



Lesson created by:

# Introduction to Drama: Actor's Tools and Character Development

**Directions:** Choose any standard from the [California Arts Standards for Public Schools](#) and design a lesson for your students. Make sure that it includes UDL elements to help meet the needs of specific student [California Arts Standards - Content Standards \(CA Dept of Education\)](#)nts who could be in your class.

Artistic Process(es):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating</li> <li>• Performing (dance, music, theatre)</li> </ul>	Process Component(s):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work</li> <li>• Refine and complete artistic work.</li> <li>• Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation.</li> </ul>
Standard(s):	<p><b>TH CREATING 1.1: Envision/Conceptualize</b> Anchor Standard 1: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work</p> <p><b>TH CREATING 3.1: Rehearse</b> Anchor Standard 3: Refine and complete artistic work.</p> <p><b>TH PERFORMING 4.1: Select</b> Anchor Standard 4: Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation.</p>		
Enduring Understanding:	Theatre artists rely on intuition, curiosity, and critical inquiry.		
Essential Question(s):	What happens when theatre artists use their imaginations and/or learned theatre skills while engaging in creative exploration and inquiry?		

## Lesson Goals:

Perform a short role play while utilizing the actor's tools; body, voice and imagination  
 Develop a character analysis of the characters in a role play script  
 Identify the character traits of a familiar character

## **Activate Learner:**

- Ask students to think of a character from a favorite story, film or series. Ask them to identify the emotions of this character. “How does the character feel throughout the story?”
- Have students gather in an open space. Let students know that they are going to be using their bodies, their voices and their imaginations. Conduct an easy to follow stretching exercise for about 2 – 3 minutes. Have students share out their character selections from the Prior Student Knowledge activity. (be prepared with a few suggestions for students that may not believe they can recall a character)
- Focus on the three Actor’s Tools, body, voice and imagination. Ask the following questions to gather quick fire responses for each.  
Body - How a character uses his/her physical movements or postures to portray a character.  
Voice - How a character uses his/her voice to add an additional level or characteristic to the character they are portraying.  
Imagination - How an actor develops backstory and motivations in order to understand their characters choices.
- Invite everyone to share out. The concept of “inviting” is important in the early stages of introducing dramatic performance into your learning space. Trust building is a high priority at this early stage.

### **Activity:**

- When the students return to their seats have them write out the three Actor’s Tools and to describe how the actor that portrayed their favorite character from a movie or series used the Tools to create the character performance.

## **Cultivate Heart and Meaning:**

- Ask students to think about their favorite character, It should be the character they originally choose in the first activity. Have them identify emotions that their favorite character demonstrates in their stories, films or series.
- Have students sit in a circle and have them remain silent. While in this configuration and ask students to think of a time that they may have felt the same emotion as their character. (assure students that they will not need to share their personal emotions)

### **Activity:**

- Have students return to their work spaces and pass out the hand out character wants and needs. Explain to the learners that they will think about the emotion their favorite character felt and utilize the worksheet to record the character wants and needs that may have elicited the emotion.

## **Teach to Learn:**

- Introduce the class to the concept of character traits. Explain that a character trait describes the behavior or attitude of a person, and that one could be used to describe anyone in the classroom.
- Give an example: *If someone has a character trait of diligence, he/she doesn't give up when things get hard.*
- Provide a non-example to help students understand what character traits are not: *Black hair is not a character trait, since it only describes physical appearance. Character traits describe behavior and attitude.*  
Watch the following video link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xfFI5885a1k>

### **Activity:**

- Students will share out in groups some of the traits for their chosen characters.

## **Open Minds:**

### **Activity:**

- Pass out the attached *Character Matrix* worksheet. Ask students to complete this worksheet, using their “favorite” character. It is important to have some character options for students that may believe that they do not have a favorite character.
- Invite students into a Pair / Share and have them share out their matrix with a partner. Monitoring discussions, it may also be helpful to add a timer, so that all participants are given equal time to share.

### **Activity:**

- Invite students into the performance space in your classroom. Remind the students of the performance norms. Invite each student to re-create a short scene from the movie or series they have chosen to work with.  
*You may wish to challenge students to create a new scene with their characters.*

## Serve Learning Community

- Ask students why an actor may use a character matrix as a way to better understand and portray their characters on screen or on stage. Explain to students that they will be conducting a table read of the script for this lesson.
- Introduce students to the parts of a script. The basic format consists of six major **elements**: scene headings, action, character name, dialogue, parentheticals, and transitions. The first four items are included in a spec **script**, a **script** seeking to be sold for production, while all six are present in a shooting **script**.
- Explain to students that they will participate in a table read. Define a table read.

