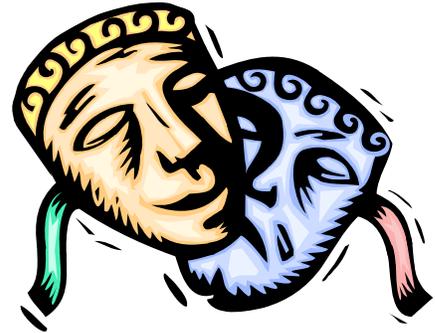


Teacher Notes: Role-Plays and Simulations

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Value of role-plays in the history classroom:

Role-plays or simulations can enhance student awareness of the impact of historic events, people, or ideas by allowing them to make connections between their personal experiences and the lives of people in the past. It can also be a way of encouraging them to explore perspectives or points of view that they would not otherwise understand. Finally, role-plays can help students develop empathy and enrich their social consciousness.



Some guidelines for effective role-plays or simulations:

- The context and roles should be clearly defined, while allowing latitude for spontaneity and creativity on the part of the students.
- The role-play should have a designated time frame—generally, not more than five minutes.
- The situation should be defined as a problem or controversy so that students are encouraged to take a stand or a position.
- Students should be allowed time to prepare and to access any preparatory information they need.
- The setting or context should be clearly described to help students enter into their roles.
- Role descriptions should provide enough information to help students “enter into” the character they are to portray (general characteristics, beliefs, and values) without conveying a pre-determined script. Students may use their historical knowledge to develop their own role descriptions, or they may base their character on a historical figure.
- Students may fill out a role-play outline to help them prepare their characters (refer to the example that follows).
- The role-play should be structured so as to reach a conclusion or a resolution.
- Allow time for a group debriefing, including the audience, after the role-play. Students may also write individual journal reflections.
- Caution students to be realistic, and to avoid anachronisms, oversimplifications, or stereotypes.

Variations:

- Students may or may not decide to use props or costumes.
- If there are not enough roles for everyone in the group, one student could be assigned the task of being a witness or observer who “thinks out loud” to the audience without disrupting the action.
- Students could be asked to reverse roles or switch points of view in a second role-play.
- A narrator may help set the scene and expand on what is happening.

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Role-Play Outline

List the important facts and plan how you will approach this role-play. Do not write a script, as you do not know how the other characters will play out this scenario. Be creative but realistic.



When and where does this scenario take place?	Who am I?
Describe my character (age, culture, gender, situation).	What are my basic attitudes, beliefs, values?
What other information do I need to prepare my role?	What will I do to express this character?
What type of resolution to this situation would my character like to see?	Points to remember: