



Writing Assignment: Performance Adaptation Project

Assignment Description & Purpose

Students are organized into groups of approximately five or six students and are asked to adapt a work of literature according to a specific theme. I provide suggestions, but also allow students to select their own themes. When presenting the project, I use the example of Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* since most students are familiar with it. Adaptations of this classic include old black and white versions, cartoons like *The Flintstones* and *Mickey Mouse*, and modernized versions made for TV and film.

Several handouts guide students through the analytical process. Once the analysis is complete, students write scripts for their own adaptations, create costumes, sets, props, and sound effects, and finally present their adaptations to the class. Some students stage live performances, while others video tape their performances. Each performance is evaluated by the audience as well as by the performers.

The purpose of the assignment is to assess the skills learned during the unit and to foster a deeper understanding of the literature through extended analysis and discussion.

Original Use & Adaptability

This project was originally designed as a unit assessment for William Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*; however, it is possible to adapt the project to any of Shakespeare's other plays or to other literature.

Enrichment & Home School Use

This project was originally designed for use in a classroom setting consisting of approximately 27 to 29 students; however, the assignment can easily be adapted for smaller classrooms and for home school use.

The writing portion can be completed with as few as one or two students. Instead of performing a play, the students can create a book. In place of the sets, costumes, and music, ask the students to create illustrations. In deciding what the illustrations should look like, the students will process the same information as if they were deciding how the sets and costumes should look.

The performance portion can be completed with as few as five or six students. In a regular classroom setting, the audience would consist of other students, but if all of the students are participating in the production, the audience can also be parents, grandparents, neighbors, friends, etc. If you can't find an audience, video tape the performance and let the students be their own audience.