

 20 minutes

 K-2

Language and Literacy

Drama Word Builders



Objective

Students will practice building expressive vocabulary by creating drama-themed word posters using movement, sound, and illustrations.

Materials

- Chart paper or sentence strips
- markers
- drama word cards (whisper and leap and sneak and growl and tiptoe and sigh)

Steps

- 1 Introduce a set of expressive drama words and model how to act each one out.
- 2 Give each student or pair a word card to “bring to life” using sound, gesture, and a simple illustration.
- 3 Create a classroom “Drama Word Wall” by displaying student-made word posters.
- 4 Use the word wall as a warm-up tool in future acting games or storytelling.

Question Prompts

- What does your word mean and how does it feel? (Understand)
- How can you show your word with your whole body? (Apply)
- What other words are like yours? (Analyze)
- Where could your word fit in a story or scene? (Create)

Variations

Use the words as “drama dice”—roll two and perform a quick scene using both.

Activity Modifications

- Provide visuals for each word and model with gestures.
- Use bilingual word cards and sentence frames for ELL students.
- Offer drawing templates or stamps for students with motor needs.
- Challenge excelling students to use two words in a sentence or scene.

 20 minutes

 3-4

STEAM

Mad Scientist Sound Lab



Objective

Students will explore how the length of straws or water levels in jars affects pitch, make observations about high and low sounds, and create a short musical performance, practicing experimentation, observation, and creativity.

Materials

- 4–6 plastic straws
- 1 pair of scissors
- 6–8 inches of clear tape (if needed for holding straws together) OR 4–6 clear jars/cups (plastic or glass, same size)
- About 2–3 cups of water (to fill jars at different levels)
- 3–4 drops of food coloring (optional, for coloring water in jars)
- 1 wooden spoon or unsharpened pencil (for tapping jars)
- 1 piece of chart paper (12”x18”) or 1 recording sheet per group
- 2–3 markers or pencils (for noting results)

Steps

- 1 Predict — Discuss what will make high vs. low sounds.
- 2 Build — Cut straws to different lengths or fill jars with varying water (optional coloring).
- 3 Test — Blow/tap to hear pitch differences.
- 4 Record & Perform — Note high/low results
- 5 groups create a short “mad scientist” song.


Question Prompts


- Why did shorter straws or less water make higher sounds, while longer straws or more water made lower sounds? (understanding)
- If you wanted to make an even lower sound, what would you change about your straw or water jar? (applying)
- How were the sounds from the straws different from the sounds from the water jars? (Analyzing)
- Which instrument made the clearest sound and why do you think it worked the best? (Evaluating)

Variations

Compose and Perform: Have groups work together to create short “mad scientist songs” and perform them for the class, adding rhythm or clapping patterns.

Activity Modifications

- Visual Step Cards – Use illustrated instructions (straw  → blow → sound / jar + water → tap → sound) so students can follow steps without relying only on text.
- Pre-Teach Vocabulary – Introduce key terms (high, low, pitch, sound) with hand motions (pointing up for high, down for low) and bilingual labels for DLLs.
- Alternative Recording – Allow students to draw sound waves, color-code jars, or circle icons for high/low instead of writing full words.
- Sentence Frames – Provide supports like:
 - “The ___ made a high sound.”
 - “The ___ made a low sound.”
- Adaptive Materials – Use wide straws, sturdy jars, or pre-cut straws for students with fine motor challenges
- let them tap instead of blow if needed.
- Role Assignments – Give jobs (cutter, blower/tapper, recorder, performer) so each student can participate in a way that fits their abilities.
- Peer & Teacher Modeling – Demonstrate how to make sounds first, then let students mimic, providing scaffolding for DLLs and students needing extra support.

 25 mins

 5-6

Creative Arts and Expression

Design a Logo



Objective

Students will use symbolism, shape, and color theory to create and justify a logo that expresses brand purpose and works in multiple contexts.

Materials

- Paper per child
- colored pencils
- markers
- rulers
- graph paper
- stencils (optional)
- digital design tool (optional)

Steps

- 1 Choose a product, service, or company you want to represent with a logo.
- 2 Research or reflect on real logos for inspiration, focusing on how they use color and design to show meaning.
- 3 Sketch at least two logo drafts using different styles or layouts.
- 4 Select your best design and finalize it, adding color and details.

