

STUDY GUIDE

DISCIPLINE:
DRAMA

ARTIST:
ALAN SHAIN

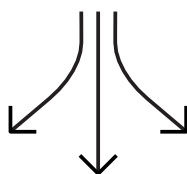


The following package is provided as a supplemental resource to enhance and support the artist’s visit.

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: DRAMA

FIRST DAY IN THE SCHOOLYARD

Program Overview

Artist Name: Alan Shain

Artist Bio: Alan Shain is a multidisciplinary artist working in theatre, dance, storytelling, and stand-up comedy. His work blends humour and honesty, drawing from lived experience to inspire change. He has toured his play Still Waiting for That Special Bus internationally since 1999 and was the only Canadian artist invited to the 2000 Paralympic Arts Festival in Sydney.

Program Description: Through a blending of stand-up comedy and storytelling, Alan poignantly tells about going to a new school. How do you blend in with a 500-pound wheelchair? These stories stretch across themes of acceptance, self-acceptance and standing up for others.

Artistic Discipline: Theatre, Drama

Recommended Grade Levels: 4 – 8

Session Logistics: In person or online

Cultural Context: Disability Awareness

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



FIRST DAY IN THE SCHOOLYARD

Curriculum Connections

Learning Themes:

- Strand A – Creating and Presenting
 - Use drama to explore real-life situations, communicate ideas (e.g., inclusion, identity), and express feelings.
- Strand B – Reflecting, Responding and Analysing
 - Reflect on and respond to performances, considering the impact of choices made by artists.
- Strand C – Exploring Forms and Cultural Contexts
 - Demonstrate an understanding of drama forms and how they reflect different perspectives and can be used to explore societal issues (e.g., accessibility, belonging).

FIRST DAY IN THE SCHOOLYARD

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
4-6

Pre

- What does it mean to accept someone for who they are?
- What makes people different from each other?
- How do you feel when you're the new person at school?

During

- How do you think Alan feels during different parts of the story?
- What's something surprising or new you learned while listening?

Post

- What do you think it means to accept yourself just the way you are?
- How could you stand up for someone being treated unfairly at school or online?
- Why do you think Alen uses humour to tell his story?

GRADES
7-8

Pre

- What does 'belonging' mean to you? Have you ever felt like you didn't belong?
- What are some ways people are treated differently based on how they look or move?
- What do you think 'self-acceptance' means, and why is it sometimes hard?

During

- How does Alan shift between humour and serious moments? What effect does that have?
- What stereotypes or assumptions is Alan challenging through his story?

Post

- How did this performance change or add to your understanding of disability?
- What does it mean to advocate for others? Have you ever done that or seen someone do it?
- How might you use creativity and humour to speak about things that matter to you?

DRAMA OVERVIEW

Drama is an art form that reflects and shapes culture while promoting equity, diversity, inclusion, and reconciliation. Through storytelling and performance, it fosters empathy and deepens understanding of diverse experiences. Drama education builds essential skills like communication, collaboration, creativity, and problem solving, while supporting student well-being by offering a safe space to explore identity and self-expression.

The creative and critical analysis process guide students in imagining, planning, interpreting, and reflecting on artistic work and can complement artist-led sessions. These frameworks empower students to become thoughtful creators, reflective learners, and active participants in building a more just and connected world.

Drama is inherently an interdisciplinary art form and serves as a powerful tool for cross-curricular learning. The discussion prompts and suggested activities in this guide are designed to help bridge connections across subjects, deepen engagement, and extend the learning in relevant, authentic, and transformative ways.



APPENDIX

Vocabulary bank/glossary:

- **Inclusion:** Making sure everyone feels welcome and part of the group.
- **Acceptance:** Letting people be themselves and treating them with respect.
- **Self-Acceptance:** Being okay with who you are, even if you're different from others.
- **Belonging:** Feeling like you are part of a group or community.
- **Identity:** The things that make you who you are (culture, beliefs, body, voice).
- **Disability:** A physical or mental condition that may affect how someone moves, learns, or interacts with the world around them.
- **Perspective:** The way someone sees or understands something, based on their experience.
- **Comedy:** A kind of performance that uses humour to entertain or tell a story.

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 \(Click Here\)](#)

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