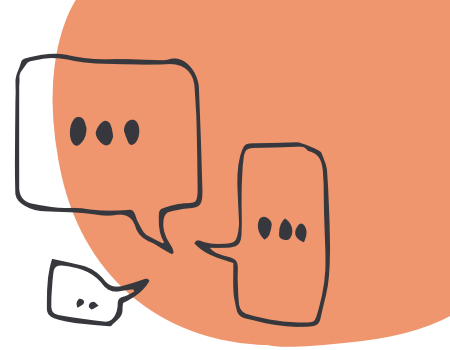


# UNIT PLAN BRAINSTORMS



## The Classroom's a Circus! (Theater)

Does the chaos of your classroom make it feel like you're running a circus? Well, now you can harness that energy (with a bit of theater education) to turn it into one! Start by sourcing common circus acts from your students and writing them on a large piece of chart paper. This list may include anything from acrobatics to clowning, and it will eventually become your class's "act list" for your very own circus. Afterward, divide your students into groups and assign each group one of the acts on your list. Task each group to research their act by watching circus videos or reading about how it's done. Then, challenge them to recreate their act in the classroom using found objects and their imaginations. This may look like tightrope walking on a piece of tape on the ground, lion-taming a stuffed animal or juggling while classmates maneuver the balls in space. Remember: the sillier, the better! Emphasize that none of these acts should be perfect, but they should be entirely unique to your classroom. Once each group has finalized their performance, run each act in order and invite another class to watch your circus!

## Spotlight On: Japan (Social Studies, Theater)

Japan is a country rich with different art forms and traditions. Take some time to learn and practice these art forms with your students. Begin with sourcing what your students know about Japan as a country with questions like: *Where is it located?* and *What do you know about Japanese culture?* Once your students have a grounding of the country, introduce them to different Japanese art forms. Begin with kabuki, a UNESCO-recognized art form of dance theater. Take time to watch videos and research about where the art form originated and what it looks like today. Then, see if you can put some basic elements of the art form on their feet, so students can experience it in action. Each week, learn about a different art form, like bunraku puppetry, the Suzuki method of acting or Japanese visual arts like origami. To culminate, reflect on which art form was your students' favorite and how these Japanese art forms relate to and influence other art forms around the world.

## You're Doing Too Much! (Social Studies, Theater, Visual Art, Music)

A core tenet of Japanese philosophy and aesthetics is the art of subtraction, or the idea that less is more. These ideas manifest in *ma*, which signifies a pause in time or negative space between other things. Experiment with *ma* in your classroom and play with the way it can impact different kinds of art. To begin, introduce the concept of subtraction and *ma* to your students by showing them photos of Japanese architecture or art and explaining the philosophy behind it. Next, prompt your students to create a spoken word poem. Once they write and rehearse their poem, ask them to "subtract" by introducing one or two meaningful pauses in their work. Leave space for them to reflect on how *ma* changed their final product. Each week, play with a different artistic medium, subtracting an element at the end to leave room for an empty space. This may look like erasing part of a visual art piece or adding a silent rest to a rhythmic composition or song. At the end of the unit, ask each student which "subtraction" they enjoyed the most and where they can add this idea to other aspects of their life.

