

Developing understanding through drama

How might creating sounds deepen our understanding of events and experiences?

CRITICAL CHALLENGE

Create a thoughtful soundscape for an image that depicts the experiences of Ukrainian and other European immigrants in Canada during the late 1800s and early 1900s.

SUMMARY

In this two-part lesson, students create a soundscape that brings the details in a selected image to life. Students first observe the details in an image of a jungle landscape and create a list of sounds that might match the details they observe. They then explore everyday materials and techniques to create two soundscapes that accurately reflect the details they observed. Next they determine which soundscape best meets the criteria for a thoughtful soundscape. In part two, students use the strategies introduced in the first part to create a soundscape for an image depicting a variety of experiences European immigrants to Canada had. The lesson concludes with students reflecting on how creating a soundscape enhanced their understanding of the experiences of Ukrainian and other European immigrants who came to Canada during the late 1800s and early 1900s.

OBJECTIVES

Broad understanding

Understanding the experiences of Ukrainians and other Europeans who immigrated to Canada during the late 1800s and early 1900s

Requisite tools

Background knowledge

- knowledge of the conditions of life in Canada for Ukrainians and other European immigrants before the First World War



Criteria for judgment

- criteria met by a thoughtful soundscape
 - accurately represents the details within an image
 - uses a variety of realistic sounds
 - uses combinations of volumes, rhythms and patterns of sound
 - sparks an emotional response in the audience



Critical thinking vocabulary

- observation



Thinking strategies

- applying the creative process
- making observations



Habits of mind

- inquiry-minded



MATERIALS

Briefing sheets

Understanding European immigration to Canada, 1891–1914 (Briefing sheet #3)

Activity sheets

Planning a soundscape (Activity sheet #G-1)

What do I see? What might I hear? (Activity sheet #G-2)

Images

European immigrant experiences (Image set #G-1)

Tiger in a Tropical Storm (Image #G-2)

Background information for teachers

For more information on European immigration to Canada, consider reading *Background information for teachers: European immigration to Canada, 1891–1914* (Briefing sheet #1). This briefing sheet is intended to support teachers with historical details related to the content of this lesson and is not intended for student use.

Suggested Activities

SESSION 1

Listen to a soundscape

1. Explain to students that they will listen to a collection of sounds known as a soundscape. A soundscape is an atmosphere or environment created by a combination of sounds. Reveal to students that they won't be given the title or see the image that belongs to the soundscape. Inform students that they will analyze the sounds to determine when, where and what is happening.
2. Play a 30 second sampling from the soundscape "Night train in the rain" (<https://youtu.be/FhYaXj91juE>) and prompt students to think carefully about what may be happening while they listen. If this soundscape is unavailable, another audio recording of the sounds of a city, forest or ocean can be used, keeping in mind that students should not view any images that might be associated with the sounds.
3. Encourage students to identify individual sounds within the soundscape to help them decide what is happening. The following questions might be useful in prompting student thinking:
 - Where does this scene take place?
 - What is happening in the scene?
 - What time of the day is it? What month is it?
 - What feeling or mood is created by the sounds?
4. Invite students to share their ideas about what the sounds suggest is taking place.

Think about the lesson challenge

1. Share and discuss the critical challenge with students: *Create a thoughtful soundscape for an image that depicts the experiences of Ukrainian and other European immigrants in Canada during the late 1800s and early 1900s.*
2. Inform students that while earlier they interpreted sounds to describe a setting, their challenge now will be to bring an image to life using sounds. Ask students to suggest how creating a thoughtful soundscape might help them to better understand the actions and events taking place within an image. Sample responses may include:
 - It helps us feel like we are experiencing the scene first-hand.
 - A soundscape draws our attention to specific actions within a scene.
 - It gives us a sense of the mood of a scene.