### What is a table read?

A table read is a gathering of the cast, writer(s), and director where they read through the episode or feature. It's where everyone gets to hear the story out loud, take notes, and can circle up after to make revisions.

- Pass out scripts *Dead Bread*, ask students to volunteer to be readers for the table read. (*See Module Resources*)  
As you prepare to read the script aloud remind students to think about who their assigned role is, how they act, how they feel, etc.
- Upon completing the table read, conduct a *Pair / Share*. Have students pair up and share who they think may have committed the crime in the script. Ask students to provide a reason why they believe their character is guilty.
- Script link found here: [Resources: Script](#)

*Ask students "How might these drama and theatre skills be used when trying to solve a crime?"*

### Vocabulary and Concepts

Character  
Emotions  
Traits  
Motivation  
Matrix  
Table Read  
Stage directions

# Scientific Inquiry and Fingerprint Analysis

**Directions:** Choose any standard from the [California Arts Standards for Public Schools](#) and design a lesson for your students. Make sure that it includes UDL elements to help meet the needs of specific student [California Arts Standards - Content Standards \(CA Dept of Education\)](#)nts who could be in your class.

Artistic Process(es):	N/A	Process Component(s):	N/A
Standard(s):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CA NGSS SEP- 1. Asking Questions and Defining Problems</li> <li>• CA NGSS SEP- 3. Planning and Carrying Out Investigations</li> <li>• CA NGSS SEP- 4. Analyzing and Interpreting Data</li> <li>• CA NGSS SEP- 8. Obtaining, Evaluating, and Communicating Information</li> </ul>		
Enduring Understanding:	Theatre artists rely on intuition, curiosity, and critical inquiry.		
Essential Question(s):	How can Theatre and Scientific Inquiry play a vital role in Crime Scene Investigation?		

## Lesson for Introducing Scientific Inquiry and Fingerprint Analysis

### Teach to Learn:

- What Does A Scientist Do? Ask my scientists this question that is posted on my whiteboard, "What does a scientist do?" Tell them you will give them a minute or two of think time, and then ask them to turn and talk to their partner. After students have had a few moments to think, and then to share with their partners, List responses on a piece of chart paper.
- Tell students that you would like to share a video with them that was made about some 6th Grade students who were asked the very same question. Tell them to pay careful attention to how the students in the video answer, because you would like to see if there is anything we missed that we can add to our list. Show the video, What Do You Think a Scientist Does?. [https://youtu.be/T\\_MouD2KGYM](https://youtu.be/T_MouD2KGYM)
- Comparing Answers: Ask students to compare the answers from the students in the video with the ones we have listed on the chart, and to notice if there is anything we can add. Ask them to turn and talk to their partner.

- As students are talking, Circulate to make sure each student is sharing. When you have seen that all students have had an opportunity to share with their partner, call on a few students to add additional answers to our list.
- Add student ideas to the chart paper list we have created. Tell students that, "Wow! - scientists do some pretty amazing things. However, in order to accomplish true outcomes and solutions , scientists have to have a process in place."
- Utilize the character dossier blank worksheets and collect the fingerprints from the students that played characters in the read through. There are two examples of filled out character dossiers for reference. You will save the completed dossiers for the end of the unit roleplay. (See attached samples and blank templates)

NOTE: Your preferred Fingerprint Analysis unit must be introduced prior to moving onto the next lesson.

- **Fingerprint Analysis Sample Lesson Plan found in lesson resources.**  
*\*\* Sample Fingerprint Analysis Lesson Plan*
- <https://betterlesson.com/lesson/641955/caught-red-handed-fingerprint-analysis>

# Dramatizing the Investigation

**Directions:** Choose any standard from the [California Arts Standards for Public Schools](#) and design a lesson for your students. Make sure that it includes UDL elements to help meet the needs of specific student [California Arts Standards - Content Standards \(CA Dept of Education\)](#)nts who could be in your class.

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Standard(s):	<p><b>TH. CREATING 1:</b> Envision/Conceptualize I-III.c  <b>TH CREATING 3:</b> Rehearse TH.Cr.3.1.I.b  <b>TH PERFORMING 4:</b> Select TH.Pr.4.1.I-II.a-b  <b>TH PERFORMING 5:</b> Prepare TH.Pr.5.1.I-II.a  <b>TH PERFORMING 6:</b> Share/Present TH.Pr.6.1.III.a</p>		
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Essential Question(s):	How can Theatre and Scientific Inquiry play a vital role in Crime Scene Investigation?		

