

Alien Planet Crypso Crisis Lesson (Decision making, speech writing)

Objectives and Outcomes:

- To increase familiarity and understanding of weekly vocabulary words (perish, haste, opposed, shattered, tension, divided, address, proclamation) using a variety of drama integration techniques including guided narration and speech delivery
- To work on dramatic skills, specifically voice and physical embodiment of characters that are far different from themselves
- To bolster argument-based writing skills
- To encourage students to make strong decisions and use evidence to support them

Materials Needed: Alien type prop or costume piece

Grade level: 3rd to 5th

Duration: 45 minutes

I. Warm-up (five minutes): Wax Museum (optional theme: aliens)

- A. Instructor plays the role of a guard in a museum, and the students play the statues. Instructor will close their eyes and have students move to their own place in the room, getting into dramatic, frozen poses. The guard walks around the students. If the instructor notices a statue moving, that student is out. When the instructor's back is to a student, the student must move into a new pose. If they are caught in the same pose as they were in before, that student is out. Play until one student is left.
- B. Optionally, the instructor can set a theme for the statues. Since this lesson is about aliens, I would suggest playing the game with an alien theme to prime them for the lesson.

II. Guided Narration of "Crypso" story (ten minutes)

- A. Instructor narrates a story, and demonstrates actions and speech that characters make. Students act out the actions and speech of the different characters in the story at the same time, following the prompting of the instructor. Instructor should take longer quotations a few words or a phrase at a time to not overload the students.
- B. Tell the story, which is at the bottom of this document. Bolded are the vocabulary words specific to the class this lesson was written for. Instructor does not necessarily need to stick to the whole script, but this version has all of the main points that should be hit in the story.

III. Discussion (ten minutes)

- A. Begin discussion by asking students what happened in the story to help with retention of the events.
- B. Ask students to think about what option they think is the best for the Crypsos, to leave the planet, to stay and fix the problems, or if they can think of another

solution. Emphasise that there are no wrong answers, but make sure to clarify that they need to keep their opinions to themselves at the moment.

- C. Tell the students that they will be each be individually playing the president of Crypso, and they have to deliver a speech to their people. Ask students to describe what they think are the most important elements in the content of this speech. Highlight the following details: explaining what has happened to their planet, what their plan is in response to these events, and why they have made that decision.
- IV. Writing (seven minutes)**
- A. Give students time to write their speeches. Assist students as necessary. Have students incorporate vocabulary words in their writing.
- B. To help shape students' writing, give them vague opening and closing phrases (e.g. "People of Crypso, we have faced a terrible tragedy on our planet.", "Thank you for your time.")
- V. Presentation (ten minutes)**
- A. Have students present their speeches one at a time. Optionally, give students an alien prop or costume piece.
- VI. Conclusion (three minutes)**
- A. Ask discussion questions to guide students through their feelings and experiences during the lesson. Some examples:
1. How did it feel to make a big decision?
 2. What did you consider to make your decision?
 3. How did it feel to write and deliver a speech to your countrypeople?

Modification and Differentiation:

- Have students write speeches in pairs or small groups
- Have students improvise speeches if there isn't enough time for writing
- End with a game if time permits

Guided narration example:

Far far away, in a distant galaxy, there is an alien planet called Crypso with an alien species called the Crypsos. One day, an alien farmer woke up to start working.

He said, "I'm gonna go out and see if I can get anything from my space cows today." But when he got out to his farmland, he saw that only one of his (two-headed) space cows was left.

He said, "oh no! All of my space cows have **perished**, and the only one left is so ill! How will I bring any food to the market?" The space cow was very sick, and was coughing, and made the sound that space cows make, and then died.

The next day, a town hall meeting was held in this alien community.

(Optionally: quickly split the class into two halves and have each half act as one of the angry groups of aliens to give a feel of a divided population)

On one side, there was a group of aliens that shared the same opinion. The leader of these aliens said, “this space cow disease has destroyed all of our sources of food.”

Another alien chimed in, “There’s nothing left for us here, and we need to pack up our things and leave for another planet with **haste**, or else we will all die.”

On the other side, there was another group of aliens with a completely different opinion. The leader of these aliens said, “we are **opposed** to leaving this planet. It’s totally unnecessary! Our doctors are capable of curing the disease and giving vaccines to the space cows that haven’t gotten it!”

The first group said, “sure, the doctors have cured other diseases before, but what if this one is different? We could really all **perish** this time!”

The second group said, “If we just leave our planet, it could leave our entire society and culture completely **shattered!**”

The first group said, “what good is culture if we’re all dead?”

The second group said, “what is life without what makes us alien?”

And the two groups continued to bicker and argue for hours. Later that night, the leader of the aliens was with his assistants, and he said, “well, it’s clear from the town hall meeting that there is a lot of **tension** between the people. The whole meeting became a shouting match!”

The assistant to the leader said, “with our whole planet **divided** like this, I think now would be an important time to give an **address** to the people.”

The leader said, “yes, we need to decide what is the best option for our people, and make a **proclamation** over space television letting our people know how we will be responding to this food crisis.”

Important speech elements: describe to the people what is happening, how you will solve the problem, and convince the people that what you’re doing is the right choice.