Question Prompts

- Which design elements did you use to make your logo unique? (Remember)
- How does your logo connect to your brand's values or purpose? (Understand)
- What design draft did you choose and why? (Analyze)
- How would your logo work in different places (poster, app, packaging)? (Evaluate)

Variations

Students trade logos with a partner and try to guess the product or company it represents. Then, partners give constructive feedback on clarity.

Activity Modifications

- Provide graphic organizers: Draft 1 → Draft 2 → Final Choice → Why I Chose It.
- Let students choose between hand-drawn or digital design.
- Encourage pair or group work for students who thrive collaboratively.
- Give advanced learners an extension: design a logo set (main logo + mini icon version).
- Provide a slideshow or handout of well-known logos with notes on symbolism, color psychology, and design style.
- Challenge them to create a “brand identity kit” (main logo, simplified icon, color palette, font choice).

WEEK 1 OF 3

SUMMER DAY-CAMP SAMPLE

CAMPFIRE STORIES AND TALL TALES

THEME OVERVIEW







Learning Topics

- Tall tales
- Oral storytelling
- Imagination versus reality
- Community storytelling traditions

Project Power Hour Final Project:

Students will create and perform an original campfire tall tale or shadow puppet story that includes exaggerated characters, setting, and a clear beginning, middle, and end.

Hands on Headquarters (Exploration Stations)

	Shadow Puppet Studio	CREATIVE ARTS & EXPRESSION
	Light and Shadow Lab	STEAM
	Tall Tale Story Circle	LANGUAGE & LITERACY
	Campfire Movement Games	PHYSICAL PLAY & WELLNESS
	Storytelling Around the World	SOCIAL STUDIES & CIVIC ENGAGEMENT
	Performance Practice Zone	SOFT SKILLS & LIFE SKILLS

Edible Explorations

- Day 1 Trail Mix Tall Tales
- Day 2 Story Stick Pretzels
- Day 3 Campfire Banana Boats
- Day 4 Firelight Fruit Skewers
- Day 5 S'more Scene Builders

Morning Kick Starters:

- Day 1 Discover Tall Tales and Imagine the Story
- Day 2 Build Bigger Than Life Characters
- Day 3 Improve & Expand
- Day 4 Connect & Combine
- Day 5 Rehearse and Perform the Campfire Story

DAY 1 OF 5

SUMMER DAY-CAMP SAMPLE

MORNING KICK STARTERS

CAMPFIRE STORIES AND TALL TALES

Kickoff! What is a Tall Tale?

Group Game:

Exaggeration Circle

Materials Lists:

- None

Instructions:

1. Invite students to sit in a circle so everyone can see and hear each other. Remind them that this game works best when we listen carefully and build on each other's ideas.
2. Explain the goal by saying, "We are going to build one big silly story together. Each person will add one exaggerated detail to make it more dramatic and fun."
3. Start the story with a very simple sentence spoken clearly, such as "I saw a fish," or "Once I found a shoe." Keep it short so students have room to add details.
4. Turn to the next student in the circle and ask them to repeat the entire sentence exactly as it was said, then add one exaggerated detail. For example, "I saw a fish that was as big as a school bus."
5. Continue moving around the circle one student at a time. Each student repeats the full story so far and adds one new exaggerated detail, such as size, speed, number, sound, or action.
6. Gently coach students to exaggerate by prompting with phrases like, "Could it be even bigger," "What made it extra surprising," or "What happened next that was over the top."
7. If a student forgets part of the story, invite the group to help by repeating the last sentence together before moving on. Keep the tone playful and supportive.
8. Continue until everyone has had a turn or until the story reaches a natural silly ending. Celebrate the final version by saying the whole tall tale together or applauding the teamwork.
9. Close the game by briefly reflecting out loud, for example, "You used imagination, memory, and listening to build something together," and connect it back to storytelling or exaggeration as a skill.

Brain Boosters (Facts About Today's Topic):

- Tall tales are stories that use exaggeration to entertain listeners, meaning the events and characters are stretched far beyond what could really happen to make the story exciting and funny.
- Many tall tales were told aloud before they were written down, which means people shared them around campfires, in communities, and with families long before books existed.
- Tall tales often feature larger than life characters and big problems, such as heroes with super strength or challenges so huge that only imagination and clever thinking can solve them.

Questions to Ask...

- Why do you think people like stories that are a little unbelievable?
- How can exaggeration make a story more fun?

