

Doorways to imagined worlds

Sarah Nunn

KS2

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Introduction

Working as private detectives, the children investigate, ‘who is the key holder?’ as they begin to piece together the clues on the investigation board, the worlds behind the doors beckon – what will they discover? The potential stories are endless, but which door will they decide to unlock?

The ‘key holder’ scheme of work encourages the class to work outside the classroom in the local environment, as a starting point to inspire creative thinking and storytelling. Real-life objects and photographs are used to spark the imagination and to devise characters and scenarios. As part of the process, an ‘investigation board’ can be set up in the classroom to document the students’ ideas, capture statements and observations on post-its and display photographs of the drama activities. This learning wall can be used to generate creative writing in future English lessons. This scheme of work consists of four one-hour lessons, a trip to the local park or woods and links to the KS2 speaking, listening, group interaction and drama objectives from the English national curriculum.

Learning objectives

By the end of this scheme the students will have learnt that:

- They can speak with confidence in a range of contexts
- They can listen, understand and respond appropriately to each other in group and whole class discussions
- They can ask relevant questions to clarify, extend and follow up ideas in hot-seating activities
- They can talk effectively as a member of a group, qualifying and justifying their opinion or idea
- They can create, adapt and sustain different roles individually and in groups during improvisations
- They can use dramatic techniques to explore characters
- They can evaluate how they and others have contributed to the shared drama
- They can imagine and explore feelings and ideas, focusing on creative uses of language.

Differentiation

- ▷ Use a range of open questions to encourage creative thinking and scaffold your questioning to engage the EAL and SEN learners
- ▷ Scaffold the drama tasks by modelling them before the students complete the activity
- ▷ Use word banks, generate keywords from the discussions and exercises which can be added to the ‘investigation board’ with images to support EAL learners in future discussions
- ▷ Teachers and TAs to scribe ideas for less confident writers
- ▷ Working in mixed ability groups so the less confident writers can to express their ideas and thoughts freely before devising the drama.

For the last 20 years, **Sarah Nunn** has been involved in education, theatre, museums and the arts. Following her MA on ‘Creativity in the Classroom’ at King’s College, London with Shakespeare’s Globe Theatre she became a freelance consultant and director of programmes at Creative Elements. She is currently a learning consultant at Globe Education, an advisor for Teachers TV and a tutor at the Institute of Education. Her ‘Legacy of Empire’ scheme of work is on the DCSF ‘Who Do We Think We Are’ website and she has had several articles published in the TES.

Extracts from *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* by C. S. Lewis; the opening of Chapter Seven – The mad tea-party in *Alice in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll, Howard Carter’s description of Tutankhamen’s tomb in *In Search of the Boy King: Tutankhamen* (Historical Storybooks) by Anthony Masters, and Anthony Browne’s *Into the Forest* and *The Tunnel* can also be used to inspire writing and the imagination. All these examples give an insight into a new and unfamiliar world.



For images of keys, doors and worlds to accompany this scheme, go to www.rhinegold.co.uk/teachingdrama, scroll down to the bottom and click on the ‘supporting material’ tab.

Lesson 1: setting the scene

Learning objectives

By the end of the lesson students will have learnt:

- That they can use their surroundings to inspire the beginning of a story
- That they can work in a small group to exchange ideas
- That they can use their senses to help me describe the setting
- That they can collect adjectives to describe the setting of a story
- That they can begin to imagine a character by looking at an object.



Resources needed:

- Visit to the local park or woods (if possible)
- An old key
- Digital camera
- Small note pads for each group (optional).

warm-up

Prepare the class for the visit to the local park or woods. Ask the students to remind you of their different senses and tell them that this experience will help them to **describe** the setting for a story once they are back in school.

To maintain the level of curiosity and engagement, refrain from telling your students about the drama element of the lesson so that the discovery of the key during the visit will spark their imagination!

arrival at park (60 minutes)

For the first part of the visit, inform the class to **walk silently**, so they can really listen to the sounds, look carefully at the environment and become aware of their senses. Ask them to look for detail in the surroundings e.g. the colour and shape of the trees, the leaves and the pathways.

After a few minutes, begin to ask questions to draw their attention to the different aspects of the wood or park in preparation for the discovery of the key:

- What can you see in the distance?
- Is the air warm or cold?
- Can you describe what you can hear and see?
- Who or what do you think made that sound?
- Can you imagine the type of people who have walked these paths before you?
- Where do you think they were going?
- How did they feel at the time – were they as warm as you – what were they wearing to protect themselves from the sun, wind or rain?
- What may they have been thinking about?

