

UNIT PLAN BRAINSTORM



A Night to Remember (Theater, English Language Arts, Social Studies)

Nighttime doesn't have to be a total snoozefest! Every culture, household and person experiences the night differently—some prefer to cozy up in bed early while others are getting dressed to go out for the evening. Begin ruminating on what the nighttime can hold by asking students to recall their favorite stories or books that take place after the sun has set (e.g., *Where the Wild Things Are* or *Goodnight Moon*). Take this exploration a step further by asking students to talk about nighttime with their caregivers, with questions like: *How do different people you know get ready for bed?* or *What does a nighttime ritual look like in your culture?* Maybe this is a certain food after dinner or a special tradition before bed! Once everyone has examined nighttime in their own living spaces, come together to reflect on what makes each student's night unique and what everyone's nights have in common. With this knowledge in mind, use the power of imagination to write your own nighttime story as a class! Have the students suggest plot points and characters, using the prior discussions as inspiration. When you're done, get on your feet and act out the story you've just created. Now, all of your students have a bedtime story in common!

To support this unit, use the *The Curious Tale of the Classroom in the Nighttime Activity* in the Discover and Create section.

Thank You for Being an (Imaginary) Friend (Theater, Visual Arts)

Having a friend requires lots of thought and care. Using design, creativity and empathy, help students design a cozy home for an imaginary friend right in your classroom. To start, ask your students to create the class's imaginary friend and describe what they might act like. Some questions to get you started are: *Where does our friend live?* *What food do they like to eat?* or *What's their favorite color?* Once you have a good idea of who your imaginary friend is, start creating a cozy corner for them! Provide materials like large cardboard boxes or sheets to create framework like doors, walls and windows. You can also use desks and chairs that you have in the classroom to give the home more structure. Once you have the shape of your cozy home, let your students use their imagination to picture what the imaginary friend would want in their space, such as toys, drawings or even pizza! To set the mood, find music online (or make your own!) that you think your class's friend would like. Once it's made, students can use the cozy corner to relax, read or make art with their friend! Have your class redecorate the cozy corner once a week to update their imaginary friend's ever-changing interests or to welcome a new friend—real or imaginary—into the classroom!

To support this unit, use the *Bringing My Imaginary Friend to Life Creativity Page* in the Respond and Connect section.

A Trick of Light (Theater)

It's time to see your classroom in a completely new light. Using simple shadow puppetry elements, you can transform ordinary objects into a magical display of theater for your students. First, grab a flashlight and dim the lights in your classroom. As a class, explore casting shadows on the wall by passing your hands in front of the light. Prompt your students to experiment with size by bringing their hands closer to or farther away from the light and challenging them to see what shapes they can make together and individually. Next, try passing different objects in front of the flashlight: *What shadow does a pencil make?* *A sheet of paper?* *What about multiple objects together?* After this group exploration, have each student break off and find their own classroom objects with which they can make a shadow character. Have your students create a voice and personality for their character, and then take turns presenting them and moving them about in front of the flashlight. To deepen this exploration, use recorded music or soundscaping to create a more immersive atmosphere. Finally, using your characters, put on your very own shadow puppetry parade for another class!

To support this unit, use the *There's Drama at Night Activity* in the Respond and Connect section.