Suggested Media Resources (Print & Digital)

- **Video:**

Short animated tall tale compilation [Famous Tall Tales Compilation](#) (search for “a variety of tall tales”)

- **Read Aloud:**

Paul Bunyan by Steven Kellogg [Paul Bunyon, by Steven Kellogg](#) (focus on exaggeration and larger than life characters)

- **Optional Visual:**

Display or print tall tale character illustrations. Encourage children to create their own illustrations.

DAY 1 OF 5

SUMMER DAY-CAMP SAMPLE

PROJECT POWER HOUR

CAMPFIRE STORIES AND TALL TALES

Discover Tall Tales and Imagine the Story

Objective:

Students will explore what makes a tall tale by listening, observing, and experimenting with exaggeration. They will begin imagining a campfire story by choosing an exaggerated character or moment and capturing it through drawing, movement, or spoken storytelling.

Materials Lists:

- Chart paper
- Markers
- Tall Tale picture cards or book images
- Crayons or pencils
- Puppets or props (optional)
- Blank paper

Age Band Scaffolds:

K-2

Sit with students and help them act out ideas using big movements and sound effects. Accept gestures and spoken ideas as planning. Help capture ideas with quick drawings or labels. Reassure students that there are no wrong ideas and that pretending and playing are important parts of being a storyteller.

3-4

Encourage students to describe their character using strong action words. Ask how the exaggeration changes the story. Support simple sketches or short spoken planning. Invite students to listen to a partner's idea and add one more exaggerated detail to build collaborative thinking.

5-6

Invite students to compare realistic versus exaggerated versions of their idea. Encourage brief discussion about why exaggeration helps entertain an audience. Ask students to consider how their choices affect the listener's emotions, such as surprise, humor, or excitement.

Project Modifications:

- Allow students to work standing or seated so they can choose the position that helps them think, move, and stay engaged.
- Offer puppets or props instead of drawing so students can show ideas through action, movement, and play when visuals feel limiting.
- Let students record ideas verbally with staff support so spoken storytelling is treated as real planning and honored as a valid way to capture thinking.
- Pair students strategically for idea sharing so one student can help talk through ideas while another helps extend, act out, or capture them.
- Provide visual prompts for students who need them so ideas remain accessible, reassuring, and easy to return to throughout the activity.

Instructions

1. Welcome students and say, “Today we start becoming campfire storytellers,” then ask, “What makes a story feel bigger than real life?” Pause to affirm responses and remind students that imagination is welcome and encouraged here.
2. Share one short, exaggerated example aloud, such as “This character sneezed so hard it moved the mountains,” and invite laughter and reactions. Follow up by asking, “Could that really happen, or is that part of the fun?”
3. Define tall tale in student-friendly language by saying, “A tall tale is a story where things are stretched bigger, louder, or wilder on purpose.” Emphasize that exaggeration is a tool storytellers use to entertain their audience.
4. Show visuals from a tall tale and ask students to name what feels exaggerated about the character or event. Encourage multiple answers and model noticing details like size, strength, or actions.
5. Invite students to act out one exaggerated action together, such as lifting something impossibly heavy or taking a giant step. Narrate their movements using descriptive language to reinforce the idea of “bigger than real life.”
6. Explain that their final project will be a campfire story or shadow puppet tale they create and perform by the end of the week. Reassure students that they will have many chances to practice, change ideas, and grow their story.
7. Ask each group to imagine one exaggerated character or moment and choose how they want to explore it today by drawing, acting, or telling it aloud. Remind them that all three choices count as real planning.
8. Circulate and prompt thinking with questions like, “How could this be even bigger,” or “What would make the audience say wow?” Use follow-up prompts to help students add detail rather than replace their idea.
9. Encourage students to try their idea once, then change one detail to make it more dramatic. Name this as part of storytelling work by saying, “Good storytellers test ideas and then stretch them.”
10. Close with a short share where each group names one exaggerated idea they want to keep working on. Celebrate effort and creativity by highlighting how different ideas can all be successful stories.