Stop at an area in the park or the woods where you can gather all the **rich language and observations** about the atmosphere and the environment.

As they are writing, (without being seen) **place an old key** on the ground. Direct a group of children to that area so they ‘discover’ the key and bring it back to you. **Build on their excitement**, by asking:

- Where did you find the key?
- Who do you think the key belongs to?
- Did you see anyone drop the key?
- What do you think the key is for?

Inform the students that they are taking on the **role of a detective**, and in order to discover who the key belongs to and what it is used for they need to think back to when they first arrived – did they see anyone?

Establish the importance of the key and build on their sense of inquisitiveness for the rest of the visit. If there are buildings or flats nearby, walk towards them and see if you can identify a possible doorway or building that the key could be connected to.

This could be an opportunity for each group to write down their initial thoughts and feelings in their notebooks and to take some photographs to help refer to the setting when back in school.

Extension

Compare the environment to their classroom and discuss how different it feels. Identify if they can hear the traffic or planes flying overhead – would they have heard the same sounds 100 years ago?

Plenary

On the way back to the classroom, ask the students to visualise what **type of person** the key could belong to, how they lost the key and how that individual could be feeling once they have realised they have misplaced the key.

The purpose of this exercise is to create an atmosphere of curiosity where their imagination can begin to picture many different scenarios for a drama to evolve back at school.

Lesson 2: doorway to another world

Learning objectives

By the end of the lesson students will have learnt:

- That they can work in a small group to share and discuss ideas about an imagined world
- That they can use a range of drama techniques to explore the character: freeze frame and soundscape
- That they can develop a story by building on the previous lesson
- That they can evaluate the exercises and justify their opinion.



Resources needed:

- An old key
- Images of different doors
- Use of hall space.

warm-up: role of a detective (5 mins)

Recap on the visit to the park; inform the class that the classroom has now become an operations room to investigate who the key belongs to and which door it opens. Tell them that as private detectives they have to piece together all the clues to build up a character profile and try and discover which doorway the key opens. Tell them that throughout the session they are going to be moving in and out of role as detectives. When they are out of role it will be to create different worlds and settings to help them identify what type person could own the key.

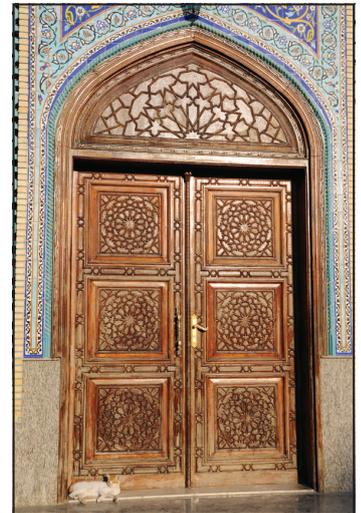
doorway to another world? (15 mins)

Inform the class that to help them identify the key holder, as the lead investigator, you have been given some **images of doors** that the key could open.

Display the images of the doors, ask them to look at the doorways carefully and consider:

- Where do you find these types of doors – government buildings, mosques, prisons, stately homes, monasteries?
- What do students think is behind the door?
- Which door do they believe the key will open?
- What type of person could be behind that door?
- Do they live there or could there be another reason for their being there?
- Do you find these doors in our local area or in other countries?
- How would you feel walking up to this door to open it?

Ask them to consider what will happen once the door opens...



imagining the world (15 mins)

Tell the class to make a circle and hold up a picture of one doorway; ask them to imagine in their head what world could be behind the door. Inform the class that they are going to re-create the unknown world behind the doorway together: one by one you are going to tap them on the shoulder, they walk into the space and create a shape to represent their object and state what they are *e.g. I am an old oak tree or I am a broken railway line*. Remind the class that they are to respond to each in order to build a big picture of this world so they need to listen carefully to each other and adapt their ideas *e.g. I am a crow resting on the old oak tree*.

Once half of the class are in place ask them to quietly add a sound effect to create the atmosphere of the world. Then one by one invite the other students to carefully walk among the students to experience the world. Return to the circle and review the exercise by discussing what type of world was created and how it felt to move through it.

Additional support

Ask the class if they know any stories that take place in a different world, collect a few examples and briefly discuss the setting of those worlds (see beginning of scheme). Or, give each group an image of the different settings included in the scheme.

creating own worlds (10 mins)

Tell the detectives to return to their group and ask them to work together to create a **freeze frame** to illustrate the world on the other side of the door that they have selected. Once each group has created their world, breathe life into the setting by asking them to **add any sound effects** to generate a 'soundscape' of the place.

experiencing the world (10 mins)

Each group in turn can walk among each of the 'soundscapes', once the moving group has walked through all the worlds they then re-create their own settings and the next group walks among all the settings, consequently creating a continuous 'soundscape' experience until all the groups have had a turn to experience the other group's world.

Plenary (5 mins)

Evaluate the experience and identify the changes in atmosphere at different points. Also discuss whether each door created a different/similar world and a range of feelings. Finally identify which doorway they felt created the most interesting drama and which door they would prefer to walk through and why.

Lesson 3: identifying the key holder**Learning objectives**

By the end of the lesson students will have learnt:

- That they can work in a small group to share and discuss ideas about an imagined character
- That they can use a range of drama techniques to explore the character: hot-seating, freeze frame and sculpting
- That they can piece together the clues to help build a life story for the character
- That they can start to analyse body language
- That they can use their imagination to answer questions about the character.

**Resources needed:**

- An old key
- Images of the old doors
- Small note pads for each group (optional).

warm-up: discussion (5 mins)

Recap on previous lesson by displaying the images of the doors and collect any phrases to describe the worlds that they re-created in their groups. Inform the class that in this session, as detectives they are going to create the profiles of the key holders whose key opens the doorways into the other worlds.

focus game (5 mins)

Ask the class to find a space in the hall, inform them as part of their ongoing detective training they need to practice their listening and concentration skills. When you say GO you want them to walk purposefully around the space, making sure they avoid contact with other people and are not talking. When you say FREEZE you want them to stop. Practice a few times, and then add two further instructions: on SECRET they jump and on PROTECT they clap.

Once they are confident, stop them and inform them as detectives they have to be able to think quickly and respond instinctively to different situations and identify people who are hiding the truth, so you are going to make the exercise more challenging! Reverse all the instructions for several rounds before stopping and evaluating the game: what did students do to help them remember the rules? Why was it difficult?

group discussion (5 mins)

Divide the class into small groups, ask them to briefly discuss what type of information they will require to help them find the person who owns the key for their door (e.g. physical profile and description, clothing, age, gender etc). Collect feedback.

sculpting the key holder (10 mins)

Divide the detectives into pairs and label them 'A' and 'B'. Ask 'A's for one minute to tell 'B's what type of person they believe the key holder to be. Swap over and repeat the exercise. Next, tell the class they each need to identify two adjectives that describe the overall character of the key holder that their partner depicted e.g. shy and frail, strong and determined, anxious and lost, frightened and confused, angry and impatient

Once each person has identified their words, ask 'B's to sculpt 'A's into a statue to represent the description. After two minutes ask 'B's to move to the side so everybody can look at all the different key holders. Walk around the space, looking carefully at the statues' pose, facial expressions and the feelings portrayed. Collect any observations and describing words which can be added to the investigation board. Inform the detectives that very quickly they have begun to build up a series of profiles that will help to match the key holder to their door. Repeat the exercise with 'A's to sculpt 'B's.

Remind the class that they can ask their fellow detective to copy their facial expression and actions or they can ask to move their partner's arms and body into position to create their sculpture.

preparing for hot-seating the key holder (10 mins)

Divide the detectives into groups and ask each group to identify one person to become a key holder. Gather all the key holders together, show them the images of the doors and ask them to select one. Then discuss what type of 'back story' they want to create for their character, they can use the worlds created from the previous lesson or create a totally new storyline. E.g.: *Are they from this time – if not, when did they lose the key? Do they want to reveal to the detectives the importance of the key or are they trying to protect a secret? How will they behave to show the detectives they are relieved or anxious?*

Ask the other group members to discuss and **write down a range of questions** that they could use to interview the different key holders to discover which key opens which door e.g.: *Where/when did you lose the key? How long has the key been missing? Did you report your key missing? How can you prove that the key is yours? What does the key open?*

hot-seating the potential key holders (15 mins)

Begin the **hot-seating** by being in-role yourself as a key holder. You could model the hot-seating process with your teaching assistant by asking them to begin the questioning and chair the session e.g.: *For the record, can you say your name, age and place of residence? When did you realise you'd lost your key?*

You can build up the picture of your character depending on what type of story you want to develop with your class. For example, you could be very cautious and reluctant to reveal any information about what the doorway will lead to, behaving nervously, looking away and checking your watch.

reading body language (5 mins)

Before the other key holder characters are interviewed, analyse your actions and responses with the class to assess what type of character they believe you are following your answers and discuss what your actions revealed about your state of mind – were you keen to protect something or were they genuine and honest? This will help them to understand how to build up the tension when they devise their drama stories.

Plenary (5 mins)

In role as the lead investigator, ask all the key holders to stand together as if in a police line up. Discuss with the rest of the detectives which key holder opens which door and why? Ask the detectives for evidence from the interviews. End the session by asking each key holder reveal which doorway their key opens.

Extension activities

documenting key holder profile (15 mins)

Ask each group to identify a person to draw around on the wallpaper. Tell them they need to work together to complete a finale profile of their Key Holder for the 'Investigation Board' – they will achieve this by writing and drawing inside and around the human outline, describing all the distinguishing features, habits, clothing, hairstyle, home, job and family background to their character *e.g. long dark, curly hair, she wears a silver leaf pendant, she carries a compass, she is not of this time, and she holds a secret...*

Ask each group to share their key holder profiles, compare differences and identify similarities before adding to the investigation board.

building up a story box

Ask each group to identify and bring in a range of objects and props that they feel reveals their key holder's story in more detail e.g. a family photograph, a train ticket, a hat, an item of clothing, a piece of music, a book and so on.

Lesson 4: devising the drama

Learning objectives

By the end of the lesson students will have learnt:

- That they can work in a small group to share and discuss ideas to devise the drama
- That they can use a range of drama techniques to create the imagined world: freeze frame, soundscape and improvisation
- That they can piece together the clues to build a life story for the character
- That they can use their imagination to answer questions about the character



Resources needed:

- Working in a hall space
- A selection of old keys
- Images of the doors
- Key holders' profiles, objects and props (if required)
- Sugar paper and pens to collect ideas.

warm-up: planning the drama (15 mins)

Inform the class that in this lesson they are going to apply all their learning and experiences in the previous lessons to devise a short drama about the lost key. Remind them that throughout the process, to help them create a story, they were in-role as detective, became the imagined world and created the character of the key holder.

Ask the students to **identify the structure** of a good drama story and establish the elements of the lost key story so far. For example:

- **Opening:** Walking in the park/woods
 - **Build up:** A small group find an old key: who does it belong to?
- Discuss in groups the various options after the discovery of the key:
- **Dilemma.** Discover a door: Shall we open it? The key holder approaches them to warn them or invite them in. Do they trust them?
 - **Reaction.** The children follow the key holder and enter the world behind the door.
 - **Discussing a range of endings.** Briefly discuss different types of endings to engage an audience e.g. a cliffhanger, the children who discover the key have to make a decision, one person turns back etc.

Breaking down the devising process

freeze frames for each section (10 mins)

Once the groups have identified the five scenes tell them to create a **freeze frame** to depict each section (remind them of the creating the imagined worlds exercise where people were objects and animals)

adding dialogue (10 mins)

Next step, tell them to now **add lines** to each scene to build up the tension and reveal more of the characters. At this stage they do not need to write the lines down.

To scaffold this process, each person delivers one line and they can organise this by numbering each other so they know who follows who in each scene.

adding sound effects (5 mins)

Finally, ask each group to add any **sound effects** to add atmosphere such as the door opening, the nature sounds in the wood and the imagined world. (Refer to the soundscape exercise.)

run-through (5 mins)

Inform the students that they are now going to have a whole class run through. Tell each group to get into their first freeze frame, when you say 'Action!' they will run their whole drama through once, when they finish they sit down and wait for the rest of the groups to finish. Give the groups two minutes to review their drama and make sure everybody is clear on their part.

performance and reflection (10 mins)

Place all the groups in a circle in the hall, each group should show the **image of the door their key opens** before their drama begins. Watch each group in turn, one after the other without interruption.

Plenary: assessment opportunities (5 mins)
(can also be continued after the lesson)

After watching the devised drama from each group drama, put two groups together, before they feedback to each other, ask each group to 'PMI' each others' work by:

- ▷ **Identifying the pluses** – which drama techniques did they use effectively? (Sound effects, freeze frame, clear voices, building up tension, specific dialogue...) How did they create the world? How did you feel as an audience member?
- ▷ **Identifying the minuses** – could they improve any of their storytelling techniques? Can you give any advice? Where their voices clear?
- ▷ **Identifying the interests** – what surprised you about their story? What stood out? Did they build up the tension?