

Lesson Plan

The Stanislavski System – Magic If, Given Circumstances, and the Through-Line of Action

VITAL INFORMATION	
Subjects (s) & Topic(s) Covered	<p>Subject & Topic: Theatre – Acting Foundations – The Stanislavski System</p> <p>This lesson will introduce students to the foundations of the Stanislavski system specifically the Magic If, Given Circumstances, and the Super-Objective/Through-Line of Action. Students will reflect on their personal experiences to understand how circumstances impact choices which will lead to direct instruction from the teacher who will model the idea reinforcing with examples. Students will collaborate in small groups applying what they learned to improvisation prompts rehearsing and performing for the class and explaining their choices. The lesson concludes with individual reflection.</p>
Grade/Level	High School (Grades 9 th -12 th)
Standard(s)	<p>Content Area Standard:</p> <p>TH:Cr1.1.I c. – Use script analysis to generate ideas about a character this is believable and authentic in a drama/theatre work.</p> <p>TH:Pr4.1.I b. – Shape character choices using given circumstances in a drama/theatre work.</p> <p>TH:Re5.1.I a. – Practice various acting techniques to expand skills in a rehearsal or drama/theatre performance.</p>
Objective(s)	<p>TSWBAT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define and explain the Stanislavski concepts of the <i>Magic If, Given Circumstances</i>, and <i>Super-Objective/Through-Line of Action</i>. • Apply these concepts to short improvisations. • Reflect on how these tools can create more truthful, imaginative acting.
Assessment/Rubrics	<p>Pre-Assessment:</p> <p>Students will respond in a Bellringer to a personal reflection about how circumstances shape decisions. (Pass/Fail)</p> <p>Formative Assessment (Rubric 50 points):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in improvisation activities. • Group presentations of improvisations. • Exit Slips reflecting on the concepts.
Collaboration	Students will work in pairs or small groups to analyze given circumstances, apply the <i>Magic If</i> , and determine objectives for improvisation prompts. Students will collaborate to perform short improvisations and share findings with the class.
Time Allotment	This lesson will take approximately 76 minutes.
Materials	<p>Teacher’s Materials: Short improvisation prompts, Space - cleared classroom</p> <p>Students’ Materials: Notebooks and pencils</p>
Vocabulary	Magic If, Given Circumstances, Super-Objective/Through-Line of Action
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MDE State standards for theater • <i>The Stanislavski System</i> by Sonia Moore

IMPLEMENTATION	
Introduction/Anticipatory Set	The teacher will begin the class with a Bellringer: <i>“Think of a time when you had to make a quick decision because of your circumstances (missed the bus, sudden storm, lost something important). Write down what happened and what choices you made. What do you think influenced your decision?”</i> The teacher will connect student’s responses to the idea of how circumstances shape a character’s actions on stage. (10 Minutes)
Procedures	<p>Direct Instruction (I Do) - (12 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher introduces Stanislavski and Sonia Moore. • Explains the importance of truthful acting versus pretending. • Reads aloud short excerpts on <i>Magic If</i> and <i>Given Circumstances</i>. • Provides examples from familiar plays or scenarios. • Asks guiding questions to check for understanding. <p>Modeling/Guided Practice (We Do) – (14 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class discusses how the question <i>“What would I do if...?”</i> can change performance choices. • Teacher and students together analyze one improvisation prompt. • As a group, they identify: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The <i>Given Circumstances</i> ○ The <i>Magic If</i> question ○ The character’s immediate <i>Objective</i> <p>Independent Practice (You Do Together): (30 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students form small groups and receive improvisation prompts from the excerpt (ex: <i>“You are on a train to an important conference but realize you are on the wrong train”</i>). • Each group: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Defines the <i>Given Circumstances</i> ○ Frames a <i>Magic If</i> question ○ Identifies an immediate <i>Objective</i> • Groups rehearse their improvisations • Groups perform for the class. • After performing, groups briefly explain their choices. • Teacher introduces <i>Super-Objective and Through-Line of Action</i>. • Students connect these larger ideas to their improvisations.
Closure	Students complete an Exit Slip: <i>“Which concept from today (Magic If, Given Circumstances, Super-Objective/Through-Line) do you think would help you most as an actor? Why?”</i> The teacher facilitates a final discussion on why audiences respond to truthful actions instead of pretend ones. (10 minutes)
Differentiation: Remediation and Enrichment	<p>Remediation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher pairs struggling students with stronger peer during improvisations. . • Teacher offers additional guidance or simpler prompts for students needing support.

Enrichment:

- Groups who finish early may be challenged to extend their improvisations, adding longer super-objective or layering subtext in their performance.