

# Henry's Magic Hat

Grade Level: K-2<sup>nd</sup>

Essential Question: *What makes a story?*

## NATIONAL STANDARDS

### National Core Art Standards: Grade 1

Similar standards for other grades can be found at <https://www.nationalartsstandards.org/>.

- **TH:Cr.1.1.1a.** Propose potential choices characters could make in a guided drama experience.
- **TH:Pr.4.1.1b.** Use body, face, gestures, and voice to communicate character traits and emotions in a guided drama experience.
- **TH:Re8.1.1b.** Identify causes of character actions in a guided drama experience.

### Common Core Standards: Grade 1

Similar standards for other grades can be found at <http://www.corestandards.org/>.

- **RL.1.3.** Describe characters, settings, and major events in a story, using key details.
- **SL.1.3.** Ask and answer questions about key details in a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.

## LESSON OBJECTIVES

### Drama

- Identify characters, problems, and solutions in dramatic stories
- Demonstrate listening and following directions
- Define and demonstrate transformation

### Language Arts

- Identify characters, problems, and solutions in a story
- Make predictions



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## PREREQUISITES

- Drama tools
- Imagination
- Concentration

## MATERIALS

- Tambourine or other signaling device
- “[Henry's Magic Hat](#)” by Karen L. Erickson (found at the end of the lesson or in the [Stories](#) section of [OneStopDRAMAShop.com](#))
- Optional: *The Magic Hat* by Mem Fox

## VOCABULARY

- Story
- Problem
- Characters
- Transformation: to change into a character in a story

## LESSON DIGEST

1. Bring students to the drama circle. Review past learning and lead the tambourine warm up.
2. Ask the essential question: What makes a story?
3. Define transformation and explain the activity process.
4. Tell “Henry’s Magic Hat” as students act it out. Pause throughout the telling for student suggestions and predictions.
5. Retell the story.
6. Optional: Read *The Magic Hat* by Mem Fox.
7. Lead the Debrief and Learn.

**Space:** Open for movement

**Time:** 40-50 minutes

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## Your Personal NOTES

## FULL LESSON

## Hints and STRATEGIES

### STARTERS

- ♣ Students come to the drama circle. Review the drama tools along with the skills of imagination and concentration.
- ♣ Say steps a through c one at a time and have students repeat the steps.
  - a. "We all stand up and wiggle (or jump, turn, etc.) around" [*move the body*]
  - b. "We freeze when we hear this sound" [*hit tambourine 1x*]
  - c. "Two beats and we all sit down" [*hit tambourine 2x*]
- ♣ Repeat several times, changing the action (dance, turn, etc.), and ending with the students seated in the circle.
- ♣ Explain that drama is not just about listening to a story, but acting it out too. Explain that listening and following directions are necessary for drama.
- ♣ Ask the essential question: "What makes a story?" Ask if the students will help you make a story today.

***Be sure the students are following directions here before moving on.***

### ACTIVITIES GUIDE

1. Tell the students that to act out a story we need characters. Actors become or change into those characters and that is called transformation. Can anyone think of anything in nature that transforms? Actors transform into characters in a story, and those characters usually have a problem.
2. Explain that you are going to tell a story that has missing pieces and that you will need their help in completing the story. They must listen carefully for the places where you need ideas and follow these "rules:"
  - a. Explain that they should not raise their hands to give ideas. They should say their idea out loud so you can hear it.
  - b. Ask them not to shout their idea repeatedly or you won't use that idea.
  - c. Explain they can have more than one idea.
  - d. Show them a hand signal that will indicate you are ready to go on with the story and they should stop giving ideas.
  - e. Have them practice making sound and stopping immediately on the hand signal – do this until the entire class is quiet upon seeing the signal.