DAY 1 OF 5

SUMMER DAY-CAMP SAMPLE

HANDS-ON HEADQUARTERS

CAMPFIRE STORIES AND TALL TALES



CREATIVE ARTS & EXPRESSION

Shadow Puppet Studio

Materials Lists:

- Drawing paper or recycled paper
- Black construction paper
- Craft sticks
- Tape
- Scissor
- Flashlights
- Shadow screens or blank wall space
- Collage scraps or texture materials (optional)
- Caption strips or small sticky notes (optional)

Simple Setup Instructions:

1. Set up the table as an open creation studio where students can design, test, pause, and return to shadow puppet ideas across multiple days.
2. Arrange paper and construction paper in open stacks so students can easily switch materials as their ideas change.
3. Place drawing tools, scissors, tape, and optional caption strips in shared containers within reach so students can choose how they plan and explain ideas.
4. Position flashlights and a shadow surface nearby so students can immediately test how their puppets appear when held close or far from the light.
5. Leave space for unfinished puppets and partial ideas to remain visible. This communicates that revision, experimentation, visual planning, and verbal explanation are expected and valued throughout the week.

Age Band Scaffolds:

K-2

Keep the start simple by offering large paper, pre cut shapes, and easy grip tools so children can jump in quickly with bold shapes and movements. If a child pauses, offer a quick either or choice such as tall puppet or wide puppet, then let them take over. Celebrate pointing, moving, naming, or describing a character as valid participation.

3-4

Set out regular materials with a few optional supports such as arrow cards or motion words so students can organize ideas without feeling overwhelmed. If a student stalls, ask one short prompt like what does your puppet do first or how does it move, then step back. Acknowledge revisions as storytelling decisions, not mistakes.

5-6

Offer materials that feel more advanced, such as jointed puppet pieces, fine tip markers, or layered shapes. When students get stuck, suggest a thinking move like testing two different shadow sizes or explaining the puppet to a partner. Encourage clarity for an audience without pushing neatness.

Extension Ideas:

- **Action and Movement Focus:**

Add visual supports that highlight movement and exaggeration, such as arrow cards or motion word cards like stomp, stretch, sneak, or fly. Students may use these tools instead of written labels to show how their puppet moves.

- **Story and Character Focus:**

Include optional character or trait cards such as giant, trickster, hero, or creature. Students may choose one card to inspire their puppet or combine traits to create a bigger than life character and describe it aloud.

- **Setting and Mood Focus:**

Provide simple setting prompt cards such as forest, mountain, storm, or campfire. Students may adjust puppet size, speed, or shape and explain how the setting affects the character.

- **Communication and Explanation Focus:**

Add caption strips, sentence starters, or sticky notes for short explanations. Students may communicate their thinking through symbols, short phrases, or verbal storytelling rather than detailed writing.

- **Remix and Combination Focus:**

Designate a space where older puppets, partial designs, or unused shapes can be placed. Students are invited to combine pieces, revise an earlier puppet, or build on an existing idea instead of starting from a blank page.

Exploration Station Modifications:

- Allow students to use collage materials or pre cut shapes instead of drawing.
- Provide large grip scissors or thicker sticks for students who benefit from easier handling.
- Offer sentence starter cards nearby for students who want language support but do not require it.
- Invite students to explain their puppet story aloud while a peer or adult assists with assembly if needed.
- Include bilingual prompt cards with visuals when possible.

DAY 1 OF 5

SUMMER DAY-CAMP SAMPLE

EDIBLE EXPLORATIONS

CAMPFIRE STORIES AND TALL TALES

Trail Mix Tall Tales

Materials Lists:

- Mini crackers or graham sticks or pretzel rods (Bite-sized snack pieces)
 - Substitution: carrot sticks or apple slices
- Hummus or yogurt or jam (*For dip*)
 - *Substitutions: mashed banana or apple sauce*
- Serving trays or small plates
- Paper towels / wipes
- Material

Simple Setup Instructions:

- **Present the idea:**

Explain that tall tales often mix many ideas together to make one big story. Tell students that trail mix works the same way by combining many ingredients into one snack.

- **Model one clear example:**

Build a small trail mix in front of the group, naming each ingredient as you add it. Use exaggerated language such as “This is the bravest pretzel in the whole forest.” Keep the model short and playful.

- **Distribute materials intentionally:**

Give each student a cup or bowl and access to a limited number of ingredients. For students who need support, pre portion ingredients or offer two choices at a time.

- **Invite building and storytelling:**

Ask students to line up their snacks so that pushing the first piece causes the last piece to reach the dip. Encourage them to decide how many pieces they need and how close together they should be.

- **Pause for sharing:**

Invite a few students to name their mix or describe one ingredient as a character or hero. Accept pointing, gestures, or short phrases as valid sharing.

- **Eat and clean up together:**

Once sharing is complete, invite students to eat their trail mix. Finish by collecting cups, wiping surfaces, and washing hands as needed.