

Introduction to Acting with a Dialect

Summary

Using a PowerPoint presentation, the teacher will introduce students to the dialects they may study in depth through the following lessons. Students will learn and use some necessary phonetic symbols to switch into various dialects. I chose to create an introductory lesson to a unit on dialects so that students could experience a little of each dialect and then determine which dialect they wanted to study further and become "expert" at. The PowerPoint presentation is critical to making this lesson smooth and is very helpful in organizing the content.

Time Frame

2 class periods of 90 minutes each

Group Size

Large Groups

Life Skills

Thinking & Reasoning, Communication

Materials

PowerPoint Presentation, "Introduction to Dialects." Introduction to Dialects Worksheet and Note-taking Outline.

Background for Teachers

The teacher must have an in-depth understanding of the International Phonetic Alphabet and how it can be used to train actors in Dialects.

Student Prior Knowledge

Students should have fundamental familiarity the International Phonetic Alphabet as well as the basics of voice and speech. It would be helpful to review the IPA symbols in class a day or two before this lesson.

Intended Learning Outcomes

Students will dissect the basic phonetic changes associated with various dialects verbally and in writing with 100% accuracy after receiving corrective feedback.

Students will demonstrate the fundamental techniques, including "tricks" and "transcriptions," for creating popular English dialects verbally and in writing with accuracy in either "trick" or "transcription."

Students will evaluate which dialect would be most appropriate to add to their actor profile.

Instructional Procedures

-The teacher shows slides 1 and 2 with the class telling them that today they are going to play with Dialects to see what the differences in Dialects are and how to manipulate each Dialect. The teacher asks the students what they think all the Dialects on slide 2 have in common and how can that characteristic help students figure out the definition of a Dialect. All the Dialects are variations of English pronunciation made by native English speakers. This differs from an Accent because an Accent is the pronunciation differences made when a speaker of another language speaks English as

an additional language.

-The teacher reviews slide 3 with the class, leading the class in pronouncing each sound in Standard American and its keyword, one at a time, aloud. Then pronouncing the word with the sound change to create the British Dialect. The students must copy these rules onto their worksheets. The teacher gives them time to find a key word for each rule and create a sentence using each of those key words. A key word is one in which the pronunciation changes according to the rules of the dialect.

-On slide 4 the teacher models how to identify the phonetic symbols used in the rules and how to change the vowel symbols for all of Steed's lines. The students volunteer vowel changes for Emma's lines as a class. The students write their transcriptions on the worksheet. The class recites the lines aloud with the Dialect changes. The teacher uses slides 5 and 6 to help students check their work. Once finished, the teacher pushes the movie button and students listen to the dialect to self-evaluate their Dialect performance. After the movie clip is played students write one sentence about that Dialect on their worksheet. The sentence can describe the actor's performance of the dialect in comparison with the rules, the student's level of comfort and ability with the dialect, or any outstanding feature of the dialect the student noticed from the video but was not included in the rules.

-The teacher reviews slide 7 with the class, leading the class in pronouncing each symbol, within a word, one at a time, and aloud. Then the students record the rules, write their own key words and sentence. The teacher invites the students to share some of their sentences using the Dialect.

-On slide 8, the teacher breaks the students into groups of four or five to transcribe the Standard American symbols and the dialect changes on their worksheets. Then the teacher presents slides 9 and 10 to help students check their work. Once finished, the teacher pushes the movie button and students listen to the dialect to self-evaluate their work. After the movie clip is played, students write one sentence about that dialect on their worksheet.

-The teacher reviews slide 11 with the class, leading the class in pronouncing each symbol, within a word, one at a time, and aloud. Then students record the rules, and write their own key words and sentence. The teacher invites the students to demonstrate the Irish dialect using their original sentences.

-On slide 12, the teacher breaks the students into pairs to transcribe the Standard American symbols and the dialect changes on their worksheets. Then the teacher presents slides 13 and 14 to help students check their work. Once finished, the teacher pushes the movie button and students listen to the dialect from "Far and Away" to self-evaluate their work. After the movie clip is played, students write one sentence about that dialect on their worksheet.

-The teacher reviews slide 15 with the students in the same manner as slide 11, 7 and 3.

-On slide 16, the teacher follows the steps described for slide 12. When the students have transcribed the dialect on their worksheets in pairs, the teachers displays slides 17 and 18 for assessment, and then plays the video clip. Again, the students write a sentence, this time about the Scottish dialect.

-The teacher reviews slide 19, letting a few adept students lead the class in the rule changes, following the basic manner as slides 15, 11, 7, and 3.

-On slide 20, the students transcribe the Standard American symbols and the Australian dialect changes individually.

-The teacher then displays slides 21 and 22 so students may check their work. The video clip is played so students may self-evaluate their production and write a sentence about the Aussie dialect on their worksheets.

-The same pattern is followed for slides 23 through 26, with students working individually and checking back with the class and the teacher.

-The class reviews changes for the New York dialect as shown on slide 27. Various students offer words to practice the pronunciation changes and share their created sentences. Make sure to practice multiple student sentences as a class using the "chewing trick" mentioned on the slide.

-On slide 28, the students practice the dialogue, in unison using the trick. Listen to dialect as

presented on the video-clip. Students assess their ability to create a dialect accurately without the transcription rules through a class discussion. Weigh the pros and cons of using tricks and/or transcription rules in creating a dialect as a class. Students compile their thoughts into two sentences on their worksheets.

-The teacher uses slide 29 to review the steps for the "Dialect Project." The Dialect Scene Rubric is passed out and reviewed so students know what is expected of them in the Dialect scene. The teacher answers any questions about the assignment, and any remaining time is devoted to helping students pick a dialect, a scene and a partner. The teacher reminds students that their acting profile consists of what they look like and what acting skills they are good at. Explain that a long-haired-red-head would naturally want to learn the Irish Dialect because she would likely be cast as an Irish person. A student who is more interested in performing romantic roles rather than character roles should pick a dialect that lends itself to subtlety. All students would do well to become proficient in the Standard British Dialect.

Strategies for Diverse Learners

ESL students should be paired with native speakers. They can be given extra time to phonetically transcribe their native accents into standard American and then onto the new dialects. It would also be interesting for the ESL student to say some short simple sentences in English, and have the class infer the phonetic rules to create that accent.

Extensions

Students will pick a scene in which a character employs one of the dialects studied in the lesson. Students transcribe the phonetic changes for the dialect and prepare to present the scene in front of the class. Students reflect upon their presentations and experiences with using a dialect in a scene.

Assessment Plan

Students will continually be informally assessed throughout the lesson by the teacher, peers and through self-check analysis. After a trial with each dialect student fill out that assessment portion of the worksheet.

Rubrics

[Dialect Scene](#)

Bibliography

"Uncle Frank's Accents for the Actor," and Sarah Shippobatham (University of Utah Dialect Coach).

Authors

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