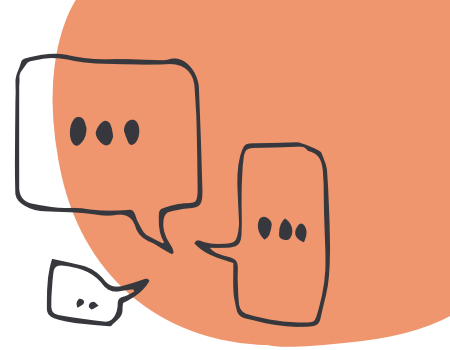


UNIT PLAN BRAINSTORMS



Speak Up, Dance Out! (Dance, Social Studies)

Dance doesn't necessarily include dialogue, but it can still say a lot! Take inspiration from companies like Urban Bush Women and Shamel Pitts | TRIBE that use dance and performance to advocate for social issues. Begin by gathering as a group to watch videos of these companies performing to get a feel for how dance and activism can co-mingle. Invite each kid to think about a local or global social issue that matters to them and keep a list of them to reference later. Ask the group to research their issue, what caused it/causes it to persist and steps they can take to help create a pathway to positive change in response to that issue. Afterward, prompt kids to generate three movements that relate to their issue; these might be literal movements that portray their social issue or movements that represent the emotions that come up for them when thinking about their issue. To culminate, ask each kid to share their movements along with information gleaned from their research to both help their peers better understand their issue and help spread awareness.

I Make FUNNY Moves (Dance, Theater)

Dance until you drop... with laughter! Mix the art of comedy with the art of dance by creating your own dance parody. To begin, gather inspiration from Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo, a ballet company that uses slapstick and comedy to bring joy to their audiences. Next, divide everyone into small groups. Ask each group to choose a song to dance to—any style, genre, tempo, etc. Next, prompt each group to generate simple choreography to their given song. Invite kids to get inspired by the way their music sounds, the story they want to tell through music and dance, or dance moves they may already know. Challenge each group to introduce a moment of comedy where things appear to go wrong to the audience. This may be someone doing their dance routine in reverse order, facing the wrong direction or moving to a completely different tempo than the rest of their group. Whatever it is, make sure that the comedic “error” is exaggerated and playful to contrast with the rest of the choreography. Then, prompt each group to “resolve the issue” in a silly way, like the whole group joining in on the incorrect choreography or trying to corral the out-of-place dancer. Once everyone has developed their comic dance routines, ask each group to present their parody dance to the whole group, and then wait for the laughter to begin!

Curiouser and Curiouser (Science, History)

Creative processes emerge from a place of exploration; often, artists choose something they have questions about and investigate it through their art. Prompt your kids to consider something they're curious about—a naturally occurring phenomenon like shooting stars, an important historical figure like Martin Luther King, Jr., or something else entirely! Upon deciding, ask kids to research the thing they want to explore in depth and, simultaneously, track their learnings in the form of a collage. For every new thing they learn, task them with adding something—a drawing, a cutout, a printed picture—to their collage that represents this new bit of knowledge. Challenge kids to not only look online, but consult with friends, adults or the local library to discover all they can about their topic. When they're finished, they should not only have newfound knowledge about their topic, but also a visual map of where their curiosity took them. Display all the completed collages together so that kids can take a gallery walk and appreciate how exploring the unknown inspires beautiful art.