

STUDY GUIDE

DISCIPLINE:
LITERARY ARTS

ARTIST:
AMANDA WEST LEWIS

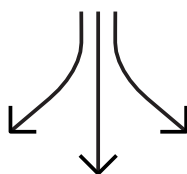


The following package is provided as a supplemental resource to enhance and support the artist’s visit.

It includes curricular connections, assessment strategies, and suggested classroom extensions. All materials are intended for use at the teacher’s discretion and may be adapted as necessary to suit the specific needs of the students.

THIS STUDY GUIDE

Discipline / Artist Example:



**Curriculum
Connections**



Suggested Classroom Extensions



**Assessment
Strategies**

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STUDY GUIDE: LITERARY ARTS

THE MAGIC 'IF': COMBINING WRITING AND ACTING

Program Overview

Artist Name: Amanda West Lewis

Artist Bio: Amanda West Lewis is a writer, theatre artist, and calligrapher. Author of ten books, including “A Planet is a Poem” and “These Are Not the Words”, her work explores activism, history, and the arts. She founded the Ottawa Children’s Theatre, holds an MFA in Writing for Children, and teaches writing, drama, and calligraphy to youth and adults.

Program Description: We learn a lot about a character by what they don’t say. This unique, interactive workshop combines theatre and writing skills. Drawing on improvisation and drama games, we’ll explore character motivation, points of view and dialogue as we discover the hidden meaning beyond the words.

Artistic Discipline: Literary Arts, Drama

Recommended Grade Levels: 5 – 12

Session Logistics: In person or online

Vocab bank/glossary: [Click here](#)



THE MAGIC 'IF': COMBINING WRITING AND ACTING

Curriculum Connections

Learning Themes:

- Strand A – Creating and Presenting/Performing
 - Apply the creative process to dramatic play and process drama, using the elements and conventions of drama to communicate feelings, ideas, and stories. (Grades 5-8)
 - Use the creative process and a variety of sources and forms, both individually and collaboratively, to design and develop drama works. (Grades 9-12)
- Strand B – Reflecting, Responding and Analysing
 - Apply the critical analysis process to communicate feelings, ideas, and understandings in response to a variety of drama works and experiences. (Grades 5-8)
 - Use the critical analysis process to reflect on and evaluate their own and others' drama works and activities. (Grades 9-12)

THE MAGIC 'IF': COMBINING WRITING AND ACTING

Extend the Learning (Discussion Prompts)

Here are optional discussion prompts to extend the artist session in the classroom. These are recommended and are not mandatory. Please use what is best for your classroom. You can also find suggested activities in the additional resources package.

GRADES
5-6

Pre

- What makes a character feel real or believable?
- Why do you think silence or body language can be as powerful as words?

During

- What does your character really want, but might not say?
- How are you showing emotions without telling them?

Post

- What did you discover about your character by acting them out?
- Would your character's story change depending on who tells it?

GRADES
7-8

Pre

- What's the difference between what a character says and what they feel?
- How can improvisation help you write better dialogue?

During

- How does your character's tone or pacing reveal their personality?
- What conflicts are hidden beneath your character's words?

Post

- How did combining acting and writing deepen your understanding of your character?
- How did it feel to "find" your character through movement or speech?

GRADES
9-12

Pre

- What are some tools actors and writers use to show character depth?
- How do internal motivations shape what a character reveals or withholds?

During

- What emotional truths are you uncovering about your character through improvisation?
- How do tone, silence, and gesture shift the meaning of your lines?
- What role does power, vulnerability, or bias play in how your character communicates?

Post

- What did this process teach you about layering emotion and intention in writing?
- How might this character exist in a larger story or scene?
- How can you use these techniques in scripts, fictions, or monologues?

LITERARY ARTS OVERVIEW

Literary Arts education consists of storytelling, poetry, and creative writing and is foundational to developing literate, reflective, and critically engaged members of society. By engaging with diverse stories, students gain insight into complex perspectives and histories, fostering inclusion and emotional resilience. Writing and sharing stories also supports mental health and builds a sense of community and belonging.

The creative and critical analysis process guide students in imagining, crafting, and reflecting on literary work. These frameworks align with MASC's core values and, when paired with artist-led sessions, empower students to become thoughtful creators and engaged learners.

Literary arts naturally support cross-curricular learning. In social studies, students explore historical context through narrative; in science they use writing to explain concepts. These interdisciplinary links help students see knowledge as interconnected and relevant to real-world applications.



APPENDIX

Vocabulary bank/glossary:

- **Character Motivation:** The reason a character acts, feels, or speaks a certain way.
- **Point a View:** The perspective from which a story or character is told.
- **Subtext:** The thoughts and feelings beneath what a character says or does.
- **Dialogue:** A conversation between characters in writing or drama.
- **Improvisation:** Performing or writing without a script—spontaneous and creative.
- **Gesture:** Movements of the body that express meaning or emotion.
- **Tone:** The way something is said that shows a feeling (e.g., angry, nervous).
- **Conflict:** The struggle between opposing forces that drives a character's actions.
- **Monologue:** A long speech by one character that shows their thoughts or feelings.

Student Health and Well-Being

How did today's activity make you feel (body and mind)?

- Choose a colour to describe that feeling. Use one word to describe how your energy changed after the activity.

Mini-Activity: Feelings Freeze Frame (Tableau)

- Ask students to create a freeze-frame (tableau) that shows how they're feeling right after the activity.
- Then, they can:
 - Share it with a partner or small group
 - Draw their freeze-frame in a journal
 - Write or talk about what made them feel that way

Additional Resources

- Assessment Guide
- Cultural Protocol/Sensitivity Guide
- Evaluation Document
- Resource Database for Further Learning