

Drama Program Title: The Drought that caused the farm not to sprout.

Grade Level: This drama program is developed for grade three.

Synopsis of the program:

The residents of an island community called Galagrow grow all of their own food. They rely on the land for everything they need. The land that the islander's farm and use on the island is owned by a person known to the islanders as Mr. Bennet. They pay their rent to him every year. The rent is paid with a certain percentage of produce from the land. Mr. Bennet's personal assistant/ messenger is sent on a given day every year to collect the rent. Life is great for the villagers until there is a terrible drought and nothing grows very well. The day comes for the islanders to hand over the rent to Mr. Bennet's personal assistant/messenger. What can they do? How will Mr. Bennet react? Will he let them stay and pay off their debt somehow? Can they relocate?

Purpose:

The main purpose of this drama is to get students to think about the effects of natural disasters, specifically drought. This is a major issue in the world today, and it is a good idea to get students to put themselves in the position of people that are actually going through this in real life. It will hopefully make them appreciate the life that they have and feel lucky to have not had to experience anything as horrible. Also, through learning about this, it will incorporate social studies, science, math, language arts, and art. I will explain the specific outcomes this drama will meet for each of these curriculum areas below.

Forces that create dramatic tension:

- ✚ First meeting with the assistant/messenger because they don't know how much he will ask for
- ✚ Telling the children that there is a drought and Mr.Bennet's assistant is coming to collect the rent.
- ✚ Meeting with Mr. Bennet and finding out his reaction to them not being able to pay the rent.

Teacher frame of reference:

As the teacher, I will be in-role as Mr Bennet's personal assistant/messenger. I will have another teacher work with me to be Mr.Bennet. This teacher will know everything that I do about the drama and will be aware of what I want the students to achieve. The purpose of the role of the messenger is to create dramatic tension. This will be created when the messenger arrives to collect their money for rent during the drought.

Students frame of reference:

The students in the class will be in-role as the islanders. They are all farmers and rely on the land as their way of life. They will have to try to solve the problem that the drought has caused and think of a way to survive.

Unpacking the frame:

As islanders what will the students be good at?

- ✚ Farming
- ✚ Hard work (labor)

- ✚ Living off the land
- ✚ Determining quality of land for growing crop
- ✚ Calculating how much money to pay Mr. Bennet each year for the rent

As Islanders, what will the students know?

- ✚ When the land/soil is good and bad for growing crops
- ✚ How to take care of their farms to ensure a successful harvest
- ✚ That a drought could cause a huge problem for them that may result in their death if they cannot feed themselves, it may lead to them being relocated, or being in debt to Mr. Bennet.
- ✚ They will know that soil has to have enough moisture for crop production.

In this drama program the students will be working as a group to try and problem solve the situation they are in. They will try to come up with solutions to the problem the drought has caused, and try to figure out how they will survive, and make predictions about what they think Mr. Bennet's reaction will be.

From this frame the students will learn problem solving, how to work collaboratively, how to share their opinions, how to make maps, how to identify and describe what places are like, they will learn about drought, specifically agricultural droughts, counting, fractions, and percentages can be added in for older students. In grade three students would not be dealing with percentages. They will develop better geographical vocabulary as they learn about drought and various features of the land. This drama will also develop better speaking and listening skills through organizing what they say, speaking with detail about their situation, listening when others are speaking, creating and sustaining roles, and dealing politely with opposing roles. They will also

develop some writing skills through writing up a description of who they will be in-role during this drama to read to the class before we actually get in-role to get the students feeling comfortable with their role and assuming it.

In this drama the students will be looking for a solution to their problem. They will be desperate to find a solution because they rely on the land for their food. They are also worried because they need to pay Mr. Bennet, and with a very bad year they will not be able to pay him very much. The students will brainstorm things they can do, what Mr. Bennet's reaction may be, and looking for alternatives to stay alive.

Curriculum outcomes selected for dramatic treatment:

Language Arts

GCO: Students will be expected to communicate information and ideas effectively and clearly, and respond personally and critically.

