

Literature Adaptation Lesson Plan

Purpose: This lesson involves adapting a book into a stage production using Scratch. Developing an adaptation requires students to closely study the original work, and consider the implications of the new medium and how that will change aspects of the work. It also encourages the development of abstract, causal, and temporal reasoning, utilizes teamwork in small team and whole-class settings, and emphasizes revision and critique in writing, as well as developing 21st century literacy skills.

This lesson is appropriate for all grades. The selection of the literature to be adapted and the length (as well as complexity) of the final Scratch play should be varied according to grade level and age-appropriateness.

Materials: The lesson calls on students to adapt a work of literature into the Scratch environment as a Scratch Play. Accordingly, you should have enough copies of the source material for each student to have one copy.

Your students should also have access to the Scratch programming environment. Three solid options for using Scratch exist:

- 1) The current version (Scratch 2.0) is run from a web browser using Adobe Flash (works with PC, Macintosh, Linux, and Android platforms, but not iPads). It can be reached at: <http://scratch.mit.edu/>
- 2) A downloadable, stand-alone executable exists for the previous version (Scratch 1.4) with installers for Mac OS X, Windows (XP, Vista, 7, & 8), and Linux. It can be downloaded here: http://scratch.mit.edu/scratch_1.4/. This version lacks some functionality (Sprite cloning and custom blocks)
- 3) For iPads, you can use an HTML5 variant of Scratch developed by Berkley: Snap! It is based on Scratch 1.4, but adds its own implementation of custom blocks. It can be found here: <http://byob.berkeley.edu/>

In addition, you may want to print out the “Animating a Scene in Scratch” and “The Joke Script” handouts for the students.

The folder also contains a completed version of “The Joke”, the Scratch play the students will build in part 3.

Background: This activity is a multi-part project that takes students through a deep reading and analysis of a work of literature to develop an animated teleplay adaptation of that work using Scratch. In developing the adaptation, the students will write a script and other intermediate tools, practicing their writing skills in a manner that emphasizes critique, revision, and teamwork. Finally, in developing the final Scratch Play students will practice many mathematically-based skills, as well as providing a creative outlet for student expression.

Objectives:



Working as a group in a long-term project, students will adapt a work of literature into a Scratch play (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.4, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.9). This activity will require students to:

- Closely read the source material and infer information about the setting, characters, and author's intent (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.1)
- Identify the key points and details that need to be preserved in the adaptation (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.2)
- Study how the plot unfolds (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.3) and adapt it to a different medium, (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.3), including writing a script and developing storyboards (CCSS.ELA.Literacy.CCRA.W.10)
- Interpret the theme and tone the original author is attempting to convey in the work (CCSS.ELA.Literacy.CCRA.R.2, CCSS.ELA.Literacy.CCRA.R.4), and decide if and how to echo that in their adaptation
- Understand how different parts of the work relate to each other (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.5) and what parts need to be integrated into the adaptation (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.3)
- Understand how the point of view helps shape the text (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.6), and how the different capabilities of an adaptation will alter that point of view.
- Carry out multiple critiques and revisions of the script, storyboards, and Scratch Play before achieving a final product (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.5, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.10)

Building a Scratch Play is more than a literary effort – the students are essentially creating a mathematical model (CCSS.Math.Practice.MP4) of an unfolding story. In creating the Scratch Play, students:

- Abstract the events and actions of the play into timelines at the level of individual sprites, scenes, and of the entire work (CCSS.Math.Practice.MP2)
- Use the Scratch editor, image processing software, paper scripts, timelines, and storyboards to construct a complex piece of software (CCSS.Math.Practice.MP4, CCSS.Math.Practice.MP5).
- Utilize message and broadcast blocks (CCSS.Math.Practice.MP7), along with forever and repeat blocks (CCSS.Math.Practice.MP8), to simplify and manage the complexity of the Scratch Play.

Discussion questions:

What is the author trying to convey with this work? Do we want to try to emulate that in our adaptation, or emphasize something else?

What do you like about the work? What do you dislike? Can we change those things? Why should or shouldn't we?

How would changing the setting change this work? What about changing one or more characters (i.e. change a character from a boy to a girl)?

How can we make sure that as we work on this project in small groups, it remains cohesive?



Procedure:

Part I: Reading the Work to be adapted

Students should read the work of literature which they are to adapt – this can be student-selected or teacher-selected, and quite likely will be part of your regular reading list. Students should know that they will be challenged to adapt the work (with the hope that they will study the work deeper than they might otherwise).

Part II: Plotting Timelines, Writing the Script, and Developing Storyboards

In all but the simplest of stories, students should not work directly from the source text to develop their Scratch play. Rather, they should create intermediate forms to assist in planning and carrying out the adaptation. These tools may include:

Timelines: This involves writing out the order of events in a story. Timelines can be chronological (ordered by time), or ordered according to the unfolding of the plot in the story (i.e. flash-forwards, flash-backs, or nonlinear narratives). The students should also develop a timeline for their Scratch Play, which may involve re-ordering, removing, or adding sequences not included by the original authors.

Script: The script contains the spoken dialogue of the piece, along with descriptions of people, locations, and important actions to occur on-screen. The parentheticals (descriptions) should be constrained to the minimal necessary to convey the important aspects (thus, requiring students to consider what is most important to the story, and what is extraneous).

Storyboards: These are visual portrayals of events to be included in the Scratch Play – they consist of a sequence of pictures showing the scene and positioning of characters. They are especially useful for scenes that will have lots of motion and action. Not every scene needs to be storyboarded, but they are extremely useful to help students come to a consensus on the more challenging ones.

Carrying out the work of developing these tools is best accomplished by breaking the students into groups to tackle different parts of the work. There should be a regular review and critique process put in place where each group presents their progress and is given suggestions by their peers for further refinement. This also helps to ensure the work remains cohesive.

Part III: Introducing Developing Scratch Plays

This part can be optional if your students are already well-versed in Scratch. It can also be moved before Part I (to use as a hook to interest the students in the project) or before Part II (to assist students in understanding why the script, timelines, and storyboards are important tools).

In this part, students should work through the process of creating a Scratch Play of “The Joke.” The focus is in learning to use Scratch to tell a story using dialogue and an unfolding plot. This can be teacher-led, or students may be allowed to work through the handout on their own. Ideally, students should do this part individually, so that each thoroughly understands the process.



Important Note: If the Scratch Play the students are developing involves multiple scenes, there are some strategies that will keep different scenes from interfering with each other: 1) always use a custom message to start the scene, not the green flag block. 2) always position your sprites where you want them at the beginning of the scene, and 3) hide all sprites and backdrops at the end of your scene (use another custom “scene end” event). This will make the process of combining scenes later much less painful.

Part IV: Developing the Scratch Play

The next step is developing the actual Scratch Play. Small groups, each working on different scenes, work very well for this step. Just like in the development of the tools, there should be a communal review process. Each group can develop their scene as a separate project, to be combined later through remixing (<http://wiki.scratch.mit.edu/wiki/Remix>). The backpack in Scratch 2.0 is a very useful tool for accomplishing this (<http://wiki.scratch.mit.edu/wiki/Backpack>).

Part V: Publishing

As a final step, your students can share their Scratch Play with the world on <http://scratch.mit.edu> by publishing the project. You may also want to hold a public presentation of the project, and invite the students’ parents.

Extension or Exploration: There are many ways to use this project in a different manner.

- You could make the whole activity an individual endeavor, where each student adapts their own work (a communal critique process is still very valuable here)
- You could start with an existing play (which sidesteps writing the script, though students must still study the work and make adaptation choices)
- You can have students create original Scratch plays

