

"Shakespeare and Star Wars": Lesson Plan Day 11
by Adam Watson (NBCT)

Academic Goals:

Understand when the purpose of writing changes, the form will often change as well.
Perform a dramatic scene by following structural cues (parentheticals, stage directions, etc.).
Infer meaning in a dramatic text using different "helpers," such as stage directions.

Core Content Standards (for Reading Literature, 9th Grade): 9-10.RL.5

Core Content Standards (College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Reading): CCRA.R.5

Handouts:

[WSSW Star Wars Skit Master List](#) (for teacher)

[WSSW Star Wars Skit Groups TEMPLATE](#) (for teacher)

[WSSW Star Wars Skit](#) (for students)

Instructional Plan:

1. Have students hand in their Double-Entry Journal projects.
2. Examine the [WSSW Star Wars Skit Master List](#) for the five skits from WSSW to use in the lesson. Use the [WSSW Star Wars Skit Groups TEMPLATE](#) to organize the group configurations of your roster in advance. As the group template shows, using all five groups would result in 35 roles, more than a typical classroom roster. There are three reasons I picked the excerpts that I did.
 - *Maximum flexibility for gender.* Aunt Beru and Leia are the only female roles in *Star Wars*, so I tried to anchor most of the skits with at least one decent female speaking part. As far as male roles go, some seem obvious (Luke, Han, Ben, Chewbacca, Vader). However, many others are ambiguous enough to get away from standard casting; for example, you could easily have a Jawa or Stormtrooper of either gender, Imperial officers could be female, and the droids could be cast either way.
 - *Some minor roles may be combined or eliminated to fit your roster.* For example, Jawa 1 and 2 could be done by one actor, and R5-D4 could be "acted" by the teacher as an offstage sound effect. Obviously, you also may not need to use all five skits.
 - *Differentiation should drive your casting decisions.* What students are naturally linguistic, particularly dramatic, or need a chance to shine? Assign longer, major roles to them. On the other hand, struggling students may be assigned Artoo or Chewbacca and still be an important part of the group activity.
3. Share the top portion of the WSSW Star Wars Skit sheet with the whole class, discussing how stage directions and inferences drive acting choices. Explain how each actor needs to connect an appropriate gesture, vocal mannerism, etc. with a moment from their skit; write down these findings on the group sheet.
4. Share group memberships and give the appropriate numbered skit sheet to each group.
5. Have students rehearse and fill out group sheet. Time will be limited (I suggest at least 15 minutes). Tell students to not just sit at desks and read the lines, but stand up and go through some minimal "blocking" (movement on stage, exits, entrances).

6. Have groups hand in their group sheet, and go back to their normal seats. Have the skits performed in order (#1-5) to reinforce comprehension of the plot. You may wish students in the audience to take notes (2-3 per skit) of good examples of gestures and vocal choices made by actor(s) in each skit. (For example, note when a student obviously "cheats out" to the audience when doing an aside.) Share and praise good choices after each skit is performed.

7. If time, discuss or do an exit slip: how did performing the scenes (versus just reading them) help students understand the play better or add meaning?

Suggested Extensions and/or Alterations :

Adding a few props can add a whole other dimension of engagement, so long as they don't overwhelm the acting or obscure the faces of the actors. Consider: a black Darth Vader helmet (without the mask), cheap lightsabres (without sound effects or lights), a furry pair of earmuffs for Leia, a gray beard for Ben, a simple black cloth vest for Han, toy laser guns, a top of a white plastic cylindrical hamper for Artoo's "head" . . . you get the picture. Next year, I would like to hit a Halloween store in the fall to pick up some of these easily and possibly cheaply, long before I actually teach my unit.

Post-Lesson Reflection:

Time was the enemy here. In my larger class (which is also a longer period, because of lunch), I barely got in four group performances. In a normal 50 minute period, another section of freshmen that has a smaller roster got three group performances done with only a few minutes to spare. In the event that you run out of time, you could finish the skits on [Day 12](#), since the end of the movie will only take about a half hour of viewing time.

For the full unit overview, [click here](#).