SCO: students will be expected to sustain one-to-one conversations and contribute to small and large group interactions.

GCO: Students will be expected to interact with sensitivity and respect, considering the situation, audience, and purpose.

SCO: Students will be expected to use basic courtesies and convention of conversation in group work and cooperative play.

SCO: Students will be expected to engage in oral language activities to explore thoughts, ideas, feelings and experiences to prepare for their role in the world.

GCO: Students will speak and listen to explore, extend, clarify, and reflect on their thoughts, ideas, feelings, and experiences.

SCO: Students will be expected to describe, share, and discuss thoughts, feelings, and experiences and consider others' ideas to extend knowledge.

Science

GCO: Investigating germination and growing conditions for plants.

SCO: Students will be expected to draw conclusions and describe how plants are affected by the conditions in which they grow.

SCO: Students will be expected to describe ways in which plants are important to living things and the environment.

- provide food
- help prevent erosion

GCO: Use for plants

SCO: Students will be expected to respond to the ideas of others, such as farmers, gardeners, environmentalists, and loggers, and acknowledge their ideas about the uses and replenishing of plants.

Mathematics

GCO A: Students will demonstrate number sense and apply number-theory concepts.

SCO: Students will be expected to use simple fractions to describe situations.

SCO: Students will be expected to use technology to solve problems involving larger numbers.

Social Studies

Outcomes:

SCO: Students will be expected to know and appreciate the interdependence of people and realize that in working together people meet their needs and the result is better services for all.

SCO: Students will be expected to recognize the effects of geographic conditions on ways of living.

SCO: Students will be expected to understand how people attempt to modify and change their environment as they seek to satisfy their needs for food, clothing, shelter, protection, communication, and transportation.

An important skill for children to develop during the unit on communities is basic mapping. This will be done through this drama.

Drama Program

Day 1

OUT OF ROLE

Teacher: Today I am going to tell you a story about an island called Galagrow. Is that okay with everyone?

Students: Yeah.

The following short story will be read to the students at this time to build the students beliefs about the village:

Far away on the island of Galagrow there is a village. Some very hard working people live in this village. They are all good friends and value their family and friends very much. The people in the village are farmers and they have to grow everything they eat. They do not own the land that they farm on. They have to pay for the land with a portion of produce each year to their landlord Mr. Bennet. On the same day every year Mr. Bennet sends his assistant to come and collect the rent. The villagers have been very fortunate and their crops have been growing abundantly.

After reading this short story to the students we will have a discussion about what I read. Through this discussion, the students will be building a belief of the island community.

Teacher: What do we know about the village?

Students: We know that the people that live there are farmers, that they get their food from the land, and they pay for their rent with food from their farms.

Teacher: I need some help finishing my story. How would you like to be the villagers to help me out?


Students: okay, that sounds like fun!!!

Teacher: okay great! So, what do we know about the people of Galagrow so far?


Students: They are hard workers, they are all farmers, they live on an island, and they are all good friends.

Teacher: What do you think farmers are good at?

Students: farmers are good at...

 growing vegetables

 working

 living off the land

** It is important to write down everything the children say to make them feel like their ideas are just as important as others. **

- ✚ finding good soil
- ✚ providing for their families
- ✚ planting seeds
- ✚ harvesting crop

The teacher will write these ideas on the board as the children say them, and have a discussion about farmers.

Teacher: Is there a specific job that you would like to have on the farm?

Student: I think we should all have different jobs. (Everyone agrees)

Teacher: What are some specific jobs that farmers have?

Students: Some jobs are:

- ✚ operating farming equipment (tractors, harvesters)
- ✚ planting
- ✚ harvesting crop
- ✚ cleaning the crop
- ✚ bagging crop
- ✚

As the teacher, I will suggest that the students decide what they would like to be, reminding them to keep in mind that their job has to deal with farming for the purposes of this drama program. They can use one of the jobs suggested today, or find another one and write down two or three sentences about it to share with everyone next day. They can also add in some things about the families they will have in-role. This will help the students find who they will be in-role and get involved in the drama. It will also help them to learn some of the important jobs that farmers have to do.

