

Tableau

A tableau is a frozen picture. Actors remain perfectly still and silent in an image.

Four Elements of Tableau:

Cheating Out

Actors are cheating out when they make sure they are facing the audience.

Exaggerated Facial Expressions

Exaggerated: large or big

Facial Expressions: using your face to show emotion. For example: cry face, happy face, angry face

Because a tableau is frozen and silent, it is important to use exaggerated facial expressions. Exaggerated facial expressions will help the audience understand your emotions and the meaning of the tableau.

Exaggerated Physicality

Exaggerated: large or big

Physicality: use of the body. For example: flexing your muscles, getting into a sprint position, or high fiving someone.

Physicality should also be exaggerated to help the audience understand the meaning of the tableau.

Levels

Actors working together in a tableau should show different physical levels. For example, if one actor is standing then the next could be sitting. Different levels help make the tableau more interesting to look at. Also, different levels can help show relationships between the characters in the tableau. For example, if actors are working together to show a family picture in a tableau, the actor standing may look like the parent and the actor sitting may look like the child.

Lesson Outline

- 1) Introduce tableau and the four elements as direct address. Provide physical demonstrations of each along with verbal examples. Have students fill out their graphic organizers with the name of each element (included in word bank), and with a definition in their own words (useful vocabulary provides in word bank).
- 2) Family portrait exercise: Students work as a group. Teacher calls out a “type” of family. For example: circus family, tired family, obsessed with Harry Potter family, superhero family, or angry family. Group has 30 seconds to create a tableau of a family picture. Teacher counts down from 5 and the group freezes in their tableau. Students will create four family pictures total. For the first photo, ask the students to focus on cheating out. If they show the other elements, awesome, but the focus is on cheating out. For the second photo, ask the students to focus cheating out and exaggerated facial expressions. For the third photo, ask the students to focus on cheating out, exaggerated facial expressions, and exaggerated physicality. For the last photo, ask them to focus on all four of the elements.
- 3) Using the graphic organizer, have students provide themselves with an example of each “element” from the exercise they just participated in. If students are struggling, complete brainstorm in pairs, or as a group.