

SRI LANKA
histories
that
connect

கதை ஒன்றை
இணைத்த வரலாறுகள்

LEARNING & TEACHING HISTORY WITH THEATRE



Acknowledgements

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4. Overview

1. Introduction

a. Knowledge Plus Fun: A New Way of Learning!

What is drama? What is education? At first glance, these may seem like simple questions, but the answers are far more complex. Over time, many playwrights and educators have offered various definitions of these concepts. Despite their differences, these definitions often highlight the interconnectedness and unity that exist between drama and education.

When we hear the word drama, we usually imagine performers presenting a creative act before an audience, either to entertain or to enlighten. When we think of education, we imagine a the traditional education system taking place in a classroom environment.

Ultimately, while the definitions may vary, both education and drama play a vital role in shaping individuals and communities. Together, they contribute significantly to personal growth and societal development.

The integration of Theatre in Education (TIE) or Theatre Edutainment (TE) can extend education beyond the classroom, fostering an environment that inspires curiosity, critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity, and teamwork among students.

This learning approach creates a space for students to engage in group discussions, participate in role-plays, collaborate, explore diverse perspectives, and develop their own interpretations.

In today's highly competitive environment, theatre-based education concepts like Theatre in Education (TIE) and Theatre Edutainment (TE) create an ideal space for students to be able to focus on and engage deeply with their subjects. It encourages curiosity and sparks imagination in the target audience. One of the key strengths of drama education concepts is their ability to provide students with opportunities to tackle complex problems, devise creative solutions, and implement those solutions effectively. Additionally, engaging storylines create opportunities to discuss issues arising from the curriculum. This, in turn, plays a direct role in the development of both individuals and society.

b. For Whom?

This book is primarily intended for teachers. History educators, in particular, can adopt the methods outlined here as a new approach to teaching. Although the subject matter may be complex, by integrating drama-based educational concepts (TIE & TE), students can engage

in a more interactive and reflective learning process, which enhances their skills through creativity and critical thinking.

c. Why is History Important?

History is crucial for understanding the foundations and complexities of the present. It offers insight into the various cultures and societies that have shaped the world we live in today. Studying history enhances critical thinking and creates opportunities to comprehend the value of judgment, personal rights, and responsibilities. Ultimately, through the study of history, we develop knowledge and skills that shape our future.

2. Our guide to using this book

We have created very simple and enjoyable drama activities for both teachers and students.

We have created very simple and enjoyable drama activities for both teachers and students.

1. The lesson is organized into sections:
We have followed the teacher's guide, selected a sample lesson, and divided it into distinct sections. Each section has been transformed into a theatre game.
2. Choose your game and environment.
Teachers and students can select the game based on their preferences, taking into account whether it will be played indoors or outdoors.
3. Follow the guidelines:
In the "games" section, the guidelines for engaging students in each game are provided.
4. The game begins:
As the first step, ensure that everyone is able to participate and act freely.
5. The lesson with the game:
In the second step, deliver the lesson while incorporating the game. Use fun and interactive methods to reinforce the concepts you're teaching.

This will be a wonderful opportunity to inspire your students' creativity and immerse them in the world of theatre, creating a memorable experience together. In the context of the history subject, an example lesson based on Sri Lanka's post-independence era is presented. In

this lesson, the focus is on the key milestones in Sri Lanka's history after 1948, which have shaped the country's development. After 1948, Sri Lanka gained independence from British colonial rule. However, a question arose: 'Did we truly achieve freedom, or is there still a form of dependence?' National independence was reclaimed on paper, but the reality is much more complex. True freedom has taken shape through various forms of governance, influenced by legacies of colonialism, socio-economic structures, cultural norms, and political dynamics.

The goal of this lesson is to encourage teachers and students to think critically about the concept of freedom within the context of Sri Lankan history. Through the following narratives, we will inspire them to examine freedom from different perspectives based on personal life and collective identity. We aim to foster critical thinking skills and encourage students to explore alternative perspectives. A strategy has been developed to facilitate the discussion around the related game, focusing on the key points to be addressed at the end.

Along with the lesson, a theatrical activity has been created. The teacher's role in guiding and engaging the students in this activity is essential. Based on the subject matter and time frame, the theatrical activity has been designed to fit within the context. The activity can be conducted in various forms according to the preferences of the students and adapted as needed based on the circumstances.