***Use a sound or hand signal here.***

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3. Ask the students if they will act the story with you, transforming into Henry as you tell it. (Have students raise their hands in response to your request.)
4. Tell the story “Henry’s Magic Hat.” Students enact the story in the circle as you tell it. Be prepared to use the tambourine to freeze them as they participate, if necessary.
5. Pause the storytelling throughout, where indicated, to ask the students for their suggestions. When students give a suggestion for the character they have become in the story, add an action that also has an imaginary object with which that character is interacting. Here are some examples:
  - a. Cat: playing with a ball of yarn
  - b. Monkey: eating a banana
  - c. Bird: building a nest
  - d. Dinosaur: eating leaves off a tree
6. Pause again where indicated to ask if Henry should put the hat on – why or why not? Ask if they think he will – why or why not? Explain that they were just making predictions. Ask, “What do you think ‘predictions’ means?”
7. Tell the story again as the students act it out. Put in their suggestions or use the cat, monkey, and bird. Hit the tambourine once to stop the students, and twice to have them sit when you are ready to move to the next part of the story. Finish the story.
8. Optional extension: Read the book *The Magic Hat* by Mem Fox. Students compare and contrast the two stories.

## **DEBRIEF AND LEARN**

- ♣ Ask the essential question: What makes a story?
- ♣ Stories have characters, settings, and problems. Who was a character? Where was the setting? What was the problem, and how did Henry solve it?
- ♣ How did listening help you to act the story?
- ♣ How did imagination and concentration assist in acting out the story? Which was hardest and which was the easiest?
- ♣ How did we use the actor tools of mind, body, and voice today?

## **ASSESSING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT**

- ♣ Download assessment tools for “Henry’s Magic Hat” on our website, [OneStopDRAMAShop.com](http://OneStopDRAMAShop.com).

***Here are some helpful notes for implementing the story:***

- a. ***Students might be hesitant to jump in right away. Sometimes they enter in the story as Henry chases the hat.***
- b. ***If not, you should enact this part of the story, as this will demonstrate how we enact story.***
- c. ***When Henry sits down, sit and ask all the actors if they can sit like you. This gives the still shy students permission to enter the story if they have not done so already.***
- d. ***When the hat lands in Henry’s lap, ask them if they have the hat. Ask them if they can show it to you. Describe the hat at this point. As you lift your hat to show them, they will usually lift theirs as well.***
- e. ***Allow each child to enter the story when they are ready.***

***If you are a bit hesitant taking student suggestions on your first time telling the story, use the suggestions listed on the left to complete the story. They are characters and actions the students enjoy.***

## **Henry's Magic Hat**

By Karen L. Erickson

Henry was walking home when he saw a very strange hat blowing down the street. It was green with red and yellow feathers and sparkles shimmering all over. He did not know it was a magic hat, he only knew it was beautiful and he wanted it. He gave chase to the hat. It blew high over his head sometimes. He jumped as he ran, trying to reach it. It blew along the ground sometimes and tumbled over and over just out of reach in front of him. Try as he might, running as hard as he could, he was not able to catch the hat.

When he was completely out of breath from running, he sat down to watch the hat blow away. But the hat did not blow away. It swirled high up into the air, did two somersaults, and came floating slowly down to rest in his lap.

Henry looked around to see if anyone was in sight that might have lost the hat. There was no one. Carefully, he picked the hat up and studied it. It was soft and the feathers tickled his nose. He found a note pinned to the top of the hat saying, "Warning: Do Not Wear!"

***Stop the story. Ask students: "What should Henry do? Should he put the hat on his head and wear it? What do you think Henry will do?"***

Henry decided to try on the hat in spite of the warning. He stood up and held it for a long time above his head, took a deep breath, and then slowly lowered it into place. When he put it on, his muscles began to twitch, his knees began to shake, his face became contorted, and he transformed into a **cat** (or take student suggestions). He began **playing with a ball of yarn** (or take student suggestions about what the person, animal, or object was doing). When he realized he wasn't himself, he grabbed at the hat with his paws to pull it off. But it wouldn't come off. He pulled and pulled and with one great final tug the hat popped off. He instantly turned back into himself.

