

# The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum

Number 1 in a series of four

## Drama ... getting started



**'Drama permeates our everyday lives and serves a variety of purposes. It enables us to understand ourselves, the people around us, and the world in which we live'.  
- The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum, 2000**

## Drama and Stories

Stories are a good starter for drama work. There is much more you can do with a story than simply acting it out. The stories used as examples in the activities below feature in *Drama in the Classroom*, a new Ministry of Education resource in your school.

### Retelling a Story

To check students understanding of the story. In pairs the students retell the story:

- *as if they are one of the characters in the story. For example as the three little pigs mum, as Maui's brothers.*
- *as fast as they can*
- *with one section mimed*
- *in a nonsense language (retaining its meaning through tone and gesture)*
- *backwards*
- *as a series of questions*

Think of other ways: whispered as gossip, shouted across a bar, sung, in five words...

**'Drama makes your brain More Powerful', Chris, aged 7 from the Ministry of Education's new resource Drama in the Classroom.**

### Getting to know the Characters

Other conventions will build empathy for the characters:

#### Vocal Collage

*Students sit on the floor back to back in groups of three. With their eyes closed they describe a character as if they know him. For example: I grew up with Maui and I always thought...*

#### Role on the Wall

*In groups students draw an outline of a character. Using words, images and colour they portray what they think the character looked like, their values, thoughts and feelings. For example: the sun before or after he has been caught.*

#### Hot Seating

*In groups students question or interview members of their group who play one of the characters. Try out different answers to the same question. For example: There might be many reasons why the Troll tries to scare the Gruff family.*

### Reflecting on the Story

Other conventions reflect on what is happening in the story

#### Still Image

*Students create a still image as if they are illustrating the story. For example the moment just before the Gruffs walk on to the bridge, Maui weaving the flax for the net. The characters can be questioned about their feelings or thoughts. Other students may be asked to speak the "voice in the head" of the role. Students might try out lines of dialogue they think their character might say. This might build a small devised piece that the students present to the rest of the group.*



*Just before the Gruffs walk on to the bridge!*

### Playing in the Story

#### Teacher in Role

*If the teacher takes a role with the students they can look at the story from different angles. For example as parents of a troll who won't scare people, or as realtors trying to sell straw houses to pigs, or as counsellors working with the sun - upset after being held prisoner.*

For more ideas see the Ministry website: [www.tki.org.nz/e/arts](http://www.tki.org.nz/e/arts) and the video and booklet distributed into every school in term 2 2001, Drama in the Classroom.