3. Theatre Games for Learning History

a. First Game - The Well and the Guard (Power and Inequality - The 1947 Constitutional Reform)

Introduction

This is a drama-based theatre game. To start the game, inform the students about the following story. The characters mentioned in the story should be assigned to the students in the class. Additionally, encourage the students to recreate the space as described in the story. Create the space for the "well" as per the story, ensuring the water bottles are placed inside. The objective is for the students to collect the water bottles within the space described in the game.

Background of the Story

There is a small village. In this village, there is only one well where the people can access water. The well is guarded by a guard. The villagers have a strong need for water. The game will begin when the guard is asleep. The guard and the dog will sleep during the game. If a

villager tries to access the water while the guard or the dog is awake, they will be caught and arrested by the guard. At the end of the game, the villagers must successfully collect the water.

Game Setup

First Section: Preparing the Space

1. Select a small space for the game (for example, within the classroom).
2. Create a round space to symbolize the well.
3. Place water bottles within the space for the children to collect.
4. Mark the well as described and create a visible landmark for it within the setup.
5. Set up a guard area with additional props to enhance the experience.

Guidelines for Conducting the Game:

1. Choose one child from the class to play the role of the guard, and assign other children as dogs to protect the area. The remaining children are the villagers.
2. The guard and the dogs will sleep, and during this time, the villagers can enter the area to collect water.
3. When the villagers attempt to enter the area to collect water, the dogs may wake up and catch them.
4. After the dogs wake up, the guard may also become aware of the situation.
5. The villagers must remain completely still while inside the area. The dogs and the guard can still catch them if they make any movements.
6. If the villagers are caught by the dogs or the guard while trying to access the water, they will not be able to enter the area.
7. The game is meant to last for about ten minutes.

The first part of the game ends here. Then, the second part begins.

1. The teacher will intervene as needed during the game.
2. The teacher takes responsibility for maintaining the order and fairness of the game, ensuring the proper roles of the guard and the dogs.
3. The teacher will also guide the villagers by suggesting strategies on how to approach the water without being caught.
4. The teacher will designate leaders from the villagers, and these leaders will communicate the strategy to their group.
5. The leaders should decide on a signal and a name for their group (like a faction).

6. The leaders will organize their group members and encourage participation in the game. Each leader will ensure that their group is well-prepared to approach the water without being caught. The teacher will give a set time for this phase.
7. After voting, the majority decides its leader should be responsible for ensuring that the villagers get water.
8. The teacher may then state that a year had passed, and select a new group with a new leader to conduct another round of the game.

Necessary materials:

Bristol board, coloured pens, string, scissors, tin, and other equipment.

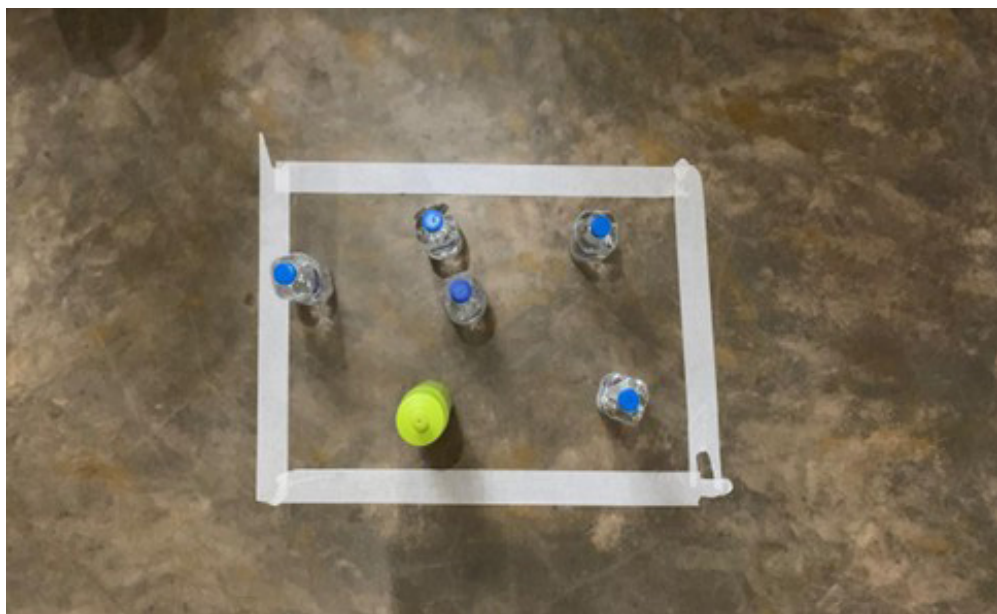
Questions raised during the discussion:

1. How did the students feel about the game?
2. Clarifying the key points gained from the game (leadership, power, political parties, voting).
3. Explain the need for organization.
4. Clarifying what the students felt about the other groups' performances.
5. Discussing the 1947 Soulbury governance structure.