## Lesson Goals:

Create a roleplay of the Investigation Process  
 Group work to review suspect dossiers/character sheets  
 Students will apply their collected Scientific Inquiry data to roleplay

## Role Play Performance

- Ask students to share what they feel about the characters in the play.
- Explain to students that they will use the scientific data from the fingerprint analysis and the character or suspect dossiers. Define the vocabulary word *dossier*.
- Break students into their groups. They will review the suspect dossier reports and develop a reason or motive for their favorite suspect. Students will review the things the characters said to discern whether they may have had a reason to commit the crime. Students will also compare the fingerprint samples from the scene to the collected sample from the dossier.
- Students should ask themselves why a person would have taken the pan dulce from the altar. How was this suspect feeling at the time of the crime? What triggered the suspects actions?

### NOTES:

It is important for students to understand that the focus of their scene should be that the forensic scientists are able to provide the Lead Detective/Teacher with factual evidence that can prove or disprove their suspect. The evidence should be both circumstantial and a DNA fingerprint match.

### Activity:

Student Groups will then work to solve the crime based on the evidence they have in their dossiers. Once they have identified enough evidence to submit a finding they will create a small role play with the Teacher acting as the Lead Detective. These roleplays should include a line for each student member to deliver during the one act conclusion.

Students will rehearse their scene and prepare their actors by creating props for them to use during the scene. Remind students to apply all three of the Actor's Tools to their performances. Students will create signs that say Detective and Forensic Scientist. They will fasten a string and attach to either side of the sign. This sign should be worn during the portrayal of the scene.

Explain that these signs can allow the audience to imagine costumes and other details about their character.



# Setting the Stage

Directions: Choose any standard from the [California Arts Standards for Public Schools](#) and design a lesson for your students. Make sure that it includes UDL elements to help meet the needs of specific student [California Arts Standards - Content Standards \(CA Dept of Education\)](#)nts who could be in your class.

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Enduring Understanding:	Theatre artists rely on intuition, curiosity, and critical inquiry.		
Essential Question(s):	How can Theatre and Scientific Inquiry play a vital role in Crime Scene Investigation?		

## Lesson Goals:

- Students will discuss the importance of a performance space.
- Students will tap prior knowledge to describe theatre/performance spaces they may have visited
- Students will form groups to create designs for a reimagined learning environment in their classrooms
- Students will test their designs to identify which configuration will work best for their classroom

## PERFORMANCE

- Ask students to think of a theatre and what it looks like. Make sure to explain the difference between a movie theatre and a traditional theatre with stage. Have the students think about why a stage is important. Record rapid responses of thoughts and ideas of how a theatre should look.
- All that is important is this one moment in movement. Make the moment important, vital, and worth living. Do not let it slip away unnoticed and unused. –Martha Graham
- Commit to making your classroom a safe space for movement, breath, tableau, dance, or other modes of physical and kinesthetic expression daily. This can feel like a risky move for many teachers, but take it one structured step at a time. You'll be amazed at how incorporating movement leads to more engaged students, and less stressful classroom management. Being allowed to move during class time can be immensely freeing for students who are used to standing in lines and sitting in rows, and can help create an environment of mutual respect between student and teacher. Neuroscience also tells us movement and learning are inextricably linked.

### Activity:

- Students will be given the opportunity to reimagine the learning space and design a functional performance space. Break students into groups and they can submit an illustrated design for the class' consideration for a final design.
- After the student groups have reported out and the classroom has decided on a design, test the design. Remind students that an important aspect of this design is that the classroom space must be able to be transformed and reset efficiently/
- Once your stage is set, invite the student groups to come to the stage to prepare their role play. Each group should have at least 15 minutes to "set" the stage for their performance. Remind audience members about audience etiquette.
- Let the show commence.  
Plan the showcases accordingly so that groups have plenty of time to set up, perform and reset the stage for the next group. This may require a couple of performance days.



Samples of Classroom Performance Spaces



**NOTE: Character Dossier Examples Below (feel free to design your own)**

## Mrs. Parra

Age: 37

Gender: Female

Hair Color: Black

Eye Color: Brown

Weight: 122lbs

Height: 5'7"



### DNA Evidence



### Interview Statement:

I was the one that setup the display. I completed the setup by 5:00pm, the night before the "pan muerto" was taken. The only other people at the school were Phillip, from maintenance and myself.

