

## Toy world

In this unit students explore the world of toys through improvisation, movement and storytelling, and make links with learning in Science and Technology.

*They will:*

- take on roles
- notice and respond to drama elements
- use movement and language skills effectively
- express feelings about drama and through drama
- enhance their understanding of how toys work.

### Drama forms

- improvisation
- movement
- storytelling



### Resources

#### Syllabus documents

- Board of Studies, NSW, (1991). *Science and Technology K-6 Syllabus*.

### Learning activities

#### Getting started

- Complete a range of Science and Technology tasks as outlined in the *Science and Technology K-6 Syllabus* (Stage 1: Toy World). Survey the class and make a list of favourite toys. Display in room.
- Students find a space of their own and move as if they were a toy. They move into a situation devised by the teacher, e.g. a wind-up animal moving fast then winding down, a teddy bear on a picnic, a favourite stuffed animal moving on its own for the first time, a dinosaur model waking up, a top winding then spinning, a lego model moving, etc. Use additional ideas from the class list of favourite toys.
- In pairs students mime the action of a favourite toy and have the other person copy. Repeat in slow motion.

#### • Taking on roles in situations • Developing drama • Performing

- Decide on a situation in which a collection of toys come to life. *Where?* e.g. at a toy exhibition, inside a magic toy box, in a sandpit. *Who do the toys belong to? When does this happen? Why? Which toys are in the story? How do they come to life? What will happen? Who else is involved?*
- Select toy roles for the story, e.g. teddy bears, dolls, toy robots, stuffed animals, puppets, model cars, trains, models made of lego, collections of characters from well-known stories or television programs etc. Discuss how these usually work. Select other roles if required, e.g. shopkeepers, children, etc.
- Students work with a partner. *Introduce yourself in role as the toy chosen and tell the story of how you came to this location. Who do you belong to? What are your special features? How do you work? Why are you an important toy? Respond to questions from your partner.*
- Students build the story as a class. Students write a rough outline of the story on the board around a beginning, middle and ending. Teacher uses this as a guide and records changes to plan as class proceeds.
- Students identify the drama space and its key features. Students decide on the location of the toys. Students walk into the space one or two at a time and take a pose in role as the toy.
- At a signal given by teacher, a student or group improvises movement to show how their toys will come to life. Teacher assists with suggestions as required. Stop the action at random moments and ask the groups to freeze. Select students to speak the thoughts of the moment in role to assist them to build belief in their roles and the situation.



- Discuss ways to improve the action. Incorporate small-group work into whole piece. Refine movements and explore contrast and focus e.g. have some toys moving while others are not, experiment with contrast between fast moving and slower moving toys etc. Discuss and explore ways to end the piece. Improvise as a whole group with assistance from the teacher.
- Students rehearse with music. Decide on costumes, make-up and props. Rehearse several times in full costume. Perform at a community event.
- Take photographs of the performance.

*Variations:*

- Select a piece of music to help tell the story. Students listen and offer ideas. What's happening?
- Select different pieces of music for each group of toys and incorporate into a sequence.
- Develop a whole-group movement piece based upon toys of the future.
- Develop the story outline into a piece of reader's theatre and have students narrate the action as it happens.

### Responding

- Discuss the performance. *Which movements were particularly effective? Why? How convincing were the roles? Were the situations clear? What was happening? Which moments grabbed attention?*
- *How did you feel when you were performing? Write about the performance.* Display photographs and create other images of roles portrayed.
- *Write about your life as a toy. How do you move? How do you work?*

### Assessment of students

- Teacher observation of students' drama work and their process of working.
- Photographs.
- Analysis by the teacher of students' oral and written comments, drawings and other responses to their drama work.
- Consideration of the following questions about students' learning in drama:
  - ♦ How well are they able to become involved in a make-believe situation and take on roles?
  - ♦ What evidence is there that students are beginning to notice and respond to drama elements as they work with others to develop drama? How effectively are they working together?
  - ♦ How effectively are they using movement and language skills as they perform?
  - ♦ What learning is evident as they observe and respond to their drama and the drama of others?
- Consideration of the following question about other learning:
  - ♦ What evidence is there that the drama work has contributed to their understanding of how toys work?

### Extension activities

- In small groups students take the hot seat in role as their favourite toys. Others ask questions to find out more about their lives and their owners. *What's the best thing about being a toy? What's the worst thing?* Groups report back to the class and discuss.
- Teacher-in-role as a research assistant for a toy company calls a meeting of designers to discuss and develop new toys for the 21st century. In groups students discuss and sketch ideas. Teacher-in-role moves around groups observing and asking questions of the designers. Students select someone from the group to report back. Teacher-in-role brings the whole group together again and asks each reporter to present the group's findings. The whole class is encouraged to ask questions of each group and seek clarification of how the toys will work and the materials involved. The teacher thanks the designers for their assistance. The students write in role as designers, explaining their toys of the future.