The game can be used to teach other lessons as well. For example, it can also be used for a lesson on Anuradhapura's monarchy.



First game setup - Figure 01



The well and the water bottles are placed (First Game) – Figure 02



The villagers attempt to get the water (First Game) - Figure 03

1947 Soulbury Reforms and independence (Soulbury -Independence-Parliamentary Democracy) The table is a guide to the points that can be discussed.

Content	Critical reading points to discuss
Independence	What is Independence? National Anthem of Sri Lanka?
Soulbury Reforms and First Elections 1947	Election and establishment of political parties Why in a country need political parties? Why do we need an election? What were the political parties formed in SL during the colonial period and after independence? <i>LSSP- Lanka Sama Samaja Party</i> <i>UNP- United National Party</i> <i>Tamil Congress</i> <i>Lanka Indian Congress</i> <i>Bolshevik Lenin Party</i> <i>Lanka Communist Party</i> <i>Labour Party</i> <i>Independence Candidates</i> <i>Indian Estate Workers</i> <i>Colonial Influence</i> <i>Origin, Rights and Issues</i>

b. Second Game

1953 Harthal

Introduction

The background story of the game is based on the 1953 Harthal in Sri Lanka, which led to the "Public Unrest" (struggle). The purpose of the game is to create a dramatic situation based on a political issue within the scope of the game.

Required Materials

A bangle and a pen

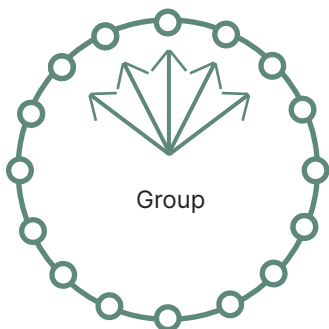
Instructions for Conducting the Game

1. The students should form a circle for the game.
2. 15 children from the class should secretly receive numbers from 1 to 15 for the game.
3. They should hold a pen in their mouths and pass the bangle using the pen to each other (Any other suitable equipment can be used for the game).
4. The game organizer (could be the teacher or one of the children who are not part of the 15) will choose four numbers at random.
5. The children holding those four numbers will leave the circle.
6. The game stops at this point.
7. The students who leave the circle will get together and call out a number from those remaining in the circle and make a request to them.
8. This request could be a creative activity or performance.
9. Once the request is completed, the students who left the circle re-join it and the game continues.
10. If the number selected was not able to fulfil their request, the students who left the circle may choose another number to make the request to.

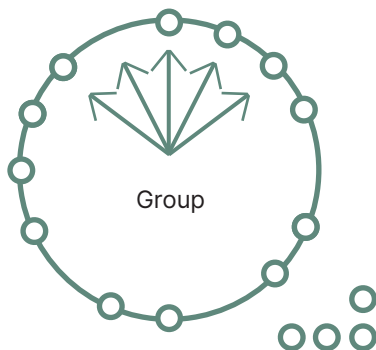
Discussion Questions Raised During the Game

1. Can public demonstrations be conducted to fulfil various requests?
2. Discuss how the Harthal movement could have influenced change.
3. Clarify the historical basis of the word "Harthal."
4. Explain the 1953 Harthal.

The dramatic game can also be used for teaching lessons while having fun. For example, it can be used in lessons on French Revolution, American Revolution, etc. Additionally, it can also be used for reviewing lessons.



*Fourth game setup
(Before players leave the circle) - Figure 4a*



*Fourth game setup
(After players leave the circle) - Figure 4b*

1953 Harthal (1956 Elections-Before 1956 Reforms) The table is a guide for discussion points.	
Content	Critical reading points to discuss
Before 1956	Harthal 1953 What does Harthal mean? Why? The influence of the peoples' uprisings, revolutions, protests and Harthals.

c. Third Game – The game of fives (1956 Pancha Maha Balavegaya)

Introduction

This drama game is based on Image Theatre (Rupa Ranga Rata). The Pancha Maha Balavegaya (Five Great Forces) that began in 1956 forms the foundation of this creative drama game. The children in the class are divided into groups and engage in a game based on the Pancha Maha Balavegaya, which uses cards with images representing each force.

