Middle School Monologues – Speech vs. Monologue / Self vs. Character

Lesson 6 · 50 minutes · Grades 6–8 · Theater

Lesson Goals

Central Focus

Students will evaluate their new monologue based on their abilities, analyzing the text, checking for understanding, and perform it for the first time.

State Standards

- 6.TH:Re7 – Describe and record personal reactions to artistic choices in a drama/theatre work.
- 7.TH:Pr4b – Use various character objectives in a drama/theatre work to overcome obstacles.
- 7.TH:Pr5a – Participate in a variety of acting exercises and techniques that can be applied in a rehearsal or drama/theatre performance.

Learning Objective

I will be able to analyze my monologue for content and context, I will be able to evaluate my character's objectives, and perform my monologue for the first time.

Academic Language and Language Supports

Language function: Analyze, interpret, perform

Language demand: Writing, Speaking, Reading, Listening

Lesson vocabulary: Reviewed vocabulary vital for lesson: Monologue, Soliloquy, Speech, Fourth Wall, Objectives, Goals. Assorted monologue-specific language reviewed with individual students.

Syntax: Students use structured sentences to describe and justify their analysis (e.g., "My character wants ___ because ***," "One important line is "*** because it shows ___.")

Discourse: Students will participate in peer and whole-class discussions to clarify who their character is, what their character wants, and how their performance choices show that character, not just themselves.

- "My character is similar to me because ___, but different from me because ___."
- "In this moment, my character is trying to get the other person to ___."
- "I chose to say this line with ___ (emotion/tone) because my character is feeling ___."

Differentiation

English Language Learners

- Encourage use of sentence frames that name the character explicitly (e.g., “My character feels…,” “My character wants…”).
- Pair ELLs with supportive partners to talk through who the character is and what is happening before focusing on performance.
- Allow students to first describe the character in their home language, then choose key words or phrases to share in English.

Gifted/Advanced Students

- Invite advanced students to make more sophisticated distinctions between self and character (e.g., where their own experience informs the role and where they are making imaginative choices).
- Challenge them to identify specific tactics or playable actions for their character’s objective (e.g., “to convince,” “to guilt,” “to impress”) and test different choices in performance.
- Ask them to model a brief before/after performance showing “me telling the story as myself” vs. “me playing the character,” then articulate the difference.

IEP/504

- Provide a clear, visual organizer that separates columns for “ME” and “MY CHARACTER” (what we have in common, what is different) to support perspective-taking.
- Use simple, repeated questions during conferences: “What does your character want here?” “How does your character feel?” to anchor students in role.
- Allow students to read aloud first in a low-pressure way (to self, to the teacher, or recorded) before performing in front of peers, focusing on one habit (e.g., volume) at a time.

Culturally Responsive Teaching

- Affirm that characters can be inspired by students’ real experiences while still being treated as roles they can shape and explore.
- Encourage students to incorporate aspects of their cultural background into the character (language choices, references, emotional responses) and then talk about those as intentional acting choices.
- Normalize a range of expression styles (quieter, bigger, more internal) as valid ways to play a character, so students do not feel forced to perform an inauthentic “personality.”

Materials

- First Readthrough Monologue Worksheet

Lesson Plan Details

10 min Steps 1–4: Hook, Preview, First Read & First Impressions

Step 1 – Hook & Objective. Briefly explain the difference between a monologue and a speech – explaining vs. feeling, and how we're approaching their monologue as actors NOT as public speakers. They're playing a CHARACTER – even if that character is inspired by themself. First step is a fresh careful read. State the goal in student-friendly language: "Today we're going to read your monologue as a performer for the first time and use a worksheet to help us understand the character you're playing and get ready to perform it later."

Step 2 – Distribute Materials & Preview Worksheet. Hand out the "First Readthrough Monologue Worksheet." Quickly walk through the sections so students know the path.

Step 3 – First Silent Read. Ask students to read the monologue silently to themselves one time. Directions: "No acting yet. Just notice what's happening and how it makes you feel." Option: students may annotate with question marks or stars on lines that stand out.

Step 4 – Complete Part 1: First Impressions. Students do a second read and then fill out Part 1 of the worksheet:

- First reaction
- Circle feeling words
- Moment/line that stood out and why
- Circulate and prompt with questions: "What surprised you?" "Which emotion word fits your character best right now?"

5–8 min Step 5 – Guided Discussion: Who / Where / When

- As a whole group, ask: "Who seems to be talking?" "Who might they be talking to?" "Where and when could this be happening?"
- Record a few student ideas on the board as models they can borrow.
- Discuss the difference between "you" as a person and "You" as a character.

> **Assessment 1.1 (Informal) · Standards: 6.TH:Re7**

18 min Steps 6–8: Basic Situation, Out-Loud Reads, Voice & Meaning

Step 6 – Complete Part 2: Basic Situation. Students now answer Part 2 on the worksheet using their best guesses: Who is speaking? Who are they talking to? Where/when? What happened right before? What does the character want? Encourage use of simple sentence frames if needed: "My character is…" "My character wants…" Support ELLs: point to the word bank or sentence frames on the board.

Step 7 – Out-Loud Reads (Solo or Partners). Students read the monologue out loud at least twice:

- First read: focus on clear words, not big acting.

- Second read: experiment with a bit more emotion.
- Options: read to a partner, or read quietly to self or record on a device (good for anxious/Autistic students).

Step 8 – Complete Part 3: Voice & Meaning. Students fill out Part 3: list confusing words/lines; put one confusing line into their own words; note which parts felt natural vs. awkward to say. Circulate and assist with vocabulary, pronunciation, and paraphrasing.

10 min Steps 9–10: Self-Assessment & Long-Term Goals

Step 9 – Self-Assessment: Part 4 Habits Check. Explain the 1–4 scale (didn't do it yet → did it really well). Students rate themselves on: volume, clarity, looking up, expression, and body. Students choose one strength (highest number) and explain why, and one area to improve (lowest number) and write one small next step.

Step 10 – Set Long-Term Goals: Part 5. Remind students they will be working on this monologue over time. Students complete Part 5:

- What they want the audience to think/feel
- Which area they want to focus on (memorization, voice, body, emotion, meaning)
- A simple goal with a time frame
- One question they still have

Invite 2–3 students to share their goal aloud.

> **Assessment 4.2 (Formal) · Standards: 7.TH:Pr4b, 7.TH:Pr5a**

~5 min Closure: Step 11

- Ask quick reflection questions: "What did you learn about your character from this first couple of reads?" "What's one thing you want to try next time you rehearse this monologue?"
- Collect worksheets for formative assessment and to reference in next lessons.