Today will end with students going away trying to decide which role they would like to have.

Day 2

OUT OF ROLE

Today will start with the students sharing what jobs they would like to have in the drama and sharing something about who they are in-role, such as things about their family and job. I am doing this because I think it is an effective way to get students into their role and thinking in their role as we discuss the jobs everyone chooses and how everyone describes what their life and family would be like living on this island. I think it is important for the students to spend a lot of time on this part of the drama because through doing this they are progressing into the drama.


I will let the students have the job that they have selected if it is relevant to farming and the life style of the people that we have been talking about. If they chose something that is totally off topic, I will ask them questions like, how do you think this job relates to farming? Do you think your job will be beneficial to the harvest? This will make the student see that their job may not be related to the needs of this island and they should pick something else. I would use questioning for this because I would want the student to realize for themselves that their job needs to be more relevant, and why it isn't without me having to tell them.


Day 3**OUT OF ROLE**


Today we will discuss what the island looks like. This will also help get the students in role because they will be visualizing what the island will look like.

Teacher: I have a big map of the island here that I have separated into four parts. We will have four groups of four people fill in the features of the land. Before we do this we will need to determine some features of the island. What do you think are some features that this island will have? (Teacher will write the students ideas on chart paper or on the chalk board)

Students: Some features would be...

 trees

 farms

 ponds

Teacher: What do you think the climate will be like?

Students: The climate will have to be something good for the crops to grow.

Teacher: What type of crops will we grow in our village?

Students: we will grow carrots, potatoes, turnip, and beet.

Teacher: okay that sounds good because these are all things that are good for us to eat, and we rely on this crop as our only food source. What do you think is the best climate for these types of crop to grow?

Students: they need lots of sunlight and moisture so they would be able to survive in our climate and then harvest them before it gets cold in late fall.

Teacher: okay now that we know the types of crops we will grow, the features of our island and the climate, we can draw our map to get a picture of what it looks like.

A sample map is in appendix A. It is divided into four sections and each group of four students will be responsible for doing a quarter of it. It will be a big map to ensure that there is room for all students to work on the map at the same time. This map will give the students a visual representation of the island in which they live. The map is started for them but they will have to fill in the rest based on what we have discussed about the island and our village.

Once the map is finished we will have a group discussion of about what else we know about the island now that we have made the map.

Teacher: Does this map help you visualize the island we are living on?

Students: yes it does, because now we can picture it in our heads.

Teacher: Do you think you will be ready to start working on the farm next day?

The students think that they are ready to start working, and are very excited about starting.

The map created will be posted up in the classroom. Although we are not yet in role, the students are really getting in to their roles and I think they will be ready to get into role next day.

Day 4

Today the students will be in-role and it is harvest time. The children will actually do work like they are working on a farm. They will use their imaginations to collect all of the crops/ vegetables and then count up how many sacks they have.

Teacher: Hello everyone today is harvest day. You need to harvest your crop and determine how much crop you have for this year. Are you ready or do you need some time to prepare.

Students: Were ready.

IN-ROLE

When they were ready the students divided themselves according to the jobs that they had. Half of the students were harvesting the crops from the soil, some were bringing it to be cleaned, and the others were putting it into sacks.

Student: It's been a good year.

Student: Yes it has, we already have 200 bags of crop and they are still in the field.

Student: I wonder how much Mr. Bennet will want this year.

Student: Well, last year we produced four hundred bags and gave him 40. So, I guess it will be around the same amount this year.

Student: I guess we will have to see when the messenger gets here.

Student: Yeah he should be here this afternoon to collect. He's never late. Mr. Bennet must be very demanding.

During this time the teacher goes around the room chatting with the villagers as they are doing their work, and asking them questions about their work. Some sample questions are: Have you had a busy day? How is the harvest? Do you have a lot of sacks full of crops? I wonder how many sacks Mr. Bennet will want this year?, do you always do this job or have you done anything else?, are you using any tools?, is the work hard? The purpose of the teacher asking these questions is to get the students thinking in-role, to get them to use the terminology that they have been learning about farming, and the work

that they do. Through imitating the experience they can better feel how these people must have felt to work so hard.

OUT OF ROLE

Teacher: okay, now that you are done with your harvest, is there anything you want to prepare before Mr. Bennet's assistant comes? Or anything you would like to talk about outside the drama?

Students: We are ready for Mr. Bennet's assistant to come. We have been up since daylight and have worked all day to be prepared for his arrival.

Teacher: Is it okay that I be in-role as the assistant sent by Mr. Bennet to collect the rent?

Students: yes it is.

Teacher: Very well then we shall begin.

IN-ROLE

The students are all gathered by the farm where they have all of their crops stored waiting for the assistant to arrive.

The assistant enters by walking slowly towards the villagers and then stands in front of them all. This creates dramatic tension because the students are all curious to what he is going to say and how much crop Mr. Bennet will want.

Assistant (teacher in-role): Thank you for meeting me here today. This is the last day of the harvest and therefore a very special day for all of us. I am Mr. Bennet's personal assistant which is why I am here on his behalf. Many of you have seen me before as I come here every year to collect the rent that you must pay to use this land. You have all worked so hard this year and have had a good harvest. Mr. Bennet says that this year three hundred sacks will be sufficient for you to pay. Will each person please help bring

the sacks forward to show their thanks to Mr. Bennet for the kindness he has shown to you.

The students all bring the sacks forward, and look very respectful, and also proud of what they have accomplished. It is here that it is evident how they are fully into their roles.

Student: we have had a good harvest this year. Can you please pass along our thanks to Mr. Bennet for letting us use his land?

Assistant: I certainly will, and I am sure Mr. Bennet will be grateful to hear this.

Students: Thank you very much.

The assistant is on his way with the crop for Mr. Bennet.

OUT OF ROLE

Have a class discussion about the interaction with the assistant.

Teacher: What did you think of the assistant?

Students: Thought he was very nice and friendly. He really appreciated all of our hard work.

Student: Why didn't Mr. Bennet come to collect it himself?

Teacher: Maybe this is something you can ask the assistant next year. No one else ever sees Mr. Bennet. Maybe he is really busy.

The discussion can go on as long as you wish, depending on you outcomes for the drama.

For the purposes of this drama, we will stop here for today to move on and get to the drought!

Day 5**IN-ROLE**

The villagers think about how they farmed the land. They discussed ways that may enable them to produce more so that everyone could have a little extra over the long cold winter. They discussed how much Mr. Bennet would ask for next year. They never knew what to expect. For the first time the villagers considered their harvest over the last few years and how much Mr. Bennet asked for.

The scene of the students talking like this is where mathematics comes in because they are making computations. For children in grade three or younger grades, children may tally or count the sacks of crop. For the situation this year, the students had 1000 sacks of crops, and they had to give 300 to Mr. Bennet. How many did they have left? They could also use simple fractions to represent it such as $300/1000$. They could also use calculators to compute how much they will have after taking out the share for Mr. Bennet as this meets the math sco which mentions using technology to solve problems. This involves math into this drama experience. If this were done with older students they could use proportions and percentages. It is really important that the number of sacks be appropriate for the abilities of the children.

OUT OF ROLE

Teacher: would it be okay if we move on to next year and another harvest?

Students: Yeah, the winter would probably be boring anyway.

Teacher: (introduce this years situation to the students) This year the villagers worked very, very hard and dreamed of a harvest as good as last years. However, it is not a good year. The rains did not come and we all know that without rain the crop cannot grow. The

earth dried up in the sun and the crop did not grow. There was a terrible drought. The people were hungry and some were ill. It is a really bad time.

This is the dramatic invention for this drama because the students will probably not have expected this to happen and they are all thinking about how they will survive.

Teacher: I want you all to freeze and try to picture what the island will look like now.

