

SESSION 9: CHARACTER

USE THIS LESSON TO: develop specific characters and hone acting skills.

🕒 45 minutes

OBJECTIVES: Students will...

- 🔪 Use acting tools (voice, body, imagination) to develop and understand character.
- 🔪 Explore the physicalization of animal characters.
- 🔪 Use improvisation as a tool for developing characters.
- 🔪 Explore how relationships impact character work.

ADDITIONAL MATERIALS:

- 🔪 Paper and pencils (for Pride C)
- 🔪 Tape or safety pins

PREPARATION:

- 🔪 Print and cut out Character Nametags.
- 🔪 Print African Animal Images (for Pride A).

PROVIDED MATERIALS:

- 🔪 Character Nametags
- 🔪 African Animal Images (for Pride A)

OPENING RITUAL: 🕒 5 minutes

- Gather students in a large standing circle.
- Distribute djembe drums to this session's Pride Leaders.
- Focus the class and ask students to facilitate their physical and vocal warm-ups, followed by the drum circle activity using the established call-and-response format.

VIDEO: 🕒 5 minutes

- Play video: 9 Character.
- The video will introduce the tools actors use to create strong characters. Additionally, the video will focus on character relationships and will explore the character development process, including the use of improvisation and movement.

GROUP ACTIVITY:

Relationship Spectrum

🕒 15 minutes

- Distribute a Character Nametag to each student. Have students tape or safety pin the nametag to a visible place on their shirt.

TEACHER TIP: When distributing the Character Nametags, be sure that each Pride has a variety of characters in its group.

- Ask students to find others who have the same Character Nametag. Ensure that there are nine groups of students and that each group represents one character from *The Lion King JR.*
- Gather all of the Scars in the center of the room. Ask the rest of your students to stand in the room according to their relationship with Scar at the beginning of the story. For example, Simba might stand near Scar at the beginning of the musical before the young cub realizes what his uncle is capable of.
- Once students have found their spots, have everyone freeze and look around. Engage your class in a dialogue about relationship.
- Repeat this exercise using a moment from the middle of the play, after Scar has taken over the Pridelands and Simba has escaped to the jungle.
- Repeat again with a moment from the end of the play, when Simba has claimed the throne.
- As time allows, repeat the whole exercise highlighting different characters in the center of the room. How do the various characters feel about Simba? Zazu?
- Facilitate a brief discussion with your class. Which relationships remain the same over the course of the story? Which change the most?

PRIDE WORK: **Developing Character** ⌚ 10 minutes

- Divide your students into their Prides and distribute a Challenge Sheet to this session's Pride Leaders.
- Distribute the African Animal Images to Pride A and paper and pencils to Pride C.
- Prompt the Pride Leaders to read the Challenge Sheet aloud to their Prides.



Character Movement

Using the African Animal Images in stride, Pride A will observe and experiment with the movement of its characters from one side of the space to the other.



Character Improvisation

Pride B will improvise a question and answer session in role as their assigned characters.



Character Perceptions

Pride C will explore character traits and relationship by documenting ideas on their relationship to others in the story.

SHARE: ⌚ 5 minutes

- Invite each Pride to come together to share their experiences. Challenge students to explain why they made the choices they did during their exercises.

REFLECTION: ⌚ 5 minutes

Use these prompts to facilitate a discussion with your class:

- What is something you learned about your character that you didn't know before?
- Which of the three methods of character development do you like best? Why?
- How can this work enrich your performance?

PRIDE JOURNAL 9:

Invite your students to complete a journal entry in response to this prompt:

- Which character in *The Lion King JR.* is most like you? Write about your similarities and differences.