"Wow," thought Henry, "This is a great hat! But what would have happened if I couldn't get it off? I wonder if I put the hat on again, if I would turn into a **cat** (same idea from above) again?" said Henry. "But I am afraid it might not come off and I would be stuck as a **cat** for the rest of my life."

***Stop the story. Ask students: "What should Henry do?" Then ask, "What do you think Henry will do?"***

But Henry felt brave, so he put the hat on again. His muscles began to twitch, his knees began to shake, his face became contorted, and this time Henry transformed into a **monkey** (use a new idea) **eating a banana** (add an action or activity here that matches the idea). This time, Henry had to work harder to get the hat off of his head. He tugged and tugged until it POPPED off.

Once Henry was safe, he laughed and said, "I wasn't scared at all. Just to prove it, I'll try it again. I wonder what I will turn into this time."

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Henry put on the hat and again his muscles began to twitch, his knees began to shake, his face became contorted as he transformed into a **bird** (add a third idea) **building a nest** (insert an action or activity with object that matches the idea). When he started to tug on the hat, Henry had an even harder time getting the hat off. He pulled and he pulled and he pulled and he pulled until finally, “POP!” the hat came off. Each time it seemed that the hat was harder and harder to remove.

The hat was getting scary. Henry thought he had better stop and wondered, “What shall I do with this hat?”

**Stop and ask the students what should be done about the hat. Take suggestions. Use their suggestion and the story comes to an end. If they don't have an ending, you may use the following:**

Carefully Henry wrapped the hat in soft tissue paper and buried it away in a dark corner of his playroom, in a place where only he would know where it was hidden. He hid it so well, that even he couldn't find it the very next day

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## Teaching In Role

Working “in role” means that the leader takes an active part in the story and guides the drama from inside. An “active role” is defined as establishing one or more characters. This does not usually include being a narrator, but in some cases, when the narrator is a character relating or commenting on the story, it does. By working in role leaders can:

### Model behavior

By working “in role”, leaders demonstrate some important performance skills, such as concentration, maintaining the mood of the story, sustaining a character voice or physical quality, imitating emotions, and/or replicating character actions and activity. Students are influenced by the leader's modeling and reflect the qualities the leader exhibits.

### Present challenges and conflicts

When working with story, the leader can work in role to present challenges and conflicts. These events are usually dictated by the story themselves and can happen in one of two ways. Usually they happen in a drama where the students are **unfamiliar** with the story. The leader uses one of the characters in the story to guide the dramatic play. For instance, in the “Elves and the Shoemaker”, the leader might play the role of the Shoemaker and discover that he is without means to pay for food. The children, as elves, must find a way to help him. These events sometimes happen in a story that is **familiar** to the students when the leader adds a new scene, a back story, or an inferred event. This takes some careful planning to introduce the new scene to the students. For instance, in the “Elves and the Shoemaker” the leader might suggest they create a scene showing how the elves know the Shoemaker or a scene showing the kindness of the Shoemaker.

### Work more closely with shy students

Leaders in role can shadow or partner with shy students who are reluctant to get fully involved.

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## Offer praise and encouragement

Leaders can praise the students' work or encourage them from the vantage point of their character or the narrator. The leader might say something like: "You are so good and kind, I must help you." "Is everyone from your village as giving as you all are?" "I know you all really care about the dwarf and have shown him great kindness, but he is in trouble again... what do we do now?" "I can see that you are all adults and that you have come to help others." "It is so good to see everyone on task; we might just finish our work before the town is wiped out in the flood waters." "The farmer group is working so hard, I think they might just save the rest of us."

## Question actions, decisions, ideas, etc.

In role, the leader can question why a certain behavior has been selected. For example, the leader can ask why he/she is being laughed at if students begin to break character and laugh at the leader's characterization. The leader might take the role of a reporter who questions the characters on their behavior, choices, or predictions about what they will be doing as the story unfolds. The leader has an opportunity to get students to think more deeply about choices, actions, and consequences.