Observe the details in an image

1. Display or provide students with copies of *Tiger in a Tropical Storm* (Image #G-2) and copies of *What do I see? What might I hear?* (Activity sheet #G-2).
2. Explain to students that they will work as a whole class to develop a group soundscape for this image.
3. Instruct students to identify the important details that they observe in the painting. Ask students to record these details on the activity sheet under the heading “What do I see?” Create a chart paper version of the activity sheet and record their observations. Student responses might include:
 - tiger
 - rain
 - lightning
 - jungle
4. Prompt students to suggest what this part of the lesson reveals about the criteria for a thoughtful soundscape. Note the following criterion on the board or chart paper and keep for use throughout the lesson. A thoughtful soundscape:
 - accurately represents the details within an image.



Identify possible sounds

1. Ask students to suggest what sounds could be made to bring each of the elements of the painting to life. Direct students to list possible sounds in the column “What might I hear?” on the activity sheet. The following questions might be used to prompt student thinking:
 - What are all the possible sounds you might hear if you were in this scene?
 - What is the loudest sound that might belong with this detail?
 - What is the quietest sound that might belong with this detail?
2. Invite students to share their suggestions with the class. Add these sound ideas to the chart paper version of the activity sheet. Student responses may include:
 - wind blowing
 - tiger roaring
 - tiger’s footsteps
 - rain falling
 - thunder rolling
 - branches breaking

Explore soundscape materials and techniques

1. Divide students into groups of four or five. Provide an assortment of small musical instruments and commonly available materials that students can use to make a variety of sounds. Possible items include plastic bags, metal and wooden spoons, newspapers, wooden blocks, sandpaper, shakers and rhythm sticks.
2. Invite students to choose one of the instruments or materials to explore within their group. Instruct students to create as many different sounds as possible with their selected item.
3. Prompt students to experiment with different techniques, volume and rhythm or tempo when creating their sounds. Invite them to consider how changing the tone of their sounds and the addition of pauses between shorter sounds affects the overall impact of the sound.
4. Invite a volunteer to create one of the possible sounds from the chart and ask the class to identify which detail it corresponds to. If the suggested sounds are difficult to identify, discuss how they could be revised to make them more realistic.
5. Prompt students to suggest what this part of the lesson reveals about the criteria for a thoughtful soundscape. Add two more criteria to the posted list. A thoughtful soundscape:
 - accurately represents the details within an image;
 - uses a variety of realistic sounds;
 - uses combinations of volumes, rhythms and patterns of sounds.

Apply the criteria to a specific sound

1. Invite each group to use their selected instrument or material to create and share a single sound they feel meets the criteria for a thoughtful soundscape.
2. Prompt the rest of the class to use the criteria to assess each of the performed sounds. The following questions might be used to prompt student thinking:
 - What detail was represented by this sound?
 - Was the sound realistic?
 - Did the sound cause you to think or feel something in response ?
3. Invite students to share their assessment of each sound. Encourage students to suggest how the sound might be refined to better meet the criteria.

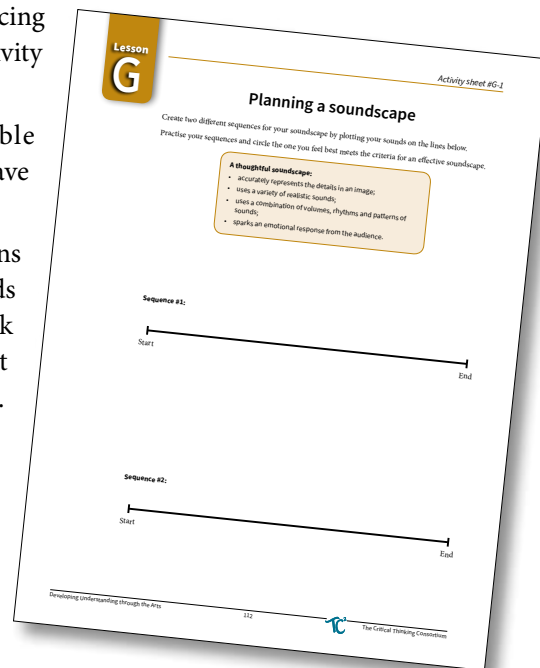
Examine the organization of a soundscape

1. Remind students that a soundscape is an atmosphere or environment created by a combination of sounds. Inform students that their next task is to explore the most effective ways to organize sounds in a soundscape.
2. Display the following ways of organizing sounds:
 - Continuous sounds: sounds that are heard throughout the soundscape.
 - Repeated sounds: sounds that can be heard more than once.
 - Layered sounds: sounds that are heard at the same time.

