

# FROM SCREEN TO STAGE

**Subject:** English Language Arts, Theater

**Goal:** to introduce students to the process of adapting source material for the stage

**Objectives:** Students will...

- Explore storytelling conventions of animation and live theater.
- Work as a class and in pairs.
- Analyze text and think creatively to adapt a scene from the animated feature film *Frozen* for the stage.

## Introduction

*Frozen* began as an animated feature film before it was adapted into a Broadway musical. The creators of the Broadway musical had to determine how the story could best be told on stage. By trying their own hand at the process of adaptation, students will learn to think theatrically and appreciate the creative team's work.

## Warm Up: Ice Powers

With students seated at desks or in a circle, ask the class to move their hands as if they had the power to create snow from their fingertips. Next, ask them to imagine forming a snowball between their palms. Then, challenge the class to simultaneously toss their snowballs into the air to burst into a full-room snowfall. Encourage them to imagine feeling the flurries land on their face and arms. Facilitate a brief discussion about the images that came to mind during the activity. Brainstorm how those images could be animated in a feature film. Expand the conversation to gather your students' thoughts on all the possibilities of animation to convey a story about ice powers.

## Main Activity: Adapting a Scene

In the process of adapting *Frozen* for the stage, the creative team had the opportunity to theatricalize Elsa's ice powers to be performed live. Brainstorm a list of artistic tools in the theatre (i.e. body, voice, costumes, props, scenery, lighting). Discuss how each of these tools might be used to create ice powers live onstage. Encourage creative solutions that feel plausible, even if improbable.

Distribute the "Ice Strike" excerpt from the *Frozen* film screenplay and choose three students to read aloud. Note: keep your students safe! This animated scene should simply be read and not performed due to its active nature. One student should read the action, which are in parenthesis. Lead a discussion about how animators realized this moment in the story. What are the strengths of using animation for such a scene? What are the limitations? Ask the students to discuss the strengths and limitations of live theater to realize this moment in the story.

Working in pairs, challenge students to write a version of the scene for the stage. Would the students re-write this moment to convey the plot in a way more appropriate for the stage? Encourage the inclusion of artistic tools and creative solutions that were brainstormed earlier in the lesson. If time allows, share the adapted scenes with the class.

## Reflection

Facilitate a discussion using the following prompts:

- How did the scene change in your adaptation?
- What was challenging about the writing process?
- What differences do you notice about storytelling in animation and live performance?
- If you could talk with the creators of the musical *Frozen*, what would you want to ask them about their adaptation process?

# FROM SCREEN TO STAGE

(CTD.)



## Variations

**OLDER:** If you are working with older students, create groups in role as a creative team (i.e. author, director, designers) and challenge them to collaborate on a design concept. How would the idea be presented to a producer?

**YOUNGER:** If you are working with younger students, consider narrowing the artistic tools to only props and scenery. Use clay to convey one of the creative solutions brainstormed for ice powers. Have students write a sentence about their adaptation of ice powers for the stage, utilizing the vocabulary brainstormed as a class.

**HOMESCHOOL:** If you are working with a homeschooled student, reference video excerpts from the animated feature and focus on the role of the author. Choose an action sequence and challenge your student to write active stage directions to convey the plot point in live performance.

# “ICE STRIKE” EXCERPT

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## “ICE STRIKE” Excerpt: Screenplay p. 4

*(Anna fearlessly jumps off a snow peak into mid air.)*

**YOUNG ANNA**

Catch me!

*(Elsa makes another peak to catch Anna.)*

**YOUNG ELSA**

Gotcha!

*(Anna keeps jumping. Elsa keeps casting magic.)*

**YOUNG ANNA** *(jumping faster)*

Again! Again!

**YOUNG ELSA** *(struggling to keep up)*

Slow down!

*(Elsa suddenly slips. Her magic accidentally STRIKES Anna in the head. Anna tumbles down a snowbank and lands, unconscious.)*

**YOUNG ELSA** *(CONT'D)*

ANNA!

*(Elsa runs to Anna and takes her in her arms. A streak of Anna’s hair, where struck, turns white.)*

**YOUNG ELSA** *(CONT'D)*

MAMA! PAPA!

*(The room around them fills with frightening ice spikes.)*

# FROZEN PICTURES

**Subject:** English Language Arts

**Goal:** to examine specific plot points from multiple perspectives

**Objectives:** Students will...

- Be introduced to the inciting incident and rising action of *Frozen*.
- Explore how the theme of love in *Frozen* manifests as joy or fear.
- Be introduced to theatrical vocabulary including tableau, action, and reaction.
- Use facial expression and physicality to tell a story in frozen pictures.
- Write a journal entry from the perspective of a character in the story.

