



# Educator Lesson Guide

RANGE	SUBJECTS	DURATION
Upper Elementary/Middle	Media Literacy, Language Arts, Drama/Theatre, Social Studies, Social Emotional Learning	3 Activities Approx. 60-90 minutes each depending on differentiation

## LESSON OVERVIEW

This lesson guide includes activities accompanying Episode 3: Nonverbal Communication, part of the "Communication Nation" series by The Children's Hour Inc.

The episode features Doug Montoya, a comedian, actor, educator, and co-founder of The Box ABQ, a theater in Albuquerque, New Mexico. He is interviewed by Katie Stone, the Founder, Executive Director, and Producer of [The Children's Hour Inc.](#), and members from the Kids Crew, youth journalists who help produce The Children's Hour as part of a free extracurricular activity in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Educational materials are created by Lorraine Archibald, Licensed Educator and Educational Director for The Children's Hour, and Amber Arnett, Licensed Special Education Educator and Educational Consultant.

The series and accompanying learning materials explore various forms of communication through languages, verbal abilities, media, and community building. They aim to serve as tools for educators and families to support the development of critical thinking skills, build social-emotional skills, celebrate diverse identities, and promote tolerance and empathy.

The learning materials align mostly to a 5th-grade level, but with differentiation, can be appropriate for grades 3-8 or beyond. Each activity can be completed approximately within a 60-90 minute lesson, not including extension options. The activities can be taught together or separately. Additional materials in the lesson guide include Episode Vocabulary, Standards, and Teaching Tips, including universal supports and targeted, intensive intervention ideas. The learning materials support lesson design and allow for flexible alignment to assessments based on grade level, site, and local needs. To maintain inclusivity and universality, the materials do not provide a specific assessment component.

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# Part 1 Activity: Trust Me, I'm the Expert

## OBJECTIVES

- Learners will understand the benefits of practicing improvisation.
- Learners will collaborate to use creativity and imagination to create a scene.
- Learners will practice the skills of, quick thinking, teamwork, and performance.

## MATERIALS:

- Audio of Part 1: "The Art of Improv"
- Student Activity Page
- Random items for props

## STANDARDS

### Common Core

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.3.B: Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, description, and pacing, to develop experiences and events or show the responses of characters to situations.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.1: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions.

### National Core Arts Standards

- Creating: Anchor Standard 1. Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.
- Performing/Presenting/Producing: Anchor Standard 5. Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation, Anchor Standard 6: Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work
- Connecting: Anchor Standard 10: Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.

### The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), five core competencies in Social and Emotional Learning (SEL):

- Relationship Skills: The ability to establish and maintain healthy and supportive relationships and to effectively navigate settings with diverse individuals and groups.

### National Health Education Standards

- Standard 4: Use interpersonal communication skills to support the health and well-being of self and others.

### The National Theatre Standards

- TH:Cr1.1.4. Articulate the visual details of imagined worlds, and improvised stories that support the given circumstances in a drama/theatre work.
- TH:Cr1.1.6. Explore a scripted or improvised character by imagining the given circumstances in a drama/theatre work.

## KEY VOCABULARY

- **Improvisation** (Im-prov-i-sa-tion): The act of doing or making something up as you go along without planning ahead of time.
- **Expert** (Ex-pert): Someone who knows a lot about a specific topic or is very skilled at something.
- **Prop** (Prop): An object used by actors during a play or performance to help tell the story.
- **Scene** (Scene) A part of a play, movie, or book where the action happens in one place without stopping.
- **Prompt** (Prompt): Something that helps or reminds you to do or say something.



# Part 1 Activity: Trust Me, I'm the Expert

## LESSON PROGRESSION:

**Introduction (5 minutes):** Inform learners that they will be practicing the "The Art of Improv", and playing a game to enjoy team building and practice skills.

**Contextualize (15-25 minutes):** 1. Explicitly teach key vocabulary by helping learners decode words and their meanings. 2. Play the audio clip "Part 1: The Art of Improv".

Discussion Questions (may be asked before/during/after listening):

1. What do you already know about improvisation or improv? Have you ever seen an improv performance?
2. Can you think of any professions where improvisation might be an important skill?
3. Why do you think the rule "Yes and" is considered the most important rule in improv?
4. How can playing improv games help build better communication and teamwork skills?
5. How can other skills learned through improv be useful in everyday life?