## Other tips for working in role:

- Change your voice or transform your body to define your character (especially if you are playing more than one character in the story).
- Use a hat, scarf, prop, or other item to indicate when you are "in role." Remove the item when you are "out of role."
- For a published story, practice the story in advance so you know the major moments and sequence of the story. Sometimes key lines influence the meaning of the story. You should honor those lines to maintain the integrity of the message or theme. Work until you feel comfortable putting down the book and guiding the story while you play a character. The story does not have to be told exactly as it is written. Keep in mind what you want to teach with the story. For instance, if teaching setting details is the focus of the lesson, you will want to remember each setting and their descriptive details. If it is sequencing, you will want to be comfortable with the order of the story.
- Add side coaching or ask questions to guide students or groups that might be struggling.
- Add praise to highlight students or groups that are meeting standards or levels of a given rubric. Be specific with your praise.
- Model the focus (concentration) and energy you want from the students.

# Supplemental Teaching Strategies & Background on the Erickson Drama Learning Program

## MAGIC GUIDING WORDS AND PHRASES

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There are some key phrases that, over the years, have helped me guide and manage my classes with ease. Take time to try these and incorporate them into your teaching. I hope they will work as well for you as they do for me. More management tips can be found under our [RESOURCE](#) section.

### **Begin now.**

*This clues students to initiate simultaneous play, start their planning, begin an assessment task, etc.*

### **There.**

*This word clues an ending to an action or event. You might also phrase it, “There. We’ve done it!”*

### **I have a problem...**

*This phrase clues actors in on the need to help solve a class problem.*

### **Who forgot and \_\_\_\_\_ed a little?**

*This question honors students “knowing” but recognizes that sometimes we forget, while “little” provides an opportunity for them to admit to something without feeling overwhelmed by incompetence.*

### **I don’t know how you are going to do this but I know you’ll think of something.**

*This clues the students not to ask you for ideas on how to solve the problem while challenging them to stretch their imaginations. It also indicates you honor their imaginations. You are treating them as artists.*

### **Stretch your imagination.**

*Use this when students are bogged down in stereotyped characters, plot ideas, actions, or choices.*

### **How can you imitate that without really doing it?**

*Use this for safety issues when you don’t want students on top of each other, on furniture, or making other unsafe physical choices*

### **Make it believable. Do it for real.**

*Either or both of these phrases work when students are exaggerating or being silly in a moment that does not match the intended mood of the work. Use it especially when working toward honest emotions.*

### **Lights up. Lights out. Curtain.**

*Use any combination to begin and/or end a scene or story.*

### **What do you think I really liked today about our drama class? What do you think I will say our class needs to improve? Why?**

*I use these questions to elicit deeper reflection and more honest responses from the students. This moves them out of the emotional and into higher order evaluation of their work. Note: I never share with them my thoughts. I only thank them for their ideas.*

### **I’m going to give you the grown-up, professional actor way.**

*I use this statement before modeling a way to improve an acting skill. It excites students to commit to improving a particular action or skill while students might meet value terms like “right way” and “wrong way” with resistance.*

### **How many people agree to that? (the contract)**

*I use this question to elicit agreement from ALL students on particular “rule” or solution to a problem. When the question is asked, I wait for all hands to go up and inquire with students who have not “signed” onto the contract. This technique is a powerful way to commit the whole group to a new behavior, rule, solution, etc.; but all students must agree in order for it to be effective.*

## AN OVERVIEW OF THE FOUR LEARNING LEVELS

The Erickson Drama/Learning Program is organized by four distinct and progressive levels. Each level builds upon the previous becoming more complex and enriching. All of the levels can occur yearly (as you will uncover later, they are often combined), but participants should master one before moving to the next. Likewise, it is useful for the drama leader to become comfortable with the strategies and techniques of teaching each drama level progressively. With this in mind, the opening chapters of this book have been organized by drama level. You will be guided through the delivery, management, and planning strategies for Level I, followed by Level II and so forth. But here is some general information about each of the four levels to get you started.