## Bobbi Mendez

Age: 12

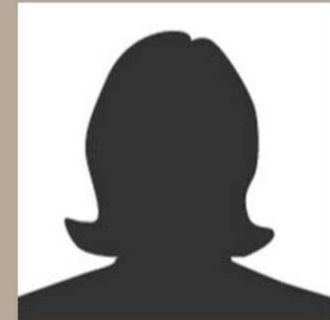
Gender: Female

Hair Color: Brown

Eye Color: Brown

Weight: 90lbs

Height: 4'6"



### DNA Evidence



### Interview Statement:

I saw the pan muerto when Mrs. Parra brought it in to class. I made the comment, "Do we each get a piece, I'm super hungry". I get picked up and dropped off in front of the school everyday.

## Calvin Johns

Age: 13

Gender: Male

Hair Color: Black

Eye Color: Brown

Weight: 112 lbs

Height: 5'6"



### DNA Evidence



### Interview Statement:

I did say out loud that I could eat a ton of pan dulce and I did suggest that no one would know if I took a piece, but I didn't take all 24 pieces.

## Anne Hardy

Age: 12

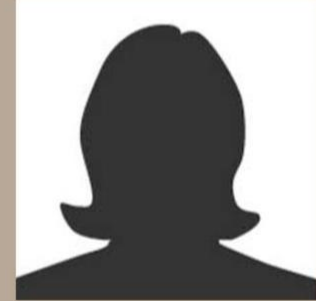
Gender: Female

Hair Color: Brown

Eye Color: Brown

Weight: 90lbs

Height: 4'6"



### DNA Evidence



### Interview Statement:

"All of my friends know I do not like sweets, so it wasn't me". I also said that we shouldn't be allowed to eat sweets at school but that doesn't mean that I would get rid of the pan dulce.

## Phillip Gomez

Age: 13  
Gender: Male  
Hair Color: Brown  
Eye Color: Black  
Weight: 123 lbs  
Height: 5'5"



### DNA Evidence



### Interview Statement:

I did actually have my own pan dulce that day in my lunch but I had stopped at the panaderia before like I always do with my mother.

## Joseph O'Neil

Age: 12  
Gender: Male  
Hair Color: Blonde  
Eye Color: Green  
Weight: 100 lbs  
Height: 5'2"



### DNA Evidence



### Interview Statement:

People have always blamed me for taking things and maybe I may have taken a few pencils from Para's desk but I would not take the pan. I knew how important the offering/ofrenda was.

**Dead Bread**  
by  
**Emiliano Valdez**

CHARACTERS

*(List in order of importance; include a brief description of each.)*

Character: **Mrs. Parra**, a classroom teacher

Character: **Bobbi**, a student, possible suspect 1

Character: **Calvin**, a student, possible suspect 2

Character: Student group

Character: **Mr. Javier**, school maintenance worker

Character: **Phillip**, a student, possible suspect 3

Character: **Joseph**, the class clown and possible suspect 4

Character: **Anne**, suspect 4

Character: **Mr. Francisco**, Science teacher and a forensics expert

**SETTING:** Our story takes place on a school day at Edgar Burro Arroz School.

**Mrs. Parra's** classroom is decorated for Dia de Los Muertos, right outside her classroom is an "*ofrenda*" or *offering table* that had been decorated for the student's loved ones.

**TIME:** Our play takes place during school, it's the end of October and Dia de Los Muertos is coming in a few days.

ACT I  
SCENE 1

*[The 1<sup>st</sup> period bell has just rung and students are filing into the classroom. Mr. Javier, the maintenance worker is emptying the garbage cans in the back of the class]*

**Mrs. Parra**

Everyone take there seats quickly, I have a very important announcement.

**Student Group 1**

Shhhhhhh, quiet, sit down! (whispered)

**Calvin**

Should I take roll Mrs. Parra?



**Mrs. Parra**

No, not just yet, right after the announcement.  
Alright class, I need to ask you a very important question.

**Joseph**

Yes I would LOOOOOOVE a Starbux!

**Student Group 2**

hahahaha

**[Mrs. Parra gives the class a very serious look]**

**Mrs. Parra**

Someone took the *pan de muerto* from the *ofrenda* this morning.  
I thought I was very clear that the sweet bread was not to be eaten.

