

Lights, Camera, Literacy!
High School Edition
Lesson Plan #13

Topics:

Journal Writing
Brainstorming Techniques
Film Groups
Story Brainstorming
Free Writing Exercises

Outcomes:

Students will follow organizational procedures.
Students will see, hear, and use applicable vocabulary.
Students will generate story ideas by brainstorming.
Students will form production groups and begin story development.
Students will incorporate elements of Magical Realism into their stories.

Materials:

Journals
LCD projector or Promethean Board
Chart paper and Post-its or Promethean Board
Post-It Notes and Markers
Bulletin board paper

HANDOUTS:

Magical Realism Short Film Project (from Lesson #12)

New Vocabulary: Categorize, Analyze

Sequence of Events:

I. Journal Writing (15)

Prompt: **Describe one interesting idea you came up with last class period during our Free Your Mind writing activity.**

II. Effective Brainstorming Techniques (20)

1. Students have used group brainstorming sessions to help generate ideas for past class projects like the anti-bullying PSA and the green screen productions. Ask students how their past group brainstorming sessions went. Did brainstorming help your group come up with good ideas?

Tell students that they will use group brainstorming again to generate ideas for their upcoming short film project. But first, explain that we are going to look a little closer at effective brainstorming techniques.

Play the following four minute video, [Brainstorming Done Right!](#)

2. Review the main rules and advice from the video with students:

During the brainstorm:

Do's

Capture EVERYTHING (No idea is too crazy!)

Encourage participation

Don'ts:

No judging or evaluating during the brainstorm

Never force participation

After the brainstorm:

Categorize and reduce the ideas

Analyze and choose the best ideas

III. Brainstorming Session w/ Post-It Notes (60)

1. Have students sit in groups of four for this activity.
2. Often, during a typical brainstorming session not everyone feels comfortable saying their ideas outloud. This limits the amount of participation, one of the key aspects of effective brainstorming. Tell students they are going to use Post-It notes and markers to jot down ideas during a practice brainstorming session.
3. Pass out stacks of Post-It Notes and markers to each group. Students will practice brainstorming story ideas based on the following prompt:

An alien comes to Earth, and...

4. Project the prompt on the screen and have a timer ready. Students will write down each story idea they come up with on separate Post-It Notes. Students **DO NOT** write their names on their Post-It Notes.

Tell students they will have four minutes to generate as many story ideas as possible.

5. Instruct students to combine all their Post-It Notes in their groups and to look for any similarities among all the ideas they came up with.

Next, tell students to **CATEGORIZE** all their ideas. Roam around the room and help students as needed.

6. Next, have each group **ANALYZE** the ideas for practicality and to choose the best ones.

When they are ready, ask each group to share one or two of their best ideas. Lead an informal discussion on the effectiveness of this brainstorming session. What worked?

What could be improved? How did they go about categorizing all ideas after the brainstorming session?

IV. Form Production Groups and Review Project (20)

1. Have students look at their The Magical Realism Short Film Project Handouts from their folders and project this handout on the screen.

Carefully review the project guidelines with students. Be sure to point out all the requirements. Tell students the first step in this process is coming up with possible story ideas. In order to do this, they will continue brainstorming using the Post-It Note method.

V. Group Brainstorming Session (40)

1. Pass out stacks of Post-It Notes and markers to each group.

Project the following prompts on the screen and tell students they will have ten minutes to quietly brainstorm possible story ideas. Point out that these prompts have been taken directly from the Magical Realism Short Film Project handout. Tell students it's fine to brainstorm story ideas from all three prompts:

A character does not allow someone to get what they want

A character deals with peer pressure

A character wants to belong but is an outsider

Use a timer and give students ten minutes to quietly brainstorm story ideas. They should use one Post-It Note for each story idea they come up with. Tell students not to get hung up on any one idea. The goal is to generate as many ideas as possible in the allotted time.

2. After ten minutes are up, allow students time to share their Post-It Notes with one another. Next, have students **categorize** all the ideas they generated during the brainstorm.

Give groups large pieces of bulletin board paper on which they can organize their Post-It Notes.

Encourage students to group similar ideas together. Students can use any criteria they want for categorizing their ideas. Perhaps some ideas can be connected or even combined?

Monitor students as they work and assist as needed.

3. Next, tell groups to choose their top three ideas from the brainstorming session.

They are not ready to decide on a final story idea yet. First, they will individually participate in some free writing activities to further develop their ideas.

VI. Free Writing Exercises (40)

1. Students will use their journals for timed free writing exercises as a way to further develop one of the ideas from their group's brainstorming session.

Each student must choose ONE IDEA from their group's brainstorming session that they wish to write about for these free writes.

2. Review the rules again for timed free writing:
 - Students cannot stop writing during the required time frame. If they get stuck, they write the same thought over and over again until something new comes but they DO NOT take the pencil up from the paper.
 - Tell them not to overthink it, but just write down whatever pops into their minds. They should allow their minds to wander freely and uninterrupted. Remember, there are no right or wrong answers - only ideas.

3. Have students write down their favorite idea from their group's brainstorming session at the top of a page in their journals. It doesn't have to be their own idea. It can be any idea that came up in their brainstorming session.

Have a timer ready. Students will have three minutes to freely write for each prompt listed below.

Prompt #1: How does this story begin?

Prompt #2: Describe one or two challenges or setbacks the character faces in the story.

4. Ask students to share their ideas in their groups. Students DO NOT need to read their free writes out loud. Rather, have them summarize what they wrote.
5. Hopefully, by this point, groups are starting to gel around a possible story idea. Allow students time in their groups to choose a final story idea they all agree on. (NOTE: Next class, students will have time to think about possible characters and start planning their stories.)

VII. Reflection: (15)

1. Direct students to the hanging chart paper labeled:

What have you learned about the benefits of everyone participating in a focused brainstorming session?

2. Hand out Post-its on which students write an item to post on the chart.
3. Review the comments on the Post-its with the class, so students have a sense of what was learned that day. Make sure to clear up any misconceptions.