Required Materials

Bristol board, Cardboard box, Paint, Paintbrush, Scissors

Game Instructions

1. The teacher must facilitate the game.
2. Prepare 3×3 inch cards with images representing each of the five forces of the Pancha Maha Balavegaya. Also, prepare extra cards for the groups without images.
3. Using the prepared cards with images and extra cards, decide how many cards each group will have based on the number of children in the class.
4. The number of remaining children in each group will determine the distribution of the cards.
5. All cards should be placed in a bag, and one card should be handed to each student in the class.
6. Children should arrange the cards according to the groupings they are part of.
7. Each group must then use the cards to create a tableau that represents the profession their cards represent.
8. Each group should be given a time to present their tableau to the class.
9. Each group must be given the opportunity to observe the tableau created by other groups.
10. At the end of the session, provide an opportunity for discussion about the drama game and the Pancha Maha Balavegaya.

Discussion Questions

1. What is the significance of number 5? (Panchaseela, Pase paw, Pasemahabalu, Pancha Nivarna, Pasevaga Mahanun, Pancha Mahepa, Pancha Mahavil, Pancha Maha Vadaya)
2. Why is the Pancha Maha Balavegaya important in this context?
3. How does the Pancha Maha Balavegaya impact the country?

4. Did the Pancha Maha Balavegaya serve as the legal framework that propelled the country forward? How did it influence the nation-building process?
5. Discuss the implications and influences of the 1956 language policy.
6. What are the differences between the Pancha Maha Balavegaya? What was the impact of the 1956 election on it?
7. Why was only Sanga included? Why weren't other clergy members involved?

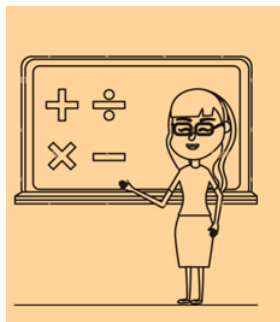
Note: This creative drama game can also be tweaked and used as a tool to teach other lessons.



Image Theatre – Figure 05



Third game setup – Figure 06



The type of cards you will need for the third game – Figure 07



*Playing the Veda role in the third game –
Figure - 08*



*Playing the Govi role in the third game –
Figure - 09*

Critical reading points and topics of the lesson	
(1956 Reforms, Social transform)	
Content	Critical reading points to discuss
Before 1956	Harthal 1953 What does Harthal mean? Why?
1956 Election	Panchaa maha balawegaya political propaganda Formation of SLFP 1956 election (results and changes) Sinhalese as the official language Public sector boom <i>Port and transport</i>

d. Fourth Game - Puppet Dance (1972)

Introduction

This is a rhythmic and musical game where children from a class form groups and perform movements along with rhythmic beats and music.

Materials Needed:

1. 2 strips of cloth
2. Background music
3. Instruments to play the music

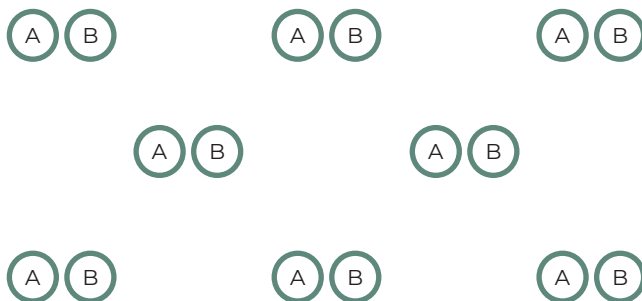
Instructions:

1. Divide the classroom into groups of 2 children.
2. In each team, one student will be A and the other will be B.
3. Each group should be given 2 strips of cloth, approximately three feet in length, to use in their performance.
4. B will tie one end of the strip on one hand.
5. A will be given the other strip to hold with both hands.
6. Draw a circle on the floor large enough for one child each group to stand inside comfortably.
7. The distance between the outer boundaries of the circle and the centre should be approximately six feet.
8. B will stand in the circles.
9. As the music plays, A will move the strips to conduct B in a dance.
10. B cannot exit the circle.
11. After a while, inform A to let go of one of the strips.
12. A must continue leading B to dance with the other strip.
13. After a while, inform A to let go of the other strip too.
14. Now B can dance any way they want to in keeping with the music.
15. The game is repeated again with A and B swapping roles. (A now holds the strip, and B will act according to the movements.)
16. Instead of strips, wooden sticks of about three feet in length can also be used for this game.
17. If the classroom is too small to have all the groups play at once, it can be done in batches.