### Activity (30-60 minutes):

1. Hand out the activity page "Trust Me, I'm the Expert". Instruct learners to read the instructions and help clarify the rules of improv:
  - Use "yes, and..." instead of rejecting prompts from others. Instead, we always say yes to what is happening in the scene and add more information when it is our turn.
  - Act as though you are the expert on what you're talking about, even though you're just pretending.
  - Use what is available and be creative.
2. Assign groups of 4-6 if possible. Help students complete the "scavenger hunt for props" section by allowing them to collect random items. The types of items they will be collecting include something green, soft, small, weird, common, and useful. Help them to set up an area to perform.
3. Learners should use the "improv prompts" to inspire a scene. They will take turns as the expert "leading" a scene and choosing a prompt, but everyone will have a turn in contributing to each scene. The scene ends when everyone has spoken or a predetermined time limit is reached.

Extension: Challenge students to enact a long-form improv version of one of their prompts.

### Closing (5 Minutes)

Kindly thank students for their cooperation and participation. Ask what they thought of the activity.

## DIFFERENTIATION

Support learners with targeted interventions, including clarifying for understanding, breaking activities into smaller steps, and contextualizing vocabulary and topics.

Challenge learners with extension activities and leadership roles such as modeling/supporting peers.

For English Language Learners and others who would benefit, prepare sentence stem/word bank cards to accompany some prompts as a tool for application.

For students who may not be comfortable with acting, create an agreement allowing them to take on a role related to coaching others, setting the scene, and contributing out loud during discussions.

## Part 2 Activity: Creating Connections

### OBJECTIVES

- Learners will practice adapting and adjusting quickly through improvisation games.
- Learners will summarize their experience.
- Learners will design their own version of a game.
- Learners will collaborate and cooperate with peers.

### MATERIALS:

- Audio of Part 2: "Staying Connected"
- Student Activity Page
- Timers, writing utensils, paper or dry erase boards

### STANDARDS

#### ELA Common Core

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.3.B: Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, description, and pacing, to develop experiences and events or show characters' responses to situations.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.1: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions.

#### The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), five core competencies in Social and Emotional Learning (SEL):

- Social awareness: The ability to understand the perspectives of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds, cultures, & contexts.
- Relationship Skills: The abilities to establish and maintain healthy and supportive relationships and to effectively navigate settings with diverse individuals and groups.

#### National Health Education Standards

- Standard 4: Use interpersonal communication skills to support the health and well-being of self and others.

#### National Core Arts Standards

- Creating: Anchor Standard 1: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.

#### Next Generation Science Standards: Science and Engineering Practices:

- Planning and Carrying Out Investigations
- Analyzing and Interpreting Data

### KEY VOCABULARY

**Teamwork** (Team-work): Working together with others to complete a task or achieve a goal.

**Cooperation** (Co-op-er-a-tion): Sharing ideas, responsibilities, positivity, and efforts to get something done.

**Collaboration** (Col-lab-or-a-tion): Working together with others equally to achieve a common goal or complete a task.

## Part 2 Activity: Creating Connections

### LESSON PROGRESSION:

**Introduction (5 minutes):** Ask learners, “Do you ever feel that you overthink things sometimes?” Allow learners who volunteer to provide examples. Point out connections between students and emphasize that everyone has in common that we all overthink sometimes.

**Contextualize (15-25 minutes):** 1. Explicitly teach key vocabulary by helping learners decode words and their meanings. 2. Play the audio clip “Part 2: Staying Connected”.

Discussion Questions (may be asked before/during/after listening):

1. What are some common norms or “unspoken” rules when communicating with others?
2. Why is staying positive important in improv, and how can negativity affect a performance?
3. How can playing improv games help us feel more connected to the people we are playing with?
4. How can the “yes, and...” rule be applied in real-life situations?
5. How can practicing improv help you understand and appreciate different perspectives and ideas?

**Activity (30-60 minutes):**

1. Hand out the activity page, have students read instructions, clarify any questions, and model a round of the classic version of the game.
2. Briefly review the rules of the three versions that students will play. Assign learners to small groups and allow appropriate time for play and note-taking.
3. Support students in using their notes to inform the idea of their version.

**Closing (5 Minutes)**

Thank everyone for their cooperation and participation. Ask learners what skills they gained with this activity. If you are doing Activity 4.3, inform them that they have practiced skills that will be very important for the next.

### DIFFERENTIATION

Support learners who struggle with socialization by assigning rotating groups or planning groups with consideration of learner dynamics.

Offer tools such as communication boards or display visuals to support learners with unfamiliar categories or words.

Invite students to create, share their variations, and find commonalities with others.

English Language Learners can benefit from premade word lists.

## Part 3 Activity: Play for a Purpose

### OBJECTIVES

- Learners will identify patterns of values and benefits of games from around the world.
- Learners will plan, design, and invent a game.
- Learners will sequence information to create steps for a game.
- Learners will create a game that fulfills a positive purpose.

