

Toolkit 5

Advice for generating theatrical scenario based on Mimesis



5.1 Guidelines for Script Development

Watch tutorials



Step by Step



Teachers can Act!



In the Mimesis approach and the proposed activities, the construction of a scenario for a theatrical performance and conducting a creative process are interconnected. Depending on the process, the performance script may be based on a plot in which events have a clear causal relationship. But it can also be built on a collage principle, in which the alternating scenes are not so much tied to a specific plot, but are more expressive visual interpretations of a specific theme. A typical example of such performances are from the genre of dance theatre, mask theatre and others. Scenarios of the second type may seem to you not so familiar and rather abstract, but in our practice we have convinced ourselves that they are particularly suitable for children and for making a performance from creative material accumulated in the process without the presence of preliminary dramaturgical material. Here we will try to help you by providing you with some basic principles for writing a play (script) and tips on how to actively involve your students in the process.

How to Create your Play (script, scenario)?

Step 1: Choose your leading theme

Simple example themes, suitable for creating a children's play could be "friendship", "I'm different", "parent-child", "unexpected vacation", "the magic book" etc.

A scientific concept also could be a leading theme. A wide selection of suitable topics can be found in the printable resources of ACT 1 "Scientific improvisation" of "Narrate your lesson"Activity. The titles of some MIMESIS activities could also be used as inspiring topics. For example titles like "World on fire", "It's not a magic, it's science!", "Water, water everywhere!" and many others

Step 2: Start with the Characters

The Protagonist.

- Our main character.
- The one the audience follows in the story.
- The main characters have a goal /dream/ that they may or may not achieve at the end.
- The protagonist could be an individual, but also a group character.

The Antagonist.

- The one who creates obstacles for the main character to achieve their goal, /dream/
- That doesn't mean the Antagonist should be mean or bad.
- Also could individual or group character.

The Pivotal character.

- The one who appears at the turning point of the plot when "there is no hope left" for the main character.
- Does something or helps directly to the Protagonist to achieve their goal.

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Anyone and anything can be a character in the play. Whether it is a person, an animal, an object, the character must "come alive". The following guiding questions may help:

- What are your character's main characteristics? Think more in terms of self-expression and behaviour. Leave the physical characteristics in the background, because they do not help building the effective image of the character and the future development of the action.
- What does your character want? What is keeping your character from getting what they want? What stands in their way?
- What interesting job or unusual habit might the character have? Thinking about interesting occupations, sports or artistic practices or hobbies can be a good way to develop character.

Examples

- Annie, 12 years old, spoiled and haughty, she likes new clothes, accessories, toys. She doesn't like reading books and studying, she thinks it's boring and stupid.
- The umbrella, named Fru, is curious and unreasonably brave. He lives with an old scientist, and it's terribly annoying to him. Fru wants to transform into a rocket and explore the universe. For the purpose of transformation he practises mental yoga and martial arts....
- The Black Gang - 10 birds, guardians of a black box. They don't know what's in it and shouldn't open it. They spend their days arguing constantly about what's in it.

Step 3: Start developing the general plot structure

1. Exposition.

Presents the Protagonist, its surrounding, set up and relationships. In the exposition we learn Who, What, Where, When, Why and How in the main character's life. It is usually consists of 2 parts:

- Balance - The Protagonist life at the beginning of the story
- Inciting incident - breaks the balance and sets the story in motion

2. Main conflict.

What the Protagonist wants, but can't have.

3. Complications.

They stay on the Protagonist path to reach their goal. They make the story exciting, memorable, full of tension and emotions. Complications may arise:

- From Protagonists' wrong decisions and choices.
- From Antagonists' obstacles placed on the Protagonists' path

The second is often to be found in fairytales and animated movies and is easily understood from students of young age.

4. The turning point.

After a series of overcome obstacles and difficulties, the protagonist reaches a point where it seems that they are doomed to failure and "all hope is lost". Then usually the Pivotal character appears to offer a new option.

5. Climax.

- The moment the Protagonist reaches their goal or fails to reach it.

