

TITLE OF LESSON

English 1 Unit 3 Lesson 4 – Blocking Basics

TIME ESTIMATE FOR THIS LESSON

One class period

ALIGNMENT WITH STANDARDS

California – Eng 9-10: R1.0-3, 2.0, 3.0-1, 3.3-12, W1.0-2, 1.4, W/O1.0-3, L/S1.0-1, 1.7, 1.9, 1.11, 2.0, 2.4a-d

MATERIALS

Romeo and Juliet, I. i.

Stage Directions – Student Page

Large sheets of butcher paper labeled with each of the stage directions

LESSON OBJECTIVES

- To read Act I Scene 1 Lines 105-247
 - To act out the play as it is read
 - To observe and discuss methods for blocking the scene, using stage directions and stage vocabulary
 - To practice different methods of blocking in groups
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FOCUS AND MOTIVATE STUDENTS – WARM-UP ACTIVITY

- 1) Homework Check – Stamp/ Initial all homework assignments. Pass back graded assignments and ask students to place them in the appropriate section of their binders.
- 2) Review – Post the diagram **Stage Directions** on the front board. Ask all students to copy it down. Explain to students that these are the terms directors and actors use to talk about movement in a play. Today, they will be using them to direct each other. Ask a student to stand and be an actor. Then ask for a director. Using the directions they now have, ask the director to tell the actor where to move. Give them just a couple of minutes. In this way, you can clarify terms the class may not understand. Tell them that if they are directing, often the directions they give will seem backwards to them because they are facing the stage. The class should be set up based on the set design they chose yesterday. On large sheets of butcher paper have each stage direction written. Ask for a volunteer to post the sheets of butcher paper in the room where they belong according to the set design the class voted for. If the student cannot get it right, ask for volunteers to help out. Then they can refer to the signs, if the actors get confused about where to move or if the directors cannot remember the formal directions.
- 3) **Daily Log** – Have students copy down their Daily Log entry below.
- 4) Character List Building – Ask students to take out their list of characters (homework last night). Have a volunteer read the names of the characters they have listed that appear in the play so far. Next to each name, have the student tell you who this person is (e.g., Sampson- servant of Lord Capulet) and write it down. Ask if they have any more information about the character (e.g., surly, good natured, friend of Gregory, etc.) and write that down too. Remind students that if you are writing, they are writing. All students should be writing down any information they do not already have. When you have gone through each of the characters that have been introduced so far, have students save this character list. Tell them they will be adding to it after each scene. Have them set the list aside for now.

Date	Journal	Lecture Discussion	Activity	Readings	Homework
	1 – Why open a play with a fight scene?	Share observations and ideas about blocking scenes.	Try different methods of blocking.	Romeo and Juliet, I. i. 1-247	List five blocking guidelines you consider important for creating your own scene. You may add sketches of how scenes could be blocked.

ACTIVITIES – INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP

1. **Reading** Prince Escalus's Speech – Have the class sit in a circle and read I. i. 83-105 in three different ways, just like yesterday. First, have the students read the speech out loud in unison. Then, going around the circle, have the students read the speech a line at a time, underlining words or phrases they do not understand. After this reading, have students discuss and define the words or phrases they do not understand. Be sure that students who volunteer their knowledge also tell how they figured out what a word meant, what strategies they used. Finally, read the speech again, asking each student to complete a sentence and tell what it means in teen language.
2. **Identifying Key Points** – Ask the students to identify the key ideas from the speech. These are the ideas that are crucial to understanding what the prince is saying. Make sure they are able to tell why the key points they choose are important. Tell them they will be identifying key ideas for homework tonight, too.
3. **Stage Directions** – Have the same students who were actors yesterday, assume their roles today. Choose a director and ask the director to tell the actors where to move based on the stage directions from above and the reading they just completed. Tell students this is part of what is called *blocking*. The other parts to blocking are choosing which lines the actors actually say (yes, directors often cut lines from plays to shorten the length of the play) and how they say their lines. For class today, they are just going to focus on movement. They will work on line choice and how to say lines later. Pick up where you left off yesterday and have the actors act out the scene by reading the lines and moving where they have been told.
4. **Fight Choreography** – The director will have to choreograph a small fight. If you find that directors are getting frustrated or bored or they are just not doing their job, ask for a new volunteer who thinks they could make it work. Keep the pace quick (10 minutes tops). Use the stage vocabulary and stage directions to ask questions of the actors, directors, and audience. How is the drama most effective? Should the actors face each other or the audience? When should they move around the stage? How is the set design working?
5. **Reading** in Groups – For the rest of the class, have the students return to their groups and finish reading the rest of the scene. Tell them to assign character parts in their groups. Remind them that their job is still to understand the text. So, if there are words or phrases they do not understand, they should attempt to figure them out. If they still cannot figure out a word or phrase in their groups, they can ask you or another group. They have two jobs while they are reading: a) to identify the key points of the reading (what were the important events/ideas that occurred without which someone would not understand what it going on) and b) to add any new characters to their character list along with who they are. All members of the group need to pay attention and understand why they list answers because tomorrow you will randomly call on a group member to present and explain. (Reminder: When a person you call on does not have any information and/or they do not understand what they are presenting, you may want to call on someone else in the group to help him/her out. Although you may not talk to the student about it during the presentation, be sure to find out sometime during class or after class what is happening that the student does not understand and aid them in figuring out how to complete the assignment.)
6. **Class Notes: Blocking** – Right before the end of the period, call the class to order. If students have not finished their assignment, it is homework tonight. Ask the students to point out some of their observations about blocking. Remind them to use correct stage directions and stage vocabulary. As they share observations, have a volunteer take notes. These notes will become part of the guidelines for blocking their exit scenes (see homework assignment 1 below for good questions to ask to help them point out good blocking and poor blocking today). Keep the notes or post them in the room.
7. **Review** the homework assignments.

HOMEWORK

- 1) List five blocking guidelines you consider important for creating your own scene. Ideas you may want to consider: In blocking, how can you make the action more dramatic? What can you do to keep audience

interest during a long speech? What do actors who are not speaking do in various situations? How can an actor show, through movement, what s/he is feeling or thinking? What do you have actors do differently when a scene is set outdoors? In a theater, how do you reach the audience in all the various locations, such as the yard and the galleries? When is it important to cross the stage? When is it distracting to cross the stage? Why would an actor choose to play upstage or downstage?

- 2) [Journal 1](#) – Why open a play with a fight scene? 1 page
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GROUP ROLES

None

DOCUMENTATION FOR PORTFOLIO

Unit 1

- Final Exam Unit 1
- Hero Myth
- Trickster Myth
- Monster Myth
- Creation Myth

Unit 3

None

Unit 2

- Final Project #1: Creating Your Own Autobiography Web Page
- Final Project #2: Book Project of all of their writings to date: 4 Autobiographical Incidents, 2 Evaluation Essays, and 4 Myths
- Final Exam Unit 2

Unit 4

None