**Drama = characters in  
action with a  
problem/conflict to  
resolve**

### LEVEL I: Foundations for Drama

At this level, students are prepared for drama through skill building activities. The activities allow students to practice using the three tools (body, mind, voice) and five skills (concentration, imitation, imagination, transformation, collaboration) before using them to create a dramatized story.

### LEVEL II: Drama as Art

Level II is the study of dramatic story as an art form. This level is sometimes referred to as “story drama” because story is the basis of the art form. Students learn the structure and formal elements of dramatic story which are identical to the elements when studying literature. Students also learn the skills of planning, practicing, and presenting.

### LEVEL III: Life Drama

Life Drama entails the creation of dramas from personal background, human experiences of others, or universal human themes. Life Dramas are most often played out as extended improvisations guided by the drama leader. As such, students do not know what will come next in the drama. Level III is *never* for product or presentation. If so, it becomes Level II. Once Level III is introduced, you can move onto Level IV at any time.

### LEVEL IV: Point of View Drama

Level IV drama combines the first three levels into fast paced teacher and student directed activities. Students explore a concept or idea from different points of view, switching roles and vantage points often throughout the work. To make this work, students - as well as the leader - should be able to shift between each level seamlessly.

## THE ERICKSON DRAMA LEARNING CURRICULUM

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### The Objectives

The objectives in the Erickson Drama Learning Program can essentially be sorted into three categories:

1. Self-management (intrapersonal) objectives
2. Collaborative (interpersonal) objectives
3. Discipline-based art objectives, which include:
  - Elements of drama (e.g., story elements, emotional and sensory qualities)
  - Processes of drama (e.g., playwriting, acting, etc.)
  - Connections to other art forms
  - Connections to other academics
  - Aesthetics
  - Critical analysis
  - Creative thinking
  - Cultural and societal connections
  - Careers

These three categories are interdependent, but much is gained from teaching them specifically and in a sequence that builds understanding and competence.

### Alignment with National Standards

The lesson objectives are aligned with the United States National Core Standards. Many states and nations have other standards. You are encouraged to look at your state's or nation's drama standards and see what you might need to add so that all standards are covered adequately.

### Lesson at a Glance

For each lesson, I have created a "Lesson at a Glance" that provides a quick reference for teaching the lesson, once you know it well. This page also provides the list of objectives addressed in the lesson along with any materials, resources, or special set-up requirements.

### Exploratory and Essential Questions

The main lesson is written with as much detail as possible for ease of implementation. Each lesson has a sample exploratory or essential question that drives the instruction. What is the difference? An exploratory question is something that has a definitive answer and will not take years of study to understand it or uncover all of the meanings. An essential question is connected to more enduring understandings and will, perhaps, take years to uncover and understand entirely.

## Tips and Strategies

Throughout, you will find side bar notes that refer you to implementation tips and strategies. These are taken directly from my own experience delivering these lessons. I also encourage you to take your own notes so that you can refine your teaching methods whenever you revisit a favorite lesson.

## Student-Centered Approach

In my work and in these lessons, I am always moving students through a gradual release process, from me modeling or guiding the drama to them independently creating stories. I have tried to make this distinction in the lesson steps. When the teacher is in the lead, the lesson step begins with a verb (e.g., model, explain, lead, have students). When students are in the lead or working independently, the lesson step describes their work (e.g., students brainstorm, groups plan and practice).

## Teaming and Copyright

I hope that you will have a team of teachers in your school collaborate and support each other through the process of teaching drama. As you work and share, I ask that you protect the copyright on these materials by not reproducing them without permission. Thank you in advance for that courtesy.