6. Resolution.

The result from the Climax. New balance - The new life of the Protagonist after the journey.



Example for script outline incorporating MIMESIS activities

Theme: "The magic Kamishibai"

Characters:

- **Protagonist:** Annie, the spoiled girl
- **Antagonist:** The frame of Famous Kamishibai
- **Pivotal character:** Fru the umbrella

Exposition.

1. Annie's birthday. Many friends and classmates. Everyone gives her gifts. She eagerly opens them....
2. Annie's grandfather, an old professor, appears with his strange umbrella Fru. The grandfather gives her a big gift /Butai frame and doors from the activity "Famous Kamishibai", made on a larger scale/
3. Annie quickly opens the doors of Kamishibai. Nothing special, just an empty frame. Annie is very disappointed.
4. Inciting incident : She steps over the frame to see if there is anything special on the other side and at that moment everything around her disappears.

Main conflict.

1. Inside The frame is very dark. Annie is scared, but also angry. She wants to get out, but she can't and doesn't know how.
2. Suddenly she sees 4 cards on the floor and hears The frame's whispering.
3. In a dialogue between the two it becomes clear that Annie needs to go for a journey to discover the meaning of the cards and to restore the Kamishibai story.

Complications (obstacles).

1. First obstacle - Annie is surrounded by couples (Steam your body activity, Act1 "Mime my symmetry"). Only in one couple does the "mirror" repeat the movements in perfect symmetry. In the remaining couples, each "mirror" interprets the movements in a different way - tired, sad, energetic, angry, silly, cheerful...
2. Annie is trying to find which of the couples can be connected to one of the four cards. After careful observation she finally found the couple that was related to symmetry. (The Card with the flower from Printable Resources)
3. Second obstacles - Annie notices a group of children standing in front of a path of coloured A4 sheets (Water water everywhere activity, Act 1 "Zone game"). She sees them walking along it and going through the different zones. At first, Annie can't find a connection to any of the cards.
4. When the group fall into the fog zone and then the ice zone, she realizes that they are in danger and the only way to help them is to quickly figure out which card is related to all the changes she is seeing.
5. Annie is still hesitant. The children fall into the water, Annie makes a snap decision and throws the card depicting the water cycle. (From printable resources)
6. Third obstacle - Annie is surrounded by strange creatures (The secret life of the plankton, Act 2 introductory game the 3 types of plankton present their haka dance)
7. Annie feels very confident after passing the first two obstacles. She quickly decides that she has discovered the meaning of the third card, announces that she has found herself among a group of aliens, and throws the card with the image of a planet. (From printable resources)



Example for script outline incorporating MIMESIS activities

Turning point.

1. Annie falls back into complete darkness. She understands that she was in a hurry and made a mistake, she cannot find any way out of the place she is in, she is desperate.
2. The umbrella Fru appears, having transformed into a rocket. He grabs Annie and flies away with her into endless space.

Climax.

1. The two are arrested by the intergalactic police and brought before the annual transgalactic conference where the fate of planet Earth is discussed (A matter of scale activity, Act 3 "Different life forms")
2. It turns out that life on Earth is in danger because Annie has disrupted the underwater food chain.

Resolution.

1. Annie realises that she is responsible for this and that she must go back and to place the correct card.
2. Annie and Fru argue. He doesn't want to go back. He wants to continue as a rocket and fly into space. Finally, Annie convinces him and they together return to the Earth.
3. Back to the "strange creatures" of scene 13. Annie places the card in the middle, balance is restored and the planktons can continue their game. (back to Act 2 of The secret life of the plankton/
4. Annie discovers the story of "Famous Kamishibai" - The Universe of Science - full of wonders!

New balance.

1. The changed Annie, who likes to spend time with her grandpa to learn and discover new wonders.

5.1 Guidelines for Script Development



Example for script outline - Printable ressources - Create your Script

1

What is the story about?



2

Who is the Main character of the story? (something more specific, unique, unusual about them?)



3

Place, time and setup of the story?



4

What happened? One day (suddenly, the next morning...)



