

Freeze Frame

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'Freeze Frame' encourages collaborative reading, understanding and appreciation of a play. This activity fosters interactivity among peers and engagement with the text. Through the process, students learn to take ownership of their learning experience through multiple readings of the text, by framing insightful questions and probing deeper into plot development and character formation in their attempt to convincingly answer the questions asked while giving students an opportunity to improve their speaking skills.

Skill focus: Reading and Speaking

Level: Classes IX to XII

Class size: 25-30 students

Material Required: Reading textbook, small paper squares and pen

Learning Objectives: 1. Dramatic reading
2. Analysis of the characters and plot

Methodology:

Stage 1: (Time required: 25-30 minutes)

- i) Introduction of the playwright and the context of the play, followed by a brief discussion on the basic plot of the play.
- ii) Students read an excerpt from the play individually to gain a primary understanding of the text.
- iii) A small paper square is given to each student where they write FREEZE in uppercase to make their Freeze Pass.

Stage 2: (Time required: 35-40 minutes)

- i) A small group of student volunteers is selected and each student is assigned a character. Two students are assigned the roles of 'Moderator' and 'Time-keeper' (the teacher could also become the Moderator).

- ii.) Discussion with the volunteers aimed at drawing in depth character sketches.
- iii.) A trial reading to work upon dialogue delivery (intonation, voice modulation etc)

Stage 3: (Time required : 1 hour)

Description: The small group working with the play- text comes forward to do a dramatic reading of the play. While the reading is in progress, rest of the class listens/reads along. The student-audience now has an opportunity to halt the reading at any point and ask a few questions to any of the characters. Each student is given not more than one chance lasting a minute (hereafter referred to as the Freeze interval). The teacher must note that when a student chooses to freeze the reading, they must deposit their Freeze Pass to the Moderator. The following points must be taken into consideration:

- i) Each student in the class has the freedom to ‘Freeze’ the reading of the play.
- ii) One ‘Freeze pass’ will be given to each student and the same is deposited to the Moderator, once it is utilised.
- iii) Not more than two questions per student will be entertained.
- iv) The Freeze interval must not exceed one minute.
- v) The Moderator must ensure rules are followed and time keeper must tap the desk twice to indicate time is up.
- vi) Students are encouraged to use their chance sensibly to gain a deeper insight into the plot/structure and/or attitudes/motivations of a character(s).
- vii) Once Frozen, the actors/readers will suspend the reading and respond to the questions asked.
- viii) The student who has used his/her ‘Freeze Pass’ will go to the reading group in front of the class and tap a character gently.
- ix) A character once tapped must then answer the questions asked by the student.
- x) Once the Freeze interval is over (time keeper claps once to indicate time is up), student-actors resume the reading of the play.

Note: Stage 1 and 2 of the activity are preparatory stages. Freeze comes into play only in stage 3. Simply put, it is similar to the ‘Pause’ button. While watching an audio/visual, the viewer has the discretion to play, pause and then play the narrative as and when they desire. This activity, in principle, tries to apply the same to the in-class learning experience through ‘Freeze’.

The following example outlines how the activity proceeds.

Target group: Class X

Play: An excerpt from *Julius Caesar* by William Shakespeare (Act III , Scene I)

Dramatic reading of the play is under progress. When Brutus is about to stab Caesar, one student puts up their 'freeze' pass. Reading is immediately paused (student-volunteers can freeze/become a statue, to add more fun). The teacher/moderator allows the student a minute to pose and seek an answer to his/her question to the chosen character. Questions to Brutus could be - Why did you conspire to kill Caesar? Was he not a loyal friend to you? How do you think Caesar would react to your betrayal? In what way was Caesar a threat? and so on. Once the questions are answered to satisfaction, reading of the play is resumed.

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