**[Classroom gets very quiet and everyone is looking around at one another and Anne raises her hand]**

**Anne**

Does it really matter, I mean can't we just replace it?

**Mrs. Parra**

Yes, but you know that honesty means so much to this classroom.  
I'll tell you what, I am going to give the class until the end of the first period.  
If someone would like to share information, you may do so with a simple note.  
By the way, I know it was someone in this class because the  
crumbs led right into this classroom.

**[1<sup>st</sup> period bell has just rung and the students are restless to go to 2<sup>nd</sup> period]**

**Bobbi**

Mrs. Parra, did anyone come forward?

**Mrs. Parra**

No, so I'm afraid I will be asking Mr. Francisco to join us in our  
classroom to teach his Science class here. Something tells me "something" will turn up.

**[Just then, Mr. Francisco enter the room carrying some supplies]**

**Mr. Francisco**

Okay class, today we will be learning about Forensic science. Who can tell what  
they might know about Forensics?

**Joseph**

The guys in white coats that study dead people.

**Mr. Francisco**

Well, that's not all they do. Anyone else?

Yes, Anne.

**Anne**

They collect evidence and solve crimes.

**Mr. Francisco**

Yes, that is correct they collect evidence and they play a vital role in solving crimes.

Can anyone tell me why I might be very excited to teach you this lesson?

Anyone? Anyone? Well it just so happens that there has been a crime  
right here outside this classroom and I cannot  
wait to see who done it!

**[The classroom looks around. A few students look worried and some students seem curious.]**

**Mrs. Parra**

Alright class...class... ( a bit more emphasized ) CLASS.

**Students quickly direct their attention to Mrs. Parra.**

**Mrs. Parra**

I would like you all to get into your groups and let's prepare to learn. (with an educator's excitement)

**As Mr. Francisco and Mrs. Parra begin to chat about the lesson, the students begin to get into groups**

**Students are shuffling desk and chairs into their group.  
Students begin to chatter about who could have taken the pan dulce.**

**Bobby, Calvin and Anne situate their desks and quickly sit down and start speaking in a low tone.  
They are clearly concerned about the missing *pan de muerto*.**

**Bobbi**

I saw the *pan de muerto* when Mrs. Parra first brought it into class.

**Anne and Calvin look at Bobbi expectantly.**

**Bobbi noticing their look replies**

**Bobbi**

I know you guys... (sigh) I said I was hungry when I saw the pan and I did think we were each getting a piece, but it wasn't me...

**Bobbi looks at Anne**

**Anne**

Don't look at me you guys. All of my friends know I do not like sweets, so, it wasn't me". I also said that we shouldn't be allowed to eat sweets at school but that doesn't mean that I would get rid of the pan dulce.

**Calvin responds immediately**

**Calvin**

I did say out loud that I could eat a ton of pan dulce and I did suggest that no one would know if I took a piece, but I didn't take all 24 pieces!

**Across the room another pair of students are whispering to one another. Every student seems to be looking around at one another, wondering if the culprit will get away with the crime.**

**Phillip and Joseph are laughing at their table.**

**Joseph**

I saw you eating the pan dulce that morning bro...

**Phillip**

So, what, I have pan dulce every day, me and my mom stop at the *panaderia* every morning, it's part of our routine. What about you huh?

## Joseph

I always get blamed for everything that goes missing in this class.

I know I've maybe taken a couple of pencils from Mrs. P's desk but I would steal two dozen pieces of bread. Besides, I know how important the *ofrendas* are.

We celebrate Dia de Los Muertos at home, I just wouldn't do that.

**Suddenly there is a knock at the classroom door. A student answers the door. Mr. Javier, the night maintenance worker is there and he hands the student a note for Mrs. Para.**

**Mrs. Para takes the note from the student and privately reads it. She shows Mr. Francisco. They both look out at the class.**

**The students look at each other with suspicion.**

## Vocabulary/Terms

***Pan de muerto*** - *Pan de muerto* also called *pan de los muertos* in Mexico, is a type of *pan dulce* traditionally baked in Mexico during the weeks leading up to the *Día de Muertos*

***ofrenda*** - *Ofrendas* are an essential part of the *Day of the Dead* celebrations. The word *ofrenda* means offering in Spanish. They are also called *altares* or *altars*, but they are not for worship.

***panaderia*** - a shop in which bread and such is baked and sold bakery