## Introduction

In *Frozen*, love is a powerful force that drives several of the characters' decisions throughout the story, causing chain reactions. By physically exploring characters' actions and reactions at specific plot points, students will develop an understanding of multiple perspectives.

## Warm Up: Action & Reaction

Begin by reading the first four sentences of the *Frozen* synopsis: *Young sisters Elsa and Anna thrive amid warmth and love in Arendelle. One night while playing, Elsa accidentally strikes Anna with her magic. The Hidden Folk shaman, Pabbie, draws the magic – and memories of it – out of Anna's head. Now frightened of her power, Elsa isolates herself, and the sisters grow up apart.* As a class, identify the sequence of actions and reactions in this part of the story. Then, challenge the class to choose one of the characters and retell the sequence from that character's point of view.

Next, divide the class into two perspective groups, one to represent Anna and the other to represent Elsa. Using facial expression and physicality to create a tableau (a frozen picture that tells a story), prompt the Anna group to show "I want to play with you!" and the Elsa group to show "To protect you, I must be left alone!". Facilitate a brief brainstorm about how each group could achieve their goal, then physically represent a few of the ideas using tableau. For each action presented by one group, invite the other group to show their reaction. Ask the class how their character's point of view influences their reactions.

## Main Activity: Full Class Tableau

Read the next three sentences of the synopsis: *Years later, Elsa is crowned Queen. When Anna and the visiting Prince Hans suddenly become engaged, Elsa panics and unleashes a blast of ice. The Duke of Weselton calls her a monster, and Elsa flees, setting off an eternal winter.*

As a class, create a list of all the characters that might live in the kingdom of Arendelle.

As a full class, create a tableau illustrating the actions and reactions for each plot point of this sequence. Establish a playing space, then invite one student to join the tableau at a time, filling out the setting with as many character perspectives as possible. Challenge students to justify their physical choices to clearly communicate their character's perspective. Prompt students to share their character's inner-thought at this moment of the story when they are tapped on the shoulder. For each tableau, encourage students to explore a character with a contrasting perspective on the situation from the character they previously portrayed.

## Reflection: Journal Entry

In role as the character they portrayed in tableau, have students write a letter to a family member about what occurred at Queen Elsa's coronation.

## Extension:

After experiencing the musical *Frozen*, divide the class in small groups, one group for each principal character. Challenge them to retell the story from the perspective of their assigned character.

# FROZEN PICTURES

(CTD.)



## Variations:

**OLDER:** If you are working with older students, pair up students as scene partners for the warmup and allow them to explore a sequence of actions and reactions without interruption. In the main activity, encourage student direction of the tableau. When prompting students to share their inner-thoughts, consider having two characters with opposing perspectives engage in improvised conversation.

**YOUNGER:** If you are working with younger students, read only the first sentence of the synopsis at the start of the main activity. Keep the class divided in half following the warm up so that half of the class create the tableau while the other half serves as audience. Rather than prompting for inner-thoughts, prompt the students in role as audience to notice physical choices being made by the actors and invite suggestions to make the storytelling of the frozen picture clear. Then, switch groups and repeat with the next sentence. Continuing alternating performers and audience for each of the four sentences in the main activity. In the reflection, challenge students to articulate how they used facial expression and physicality to communicate what their character was feeling and thinking.

**HOMESCHOOL:** If you are working with a homeschool student, have your student alternate between perspectives in the warmup, noticing the differences in physicality between characters. In the main activity, have your student choose a character to perform the sequence of tableau as you read the prompts aloud. Repeat the activity from a different perspective. Then, have your student work in role as director to brainstorm the placement onstage for each character in the plot point.

# I'M FREE

**Subject:** English Language Arts

**Goal:** to connect with Elsa's feeling of strength & freedom in "Let it Go"

**Objectives:** Students will...

- Examine the lyrics of "Let it Go".
- Identify a personal strength.
- Write original lyrics based on a personal strength.

## Introduction

After fleeing Arendelle, Elsa yields her power to build an ice castle, a place she feels most free. The lyrics of "Let it Go", written by Kristen Anderson-Lopez and Robert Lopez, communicate the strength and freedom Elsa experiences after years of fearing the power within herself. By writing their own lyrics, students will explore the power of their own strengths.

## Warm Up: Lyrics as Poetry

Write the following lyrics on the board:

"It's funny how some distance makes everything seem small  
And the fears that once controlled me can't get to me at all;  
It's time to see what I can do; To test the limits and break through;  
No right, no wrong, no rules for me; I'm free"

Read the lyrics aloud and ask the class to suggest what they might mean. Next, explain to the class that "Let it Go" celebrates the strength and power within Elsa that she's previously feared. Facilitate a brief discussion about lyrics being poetry set to music, often used in theater to tell a story. Ask the students what they notice about the language choices and rhyming structure in "Let it Go."

