



Student Tasks:

- Read and annotate the text
- Move to pairs or small groups
- Play with text as an ensemble

Online ThinkCERCA Resources

- Reading selection

Tableau

Reading comprehension and analysis through performance

Suggested Time: 15 minutes

Rationale/Research Base

Tableau is a performance-based strategy for reading comprehension and analysis that encourages participants to perform multiple close readings to embody characters, emotions, key moments, and themes from the text, bringing them to life through physical expression and visualization.

Optimal Application Notes:

Choose a literary or informational text that aligns with the theme or concept you want to explore. It could be a scene from a play, a poem, a passage from a book, an essay, or even a news article.

Before:

- Provide students with copies of the text
- Designate a performance space/stage

During:

- Have students read the passage together out loud.
- Ask students to circle key phrases and words and annotate the passage, noting key ideas, emotions, themes, issues, and ideas.
- Have small group “play” with the text, physicalizing the most salient ideas.
- Students should try physical positions, gestures, and expressions that best convey their characters' emotions, relationships, issues, and important concepts of the piece.
- Allow time for participants to rehearse their tableau.
- Encourage them to experiment with different movements and expressions to create a visually compelling and emotionally resonant scene.

Guidelines:

- Point out the left and right sides of the stage where their tableau or frozen picture will be set.
- Students should play with frozen expressions, freezing their bodies and faces in an expression that captures a key idea, emotion, theme, concept, or issue. (For example, by freezing while flexing a muscle they capture the concept of strength.)
- Encourage students to stay connected as a group so it looks like a large-scale human portrait.
- Have students use different heights for their image so the audience sees the high, medium, and low parts of the image.

Assemble and View:

- Once everyone is ready, have participants physically create the tableau in the designated space. They should freeze in their positions and expressions to represent the chosen moment from the text.
- Invite the rest of the group to observe the tableau and discuss what they see. Encourage participants to ask questions and share their interpretations of the characters, emotions, and the theme itself.

Wrap it Up!:

- Wrap up the exercise by summarizing key insights, themes, or emotions that emerged from the tableaux. Discuss how this exercise enhanced participants' understanding of the text and theme.
- Using tableau as a theatre exercise provides a dynamic and interactive way to engage with literary and informational texts, promoting a deeper connection to the material and facilitating discussions on complex themes and concepts, so let students know this strategy will be used periodically throughout the course.

Scaffolds & Supports:

- Provide a reading of the text and ask basic comprehension questions to ensure students understand the literal level of the text. Translations may also be used to support comprehension.
- Review annotations and ask students to explain their thinking.
- Provide a smaller text selection so the targeted passage is an appropriate length.
- Use pairs instead of groups.

Tableau

Instructions: Directions: Discover important themes, concepts, and issues in the text through play. With performance techniques, you and your peers, and illustrate your take on the main ideas!

Read and Rehearse

- Read the passage together out loud.
- Circle key phrases and words and annotate the passage, noting key ideas, emotions, themes, issues, and ideas.
- In your group, “play” with the text, physicalizing the most salient ideas by creating poses and scenes with just the people in your group.
- Try physical poses, gestures, and expressions that best convey characters' emotions, relationships, the main issues, and important concepts of the piece.
- Experiment with different movements and expressions to create a visually compelling and emotionally resonant scene.

Guidelines for Performances:

- Determine the left and right sides of the stage where your tableau or frozen picture will be set.
- Play with frozen expressions freezing their bodies and faces in an expression that captures a key idea, emotion, theme, concept, or issue. (For example, by freezing while flexing a muscle they capture the concept of strength.)
- Stay connected as a group so your images look like large-scale human portraits.
- Use different heights for their image so the audience sees the high, medium, and low parts of the image.

Guidelines for Performances:

- Perform your piece.
- View the work of other groups.
- Discuss the performances and make new claims about the texts based on your new learnings.