After some time the students can share what they see and make predictions about what they think will happen.

IN-ROLE

The students will share their ideas in-role.

Teacher: Does anyone know what a drought means?

Student: Is it when it does not rain?

Teacher: Yes it is. A drought is when there is a period of time when there is not enough water to support agricultural, urban or environmental water needs. A drought usually refers to an extended period of below-normal rainfall. There are many definitions of drought. The drought that we are experiencing is called agricultural drought. Does anyone know why?

Student: Is it because our crop is not growing because they don't get any water?

Teacher: Yes that's right! Agricultural drought is brought about when there is not enough moisture for crop.

(The teacher is teaching the students about drought through this experience. This makes learning this material more interesting because they don't even realize they are learning a science lesson.)

Student: Isn't Mr. Bennet's assistant due to arrive today to collect the rent?

Student: Yes he is. What are we going to do?

Student: Maybe we can ask if we can pay him double next year.

Student: I guess we better gather around to wait for him to get here.

The assistant enters in the same way he does every year when he comes to collect the rent.

Assistant: Good day everyone. Mr. Bennet asks for six hundred sacks this year.

Students: we are very sorry to tell you that because of the drought there is nothing to give at this time.

Assistant: Sorry to hear this, but this is unacceptable. You cannot expect to use this land for free.

Students: Our people are hungry. If we give we will die.

Assistant: Mr. Bennet will probably want you to leave the land if you cannot pay for it.

Students: But we have always given before. He has to have some mercy for us.

Assistant: I don't know what he will do. I cannot speak for him. I will wait over by the fence while you make your decision.

After the teacher in role as the assistant exits, as the teacher, join in with the islanders and lead a debate about what they are going to do.

Students: what are we going to do? We can't pay anything if we have nothing!

Students: Would it be a good idea if we went to Mr. Bennet's house to tell him our story?

He has to listen to us then.

OUT OF ROLE

The majority of the students want to go see Mr. Bennet so that is what they tell the assistant they are going to do. The assistant tells them that they must go to Mr. Bennet's

home in an hour.

The villagers arrive at Mr. Bennet's home and wait. The outside of the house looked scary with vines growing all over it. The door was big and wooden. The atmosphere was tense. You can feel how the students were nervous and tense from wondering what Mr. Bennet's reaction would be from their facial expressions.

Teacher: What do you think Mr. Bennet will be like?

Students: Think he will be...

- ✚ frightening
- ✚ will force us to move off the land
- ✚ won't understand our situation
- ✚ not listening to what we have to say

The students are waiting in a large room of Mr. Bennet's home as Mr. Bennet enters.

IN ROLE

Mr. Bennet: I hear you that you cannot pay your rent this year.

Students: yes sir that is correct.

Mr. Bennet: I am a fair person, but I see no reason why I should not get what is owed to me. I let you farm my land after all.

Students: We thank you for letting us use you land, but because of the terrible drought we had a very bad harvest and there was nothing we could do about it. Many of us are ill and will probably die if you can't do anything for us. Can we agree on something?

Mr. Bennet: I realize that a drought is a big disaster and you have no way to give me my crop this year. Due to the uncontrollable situation of this terrible natural disaster, I will

find you all enough crop to survive the winter if you promise that you will pay me more than usual during the next harvest.

The students talk among themselves and make a group decision.

Students: You have a deal Mr. Bennet. Thank you for taking such good care of us.

Mr. Bennet: Your welcome. I wish you every success next year.

OUT OF ROLE

It turns out that the owner ended up being a nice person. This can show students not to judge people. They should wait and give the person the benefit of a doubt. As an extension to this, in their journal for tomorrow, the students will write a letter to Mr. Bennet thanking him for his kindness in helping them out through this terrible drought.

This drama will help students feel happy that they don't have to deal with any situations like this in their lives, and hopefully they never will. It will make them thankful for what they have, for having food to eat when they want it, and not having to work as hard as the people did in this drama program. It will also cover the curriculum outcomes stated at the beginning of this program with the inclusion of art during map making.