## Main Activity: Write Original Lyrics

Explain that Elsa uses her power to build an ice castle. Ask each student to brainstorm an imaginary place they would build with their own personal power. Encourage students to choose a power based on a personal strength or personality trait of their choosing. Working in pairs, instruct students to take turns describing their places and their powers. While one student shares, the other should write a list of all the adjectives used to describe the place and all the verbs relating to the power. Then, have students use the lists as inspiration to individually write a verse of lyrics for their personal "Let it Go" moment. Invite students to share aloud and encourage students to celebrate each piece of writing; it takes a lot of strength to share original work!

## Reflection

Facilitate a brief discussion using the following prompts:

- What are some similarities among the powers of our class?
- What did you discover about the process of writing lyrics?
- How would you react if you discovered your power was negatively impacting others?
- How would you react if the place you built became threatened?

# I'M FREE

(CTD.)



## Variations:

**OLDER:** If you are working with older students, challenge the students to choose a personal strength that perhaps they once feared. In the main activity, encourage students to write a chorus in addition to a verse. In the reflection, ask students to identify a style of music for their composition.

**YOUNGER:** If you are working with younger students, consider reducing the length of the lyric to a rhyming couplet. In the main activity, encourage students to first draw their imaginary place before brainstorming words to describe it.

**HOMESCHOOL:** If you are working with a homeschool student, provide the option for the student to write original lyrics from the perspective of a friend or family they respect. In the main activity brainstorm, have your student identify a descriptor beginning with each letter of the alphabet.

# LITTLE BIT OF YOU, LITTLE BIT OF ME

**Subject:** Visual Arts; Theatrical Design

**Goal:** to explore how to make art collaboratively and how to bring it to life on stage.

**Objectives:** Students will...

- Work collaboratively with a partner.
- Create a design for a fictional character that represents personal qualities.
- Create a theatrical design for a character.

## Materials:

- Paper
- Markers
- “A Little Bit of You” music track from *Frozen*
- Music playing device
- “Costume Design Template” handout

## Introduction

In *Frozen*, sisters Anna and Elsa work together to create Olaf, a friendly snowman and playmate, who embodies qualities of each sister. Collaborating in pairs, students will explore how two people can create art together using qualities and ideas from each other.

## Warm Up

Divide students into pairs and provide each pair with one piece of paper and two markers. Instruct students to determine who is partner A and who is partner B. Then, explain that they will silently improvise a drawing together. Partner A will begin by making a mark on the page. When A lifts the marker, B will make a mark. They will trade on and off until they feel the piece is finished. At which time, whichever partner has the next turn will begin naming the piece of art. Again, the partners will trade off writing a letter until the name is complete. Then, allow students to walk around and see one another’s artwork.

## Main Activity:

Play the first 60 seconds of “A Little Bit of You” from *Frozen: The Broadway Musical* (Original Broadway Cast Recording). Ask students to consider what they heard and share how they think Olaf represents both Anna and Elsa. What qualities did each sister imbue him with?

Next, ask each student to write down characteristics of their own personality. Continuing with the partner from the warm-up, invite students to create their own creature that, like Olaf, should embody characteristics from each partner. Encourage students to begin by considering something they both like as a starting point (e.g. a tennis ball if they both enjoy playing tennis) and then add features that represent each of them separately. Provide paper for them to sketch their idea on, offering guidance and encouragement as needed.

After allowing some time for students to brainstorm, challenge them to find a way to bring their creature to life onstage. Facilitate a brief discussion for how they might bring Olaf to life onstage (an actor in a costume, a puppet, etc.). Instruct students to decide how their character will manifest onstage. Provide the “Costume Design Template” for students to create their design plan. If time allows, have students share their character and its design with the class.

## Reflection

Facilitate a brief discussion using the following prompts:

- How did you and your partner’s qualities manifest in the character you created?
- How did you determine whether your character would be costumed or a puppet?
- What considerations do you think directors and designers have when making such decisions?



# LITTLE BIT OF YOU, LITTLE BIT OF ME

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(CTD.)



## Variations:

**OLDER:** If you are working with older students, challenge the pairs to write a design concept statement for the reflection. Consider extending the lesson over several class periods and allow students to bring their design to life using a variety of materials: fabric for costumes, paper and rods for puppets, etc.

**YOUNGER:** If you are working with younger students, provide time limits in the warm up for each partner to draw, and announce transitions. In the main activity, create one creature together as a full class on a large piece of paper or your board.

**HOMESCHOOL:** If you are working with a homeschool student, invite a family member or friend to participate, or participate yourself as a partner in the lesson. Alternatively, have your student have choose two friends or family members in their life, and create an original creature with them in mind.

# COSTUME DESIGN TEMPLATE



Now that you have brainstormed an original creature with your partner that represents both of your characteristics, design how your character will manifest onstage using the template below.