5

What the Main character needs to do (wants to change, dreams to be...) 

6

Who, what stands on the Main character's path?



7

What does the Main character do?



8

Who, what helps the Main character?



9

What changed at the end in the Main character's life?



10

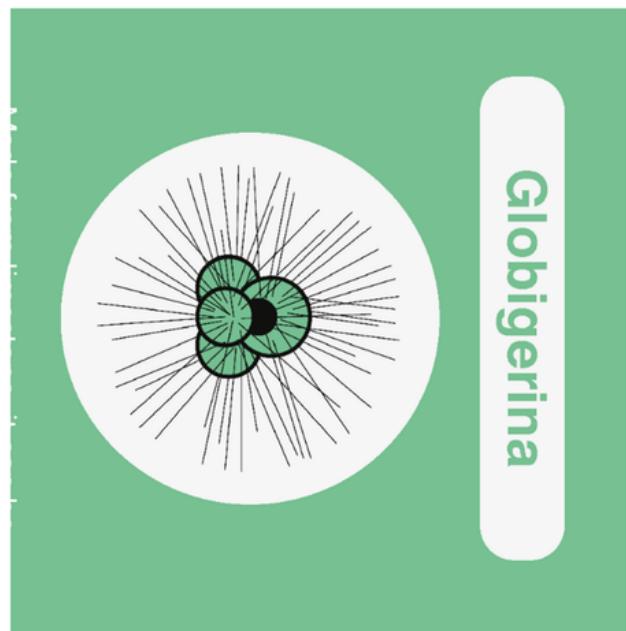
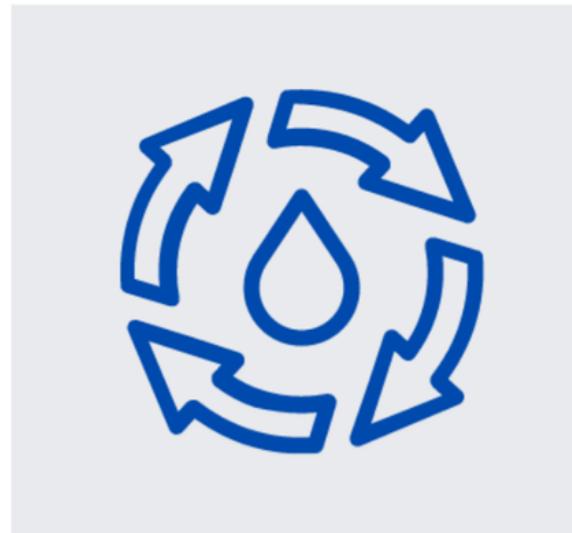
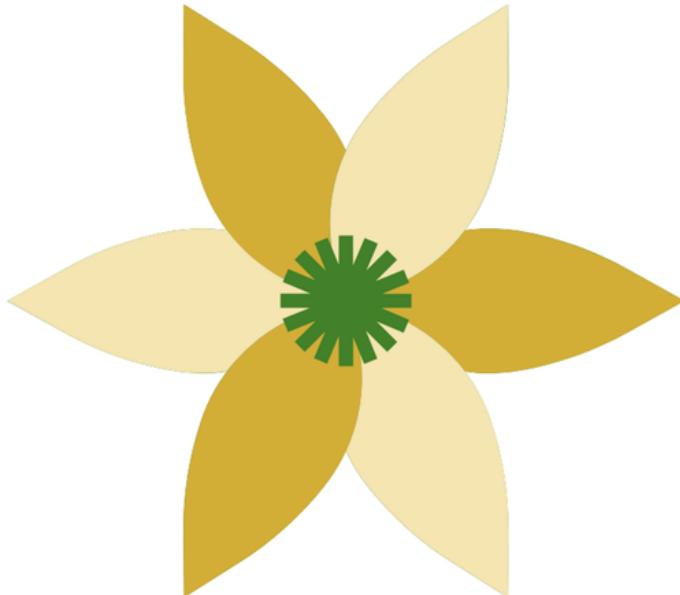
Title of the play



5.1 Guidelines for Script Development



Example for script outline - Printable ressources - Script Props



5.1 Guidelines for Script Development



Tips to build a creative process based on the exemplified script outline

STEP 1 - FAMILIARISE YOURSELF WITH THE SCRIPT

Think about whether you want to use the characters mentioned or if you would try to come up with new ones together with the children. It's possible, knowing your students and class dynamics, that the second option is better.