Organize a soundscape

3. Replay a longer portion of the soundscape “Night train in the rain” used at the beginning of the lesson. Ask students to identify an example of each way of organizing sounds. Record their observations on chart paper for later reference. Student responses may include:
 - Continuous sounds: for example, the rain at the beginning.
 - Repeated sounds: examples include the sound of the tracks and the thunder.
 - Layered sounds: such as the rain and the thunder, or the tracks and the ringing bell.

1. Create a chart paper version of the sequencing line shown on *Planning a soundscape* (Activity sheet #G-1).
2. Invite students to brainstorm a possible organization for the jungle sounds they have created in their groups.
3. Remind students to consider the observations they made about the arrangement of sounds in the “Night train in the rain” sample. Ask them to suggest sounds that might work best as repeating, continuous or recurring sounds.
4. Plot the suggested organization along the sequencing line in order from start to end. Perform and record the soundscape.
5. Pose the question: “What could we change to make the jungle sound calm and inviting?” For example, students might suggest making the sounds softer or removing sounds that might be frightening to listeners (for example, sounds made by the tiger or the storm).
6. Prompt students to suggest what this part of the lesson reveals about the criteria for a thoughtful soundscape. Add the last criteria to the posted list. A thoughtful soundscape:
 - accurately represents the details within an image;
 - uses a variety of realistic sounds;
 - uses combinations of volumes, rhythms and patterns of sounds;
 - sparks an emotional response in the audience.



Reflect on the completed soundscape

1. Reflect on the two recorded sequences and decide whether the arrangement of one of the soundscapes better meets the criteria than the other. Prompt students to suggest any changes that might be made to the two class soundscapes to better meet the criteria.

Create a soundscape

SESSION 2

1. Divide students into pairs or small groups and provide each group with copies of *European immigrant experiences* (Image set #G-1) and *What do I see? What do I hear?* (Activity sheet #G-2). **Note:** If this is the students' introduction to the topic of immigration to Canada, consider distributing *Understanding European immigration to Canada, 1891–1914* (Briefing sheet #3) to help develop background knowledge.
2. Remind students of the lesson challenge: *Create a thoughtful soundscape for an image that depicts the experiences of Ukrainian and other European immigrants in Canada during the late 1880s and early 1900s. Inform students that their challenge is to bring an image to life using sounds.*
3. Display a pre-selected image for all students to use or instruct student groups to select one of the images from the image set.
4. Instruct students to create their soundscape by following the same steps used in the class soundscape:
 - Observe the details within the image.
 - Identify possible sounds.
 - Experiment with materials and techniques.
 - Plan, practise and record a soundscape.



Self-assess the soundscape

1. Encourage students to share their recorded soundscapes with another group. Instruct students to use the criteria for a thoughtful soundscape to identify specific examples in the performed soundscapes they feel best meet the criteria. Prompt students to suggest revisions or rearrangements to their peers' soundscapes that might help the soundscapes better meet the criteria.
2. Instruct groups to select the soundscape they created that they feel best meets the criteria. Encourage groups to practise and refine their soundscape based on the feedback they receive.

Finalize and perform the soundscape

1. Arrange time for groups to re-record or perform their finalized soundscapes for the class.

Reflect on the learning

1. Invite students to reflect on what they have learned about the experiences of immigrants by creating soundscapes. Pose the question: “Which sounds in our soundscapes best capture the challenges faced by Ukrainian and other European immigrants in Canada during the late 1800s and early 1900s?”
2. Encourage students to make connections between the sounds that have been created and the real-life experiences represented in the images. For example, they may indicate that the sound of chopping wood might represent the hard work that was done by immigrants to clear their land.