

Lesson 4 Dramatic Duos

Aim:

How does conflict drive a dramatic scene?

Do Now:

Prewriting: (preferably in journals!)

Describe a conflict between two specific people, either real or imaginary.

1. Students respond to the Do-Now, writing for three to five minutes. As students write, you can write the major questions they will need to answer on the board.

The categories are

- Who
- Where
- What

2. Have a few students share their responses. You can take notes on the board; you might try taking notes that show the nature of the conflicts they describe, e.g., love, generation gap, etc.

3. Use your notes as a segue into the activity, explaining that conflict drives dramatic scenes. Each character in a dialogue will have his/her own yes and his/her own no; the difference between what each character wants creates the conflict between them.

4. On the board, create a template by creating two columns, one for you and one for your partner. Write “A” on the first line, “B” on the second, “A” on the third, and so on, until you have eight lines in total. Ask for a student volunteer and then ask the students to offer your Who, Where and What — Who are the two characters (what is the relationship between them)? Where are they (the setting)? What is the conflict in which the two characters are actively engaged?

5. Tell the students that you and your partner will now demonstrate the structured improvisation. You will begin by saying the first thing that comes into your mind; the student will respond. Both of you should keep in mind the Who, Where and What as you improvise. You are A and the student or assistant is B. Look at your partner and speak whatever comes into your mind, for instance, “What are you doing here?” Both of you should then write on your sheets, after A, “What are you doing here?” Next, your partner, B, will respond; for instance, “I’ve got some bad news.”

After B, you’ll both write “I’ve got some bad news.” Then, perhaps, you as A say, “What... what is it?” and both of you continue the dialogue in this way until all eight lines are finished. At that point you will each have your eight-line script; you can now use your scripts to offer a more dramatic reading of the scene you have created!

6. Ask students to select a partner or divide the class into partners yourself. Using the method you have just modeled, student pairs will create a scene. Tell them to make sure they agree on the Who, Where and What; but also explain that these elements can change during the writing process, as long as both partners agree on the change. Students can create a template on their own paper or you can offer the handout for them to use. Just make sure that both members of each team copy the script; that way, they will each have a script to use for the performance.

7. Use the final ten minutes or so for students to share their pieces, reading as a duo from their scripts. After each reading, ask the rest of the class to identify the conflict, the use of character and the use of setting.

Note — If you have time, you can spread this lesson out over two classes, offering students more time to develop character and conflict, to write longer dialogues and/or to rehearse their pieces for presentation to the class.

Extensions

- Students continue working on their pieces, completing a rough draft, offering it for peer review and then completing a final draft for performance.
- Students can study the use of conflict, character and setting in plays, novels or short stories being studied in class. You might ask them to create an additional dramatic scene for characters from the work you are studying, using what they know about the conflicts, the characters and the setting of the work.

Names of Playwrights:

Dramatic Duo - Handout

Use this sheet to create your first draft of a dramatic scene. Each playwright should have his/her own sheet to use so that you each have a copy of the scene.

Start by coming up with the essentials of your scene. Make sure you agree!

Who are the two characters? What is their relationship?	Where are these characters? (What is the setting?)	What is the conflict between the two characters?

Now improvise! Character A starts by saying the first thing that comes into his/her mind; then both of you write down what he/she said. Character B responds; both of you record his/her response. Continue until you have your eight-line script; then read your script with passion!

A:

B:

A:

B:

A:

B:

A:

B:
