



Stories That Matter

Lesson Overview

Estimated Time: 40 min

In this lesson, students will reflect on what comprises a person's identity, how it impacts their life and career, and how these moments can be shared through storytelling.

Learning Goals

By the end of this lesson, students will

- Extract how a theatre artist's lived experiences and identity shaped them as a storyteller and connect it to a moment in their own life that could be considered a turning point
- identify a pivotal moment, or a turning point in an artist's life, and explain its impact on them as creators.
- Craft a story to be shared as a monologue detailing their pivotal moment.

Guiding Questions

- What might comprise a person's identity?
- Why might storytelling be an effective way for an artist to express themselves?
- If you could tell a story from your own life, what might it be about?
- What are some different ways a story could be told?

Readiness

This lesson can occur on its own separate from other drama units.

The [Artists as Disruptors](#) resource hub is especially helpful if your lesson includes cultural context related to identity or social justice.

Terminology

- Monologue
- Digital Storytelling

Materials

- Blank paper and drawing materials (markers, pencil crayons, pens, pencils)
- Devices for students (tablet or laptop)
- **PDF #1 - I Am Poem**
- **PDF #2 - Monologue Rubric**
- Video Projector
- Journals

Minds On

Teacher Notes

As the primary theme of this lesson is identity, students will be reflecting on personal stories. Inform them that they should only share what they are comfortable with to their peers and teacher. Remind them that it is essential that the drama room be a safe space for sharing, communicating, and engaging respectfully.

As well, as a teacher, ensure you are an active listener and keen observer in case any student discloses sensitive personal information during any of the activities in this lesson.

Individual > Identity Map

Hand out blank paper and drawing materials to the students. Invite them to fill the paper with text, picture, symbols, diagrams, colours and more depicting all that makes up their identity.

Prompt: *Fill your paper with all that makes you who you are. What do you feel is part of your identity?*

- Character traits
- Family
- Race
- Culture
- Language
- Community
- History
- Interests
- Strengths
- Challenges
- Physical attributes
- Health
- Skills

Extensions

Students may create an “I am” poem instead of an identity map. For those interested, hand out the **PDF #1 - I Am Poem** template for them to fill out. It is quite open for them to add as much or as little as they choose.



Whole Class > Pivotal Moments Class Discussion

Invite the class to discuss pivotal moments.

Key Questions for Discussion

- *How might a single moment (event, decision, accident, award, etc.) shape someone's identity?*
- *How might this moment matter towards their life and career?*

Differentiation

Students may use a computer program to create a digital identity map if they choose.

Assessment for learning

Observe and note participation as anecdotal notes

Action!

Teacher Notes

See teacher note above

For the Ardon Bess video series, note that in the video where he speaks up for himself, he shares that he chose not to do a full frontal nudity scene (uses only that language) in a play back in the 70s. Use your discretion about your class's maturity.

Individual > Legends Library - An Artist's Identity

Students will watch 1-3 interviews from the [Legends Library](#) that provide insight and commentary on how personal identity and life experiences shaped the lives and careers of various theatre artists. They will write their responses in their journals.

Interview Suggestions:

- [Araby Lockhart](#)
- [Ardon Bess](#)*
- [Barbara Chilcott](#)
- [Jean Yoon](#)
- [Tantoo Cardinal](#)

Students should notice and document:

- **The Artist's Recipe:** What life "ingredients" comprised the interviewee's identity? (culture, community, history, class, area of study, ethics and values, religion, family, health etc.)
- **Turning Point:** What turning point, obstacle, challenge, or specific experience did the artist identify as life-changing for themselves and/or their career?
- **Impact:** How did this moment shape who they became as a storyteller or theatre artist?



Individual > Personal Moments

Invite students to reflect on their own personal experiences. In their journal, they will document a key moment in their life.

Key Questions for Discussion

- *Moment: What happened?*
- *Importance: Why was it important?*
- *Impact/ Effect: What changed about you or your life after this moment?*

Invite students to expand on this moment and turn it into a compelling story. They will add details to engage their audience:

- Setting (where were you?)
- What was happening the moment before?
- Who was there?
- Emotions: how did you feel? Be descriptive
- How did you know this was an important moment?
- Describe the change

Individual > Becoming Storytellers

Offer students a variety of ways to share their story dramatically:

- Perform it as a **monologue**
- Create a short story audiobook using voice-to-text features on a device. Narrate the story, and others may listen to it
- Create a short film, or a **digital storytelling** piece. Students will require a device for this activity. They may narrate their story, incorporate sound effects and/or music, and provide visual aids like photos (stock photos are okay), symbols, diagrams, clipart, puppets, or another creative display. Option to have a screening party/ short film festival at school where you screen your students' "Moments That Mattered" films

Differentiation

Students may watch as many or as few videos as they please.

Students may use post-it notes as a form of storyboarding their personal examples. They could write or draw the event, the importance, and the impact on different post-its as a graphic organiser.

Assessment for/of learning

Teacher-student conferencing. Visit with students to ensure they are understanding the instructions and know to identify a moment of importance, why it was important, and how it impacted the theatre artist, and then how their own moment impacted them.

For students sharing their monologue, you might use **PDF #2 Monologue Rubric** for assessment and/or co-create criteria with students.



Consolidation

Individual > Exit Card

Invite students to respond in writing or orally to one of the following prompts:

Key Questions for Discussion

- *After watching the interviews today, I believe storytelling is important because....*
- *What I learned about storytelling today is....*
- *One thing I am proud of when thinking about my work today is....*
- *How does theatre help someone share their identity?*

Differentiation

Provide a variety of ways for students to demonstrate their understanding of the content. If monologues, or digital storytelling does not work for some students, allow them to make a different choice.

Assessment of learning

Student Self-assessment: Scale of 1-5 - students will write down their number on their exit card or demonstrate using their hands (1 being not confident, 5 being extremely confident)

Prompt: *How confident were you in your understanding of storytelling before today's class?*
How confident are you now in your understanding of storytelling?

Curriculum Expectations

Grade 7

Creating and Presenting

B1.2 demonstrate an understanding of the elements of drama by selecting and combining several elements and conventions to create dramatic effects

Reflecting, Responding and Analysing

B2.1 construct personal interpretations of drama works, connecting drama issues and themes to their own and others' ideas, feelings, and experiences

Grade 8

Creating and Presenting

B1.2 demonstrate an understanding of the elements of drama by selecting and manipulating multiple elements and conventions to create and enhance a variety of drama works and shared drama experiences

Exploring Forms and Cultural Contexts

B3.1 Analyse the influence of the media on a wide variety of drama forms and/or styles of live theatre (e.g. digital storytelling)

End of lesson



I Am Poem

I am _____

I was _____

I feel _____

I fear _____

I want _____

I wonder _____

I dream _____

I wish _____

I excel at _____

I will develop my _____

My hopes are _____

I regret _____

I'll never _____

I'll always _____

I have _____

I understand _____

I try _____

I am _____



Monologue Rubric

Criteria	Level 1 Limited Effectiveness	Level 2 Moderate Effectiveness	Level 3 Considerable Effectiveness	Level 4 High Degree of Effectiveness
Knowledge/ Understanding				
Use of dramatic elements, i.e. tension, surprise, mystery, emotion	Demonstrates limited use of dramatic elements	Demonstrates some use of dramatic elements	Demonstrates effective use of dramatic elements	Demonstrates outstanding use of dramatic elements
Application				
Development of Character	Demonstrates limited evidence of character's dilemma or motivation	Demonstrates character's dilemma and motivation to some extent	Develops a character with clear a clear dilemma and motivation	Develops a three dimensional character with a complex dilemma and clear motivation
Use of voice and body to convey character	Shows limited use of body, gesture and voice to convey character	Shows some use of body, gesture and voice to convey character	Shows considerable use of body, gesture and voice to convey character	Shows extensive use of body and voice to convey character
Communication				
Relationship between audience and performer	Shows limited attempt to engage audience	Engages audience to some degree; interpretation of writing (text) and performance are partially developed	Engages audience through effective interpretation of writing (text) and performance techniques	Engages audience through outstanding interpretation of writing (text) and performance techniques