Discussion Questions:

1. How did A feel about this game? Discuss.
2. How did B feel about this game? Discuss.

3. How did the audience feel about this game? Discuss.
4. What is freedom? Discuss.
5. Discuss the differences between freedom and full independence.
6. How does one live in the midst of oppression? Discuss.
7. What steps can be taken against oppression?
8. Discuss the significance of the 1972 Constitution and the rights included.



The fourth game setup – Figure 10



The fourth game – Figure 11



The fourth game – Figure 12

Critical reading points and topics of the lesson	
1972 Janaraja -constitution - Republican state	
Content	Critical reading points to discuss
1972 constitution	What does Republican state mean? Why does SL need a republican state? Establishment of the republican What SL gained from the 1972 constitution
	the 1972 constitution <i>structure of the parliament,</i> <i>Nomintive Executive presidency</i> <i>judiciary</i>

e. Fifth Game (1978)

Kankan Booru (Simon Says)

“Kankan booru”

“Sin sin oru”

“Will you do as I say?”

“Yes...”

“Then run along and...”

The game uses Kankan Booru or Simon Says for children to create different shapes and patterns.

Instructions:

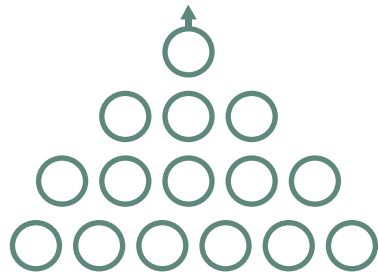
1. The leader directs one child to take an action.
2. The classroom should be prepared with enough space.
3. The rest of the group will follow the instructions given by the leader.
4. The leader will direct the group to create various shapes (e.g., a circle, a triangle).
5. The leader will guide them through religious or cultural activities (e.g., chanting, singing a song, or doing a dance).
6. The leader will appoint a new leader for the group.
7. The new leader will guide the group through various challenges (e.g., making a circle or performing an action).
8. Finally, the leader gets everyone to worship them.

Materials Needed: None

Discussion Questions:

1. Discuss how each one felt about the shapes like circles, squares, rectangles, and triangles they had to make. What was significant about the shapes?
2. Discuss the various religious or cultural postures and their significance.
3. Discuss what executive power is.
4. Discuss the executive presidency of 1978.
5. Share your experience about how executive power has been used in Sri Lanka.

The game can be used as a learning tool, incorporating lessons on topics such as the Medieval European society in European history or the ancient Egyptian civilization.



Fifth game setup – Figure 13



Fifth game – Figure 14



Fifth game – Figure 15

Critical reading points and topics of the lesson	
1978 -constitution	
Content	Critical reading points to discuss
Election	Executive presidency Economical change <i>Before 1978 Economical restrictions</i> <i>Open economy</i>
1978 constitution	Change the name of the country <i>Democratic Socialist Republican State of Sri Lanka</i> <i>Structure</i> <i>Economy</i> <i>Executive presidency</i> <i>Parliament</i> <i>Judiciary</i> <i>Changing the election System</i> <i>Preference voting system</i>

4. Overview

Studying history is not just about examining the past. It's also a critical pathway to shaping a successful future. It can be seen that history repeats itself and the same patterns can be seen throughout human civilization. The study of historical events and their interpretation is an essential activity in any society. By studying the cultural diversity, ancient traditions, and complex geopolitical dynamics in Sri Lankan history, our aim is to nurture students into critical thinkers.

There is an opportunity to develop new methodologies for the teaching and learning of history within local schools. The goal is to use concepts like Theatre in Education (TIE) and Theatre Edutainment to teach history through dramatic techniques. An example lesson plan has been created for this purpose. This is also an opportunity for teachers and students to get creative and explore how to apply drama to teach different lessons in the classroom. Using drama as a base, teachers can help students gain the ability to understand history in different ways. In this way, students' analytical and reasoning skills are developed through creative play. By teaching history in an enjoyable and engaging manner through these techniques, the goal is to help students develop critical thinking abilities.