Decide if you want to use only the ones listed, if you want to add more or remove some of them. Depending on whether you have already carried out the specified activities or part of them, decide what and how you use them, whether you want to add more or remove part of them.

STEP 2 - FAMILIARISE YOURSELF WITH THE MIMESIS ACTIVITIES INDICATED IN THE SCRIPT



STEP 3 - LEAVE THE SCRIPT TO THE SIDE AND PLAN THE CREATIVE PROCESS WITH THE STUDENTS IN THREE STAGES (SEE ON NEXT PAGE)

The three stages of the creative process described in step 3 can also be used as a basis for structuring your pedagogical sequence and creating optimal conditions for the creative exploration of scientific concepts through games and theatre techniques. For the pedagogical sequence, you do not need to go through the rehearsal stage. You can create an improvised performance at the end together with the children, in which they present their experience in the creative learning process. You can use for examples of such pedagogical sequences the following activities: "Water, water everywhere", "A matter of scale", "Point-line-shape-puppet" and "World on fire". In the process of learning and practising our MIMESIS activities, you will discover how they can be combined and interacted in each of the stages. Feel free to develop further, improvise, invent and create new ones!



Before the performance take time to you check all costumes and props. Make a sound check and lighting, if you use those. Children are in a heightened emotional state, so it is appropriate to do something together before the start, for example their favourite game or a group ritual if you have created one in the process. Complications may arise during the performance. Keep calm and improvise. After the performance is over, it is important to take time to share with the children. Make sure you gave positive feedback to each of the participants.

STEP 4 - THE PERFORMANCE



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Tips - The three Stages of Step 3

WARM UP STAGE

At this stage prepare the children for what is to come. Choose those activities and games that help create context, warm up bodies, imaginations, emotions and creativity. You can use some of those suggested in the script, and you can include additional ones. Examples:

- For developing body qualities and expressiveness - "Body sculptures" from ACT2 of "Water water everywhere" Activity
- For building better spatial orientation, flexibility, focus and rhythmical sense - ACT1 "Point-line" from "Point-line-shape-puppet"Activity
- For developing imagination and associative thinking - ACT1 "Brainstorming" from "World in fire" Activity and ACT 4 "Geometrical puppets" from "Point - line - shape - puppet"Activity



REHEARSAL STAGE

Going through the rehearsal stage is necessary if you plan to end up with a finished theatrical performance in front of an audience.

In this stage the whole performance is arranged scene by scene. Take time to build transitions between scenes. Together with the children, make costumes, decor elements and props if necessary.

Choose an appropriate sound environment and music. Very often, music serves as a great transition between scenes. It would be great if the school has a theatre hall and a stage where you can do the final rehearsals.

At this stage, children may feel bored. Alternate the rehearsals with their favourite games. At the end of the rehearsals, take time for relaxation or a pleasant group experience. You can use the storytelling from ACT 1 "In the beginning there was nothing" from "The secret life of the plankton" activity as inspiration.



BUILDING STAGE

This is the stage where you and the students build the content and means of expression of the performance. Perform the activities suggested in the scenario, add, experiment and develop further. Based on the script outline, together with the children, you develop the scenes, actions, setting and dialogues.

You can use activities like "Scientific Improvisation" for inspiration to create improvisational situations and build scenes from the play.

You can use the instructions given in "Point-line-shape-puppet" and "Water water everywhere" to involve children in creating short stories and building interesting characters.

At this stage you also choose the theatrical means. Want to try some of the scenes using the Mask Theatre, Pantomime or Dance Theatre? Or will some of the characters be recreated with the means of the Puppet Theater?

The proposed script is just an example, stay open, in the process something completely new and unique in its nature could emerge.