### MATERIALS:

- Audio of Part 3: "Games We Play"
- Student activity pages
- Extension: Materials to create games such as art supplies, recycled materials, things found in nature, equipment for team sports, other supplies such as rope, dice, etc,

### STANDARDS

#### ELA Common Core

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.5.2: Summarize a written text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

#### National Core Arts Standards

- Creating: Conceiving and developing new artistic ideas and work.

#### The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), five core competencies in Social and Emotional Learning (SEL):

- Relationship Skills: The abilities to establish and maintain healthy and supportive relationships and to effectively navigate settings with diverse individuals and groups.
- Social Awareness: The ability to understand the perspectives of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds, cultures, & contexts.

#### International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) Standards for Students:

- Creative Communicator: Students communicate clearly and express themselves creatively for various purposes using the platforms, tools, styles, formats, and digital media appropriate to their goals.

#### National Health Education Standards

- Standard 4: Use interpersonal communication skills to support health and well-being of self and others, Standard 7: Demonstrate practices and behaviors to support health and well-being of self and others.

#### National Physical Education Standards

- Standard 3: Develops social skills through movement.

### KEY VOCABULARY

**Purpose** (Pur-pose): The reason why something is done or created.

**Tradition** (Tra-di-tion): Customs and practices that originate in the past and have often been done in the same way for a long time. Traditions also adapt due to environmental factors and to survive.

**Resilience** (Re-sil-i-ence): The ability to keep going and stay strong even when facing difficult situations or challenges.

**Coordination** (Co-or-di-na-tion): The ability to move different body parts together smoothly and efficiently.



## Part 3 Activity: Play for a Purpose

### LESSON PROGRESSION:

**Introduction (5 minutes):** Ask students to share experiences related to whether they have ever made up a game or played one that someone they knew made up. Inform them that in this activity, they will listen to audio, consider the purpose of games, and invent their own.

**Contextualize (15-25 minutes):** 1. Explicitly teach key vocabulary by helping learners decode words and their meanings. 2. Play the audio clip "Part 3: Games We Play"

Discussion Questions (may be asked before/during/after listening):

1. How do you and your friends/family use games to connect and have fun together?
2. How did the ball game help build connections between different groups of people?
3. The audio mentions several games from different cultures. What common values or lessons do these games teach, and how do they compare to games you know?
4. Why is it important to be kind to ourselves and others when we struggle or lose in a game?
5. What kind of game would you create, and what values or lessons would you want it to teach?

**Activity (30-90+ minutes):**

1. Hand out the activity pages. Explain that learners will create their own game with the specific goal of playing with others. Help them through the steps on the activity pages to plan and design their game.
2. Determine which learners would like to complete the extension and help facilitate.

Extension: Build and test the games

- Allow more class time to build and play each other's games and discuss what they learned from the experience. In what way did some games do well at achieving their purpose? What improvements could be made?

**Closing (5 Minutes)**

Congratulate students on their designs and encourage them to share and play the game with others.

### DIFFERENTIATION

If you have limited resources, instead of having each learner create their own game, have each one prepare a simple poster or visual aid explaining their game proposal. The class may vote on the top games they are interested in or combine ideas and work together as a group to create them.

Consider breaking the activity sections into guided chunks and have students contribute to modeling how to respond.



# Vocabulary

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- **Coordination**: (Co-or-di-na-tion): The ability to move different body parts together smoothly and efficiently.





# Teacher Tips

Universal supports will allow for best engagement with the media and activities. Lessons may need to be adapted based on student needs. Use the chart below to help you plan out leveled systems of student support.

<b>Supports</b>	<b>Planning</b>
<p><b>Universal Supports</b> Classroom community building, safe environment, routines, audio and visual supports, structured brain breaks, objectives posted, modeling, decoding words, concise accessible instructions, collaboration and peer support, materials are culturally relevant and responsive</p>	<p><b>Throughout the lesson, all students will benefit from:</b></p>
<p><b>Targeted Intervention</b> Formatively assess to get data, provide prompt feedback, scaffold the lesson with more context and break into steps, shelter instruction with explicit comprehension support for vocabulary and concepts. Contextualize unfamiliar concepts or words.</p>	<p><b>I anticipate some students may struggle with:</b></p> <p><b>I can prevent this, or support them by:</b></p>
<p><b>Intensive Intervention</b> Identify when a student is struggling, consider an intervention that accounts for social emotional or basic needs, determine their preferred learning style, provide one on one support, long-term planning and data tracking.</p>	<p><b>A few students may need:</b></p> <p><b>What resources can I use for support?</b></p>



# Standards

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## National Physical Education Standards

- Standard 3: Develop social skills through movement.