

Activity #4: Choral Reading

*In this activity, students will translate excerpts from **Outside** into choral reading performances. The goal of the activity is for students to analyze the meaning of dramatic texts and highlight elements of texts using various choral reading strategies.*

Materials Needed:

Access to Youtube; Excerpts from *Outside*; Choral Reading Planning Steps (found at bottom of attached document); Pens, pencils

Instructional Procedures:

Tell the students that they will be creating a choral reading using an excerpt from *Outside*.

Show Youtube examples of choral reading. Suggestions include: IGNTE Choral Reading: Speak FIRST Chapter. <https://youtu.be/Cp-VTHGIKWA>

Brainstorm with students some elements to include in planning a choral reading selection: volume, tempo, rhythm. Explain that each of these elements should provide contrast and variety in the performance, (e.g, loud and soft, fast and slow, staccato and legato) and should bring out the message, important ideas and words, pacing and mood of the passage.

Explain that the choral reading performance will also include sections to be voiced in unison, two-part (either a single voice followed by the rest of the group or half the group followed by another half), and multi-part (any creative combination of voices or effects).

Assign students to groups of four or five. Distribute the same excerpt to each group member and ask for one student in the group to read the excerpt aloud to the group.

Guide the students through the Choral Reading Planning Steps provided in Appendix G.

Have the students present their choral reading selections to the class.

For each performance, ask students to identify choral reading elements that highlighted the message, important ideas, pacing and mood of the passage. What did they find memorable about each selection?

Choral Reading - Excerpts

Excerpt #1

Hi, yeah. Um...hi. I'm Daniel. You guys know that. Or maybe some of you don't. I've been at this school two months and I've barely said a word. Not 'cause I don't like you guys or anything, I'm just... none of you know why I'm here, why I transferred here, I mean. Ms. Franjelica knows, 'cause she was part of getting me here so that I could be, um, "safe", which is why she let me take over today's meeting so that I could ask you guys if...

Excerpt #2

I stand at the mirror. I look at myself. I walk back and forth. I talk to myself, I say, "Hi." I still don't get it. So I say "fag, you're a faggot, are you a faggot? Huh? It's just the way you are." I'm looking in the mirror and that's when I...see it. I see what they see. And I think, damn, that kid needs to step it up. That kid needs a real friend. So I lean into the mirror and look myself in the eyes, and I ask, as gently as I can, "Hey, Daniel, it's okay...are you?" And I look back at myself and for the first time I think... maybe? Maybe. Maybe. (beat) Yes. Yes yes yes yes yes yes yes yes yes yes yes yes, I'm pretty sure I am yes.

Excerpt #3

She had us over to her house, to work. One time Jeremy was late and so we spent an hour bitching about Carmen and Brianna. We hung out, even when we weren't doing homework, we'd take the bus into the city, and see plays and movies at the rep cinema, and suddenly I'm like, yay! I have a life! I start to relax, to enjoy my time at Salisbury Collegiate, and then... And then. (beat) I'm standing in the cafeteria at lunch, and my phone, which I barely use, starts buzzing in my backpack. It's a...text. "Are you still a faggot?"

Excerpt #4

She came up to me the first day back, I was sitting alone out by the bike racks and she starts asking me - how was my summer, how am I holding up? did I still talk to Daniel? (imitating Josie's dramatics) and that she just can't...get...over...what... happened. (...) I was like, "could be worse, Josie, he could've died, like you all were hoping he would, you know, like when you wrote on his wall 'no one likes you, no one would care if you died?'" And she was all, "that wasn't me! They don't know for sure who did that" and I said, "I don't care if it was you or one of your friends, or one of their boyfriends, or whoever- you're not allowed to pretend like you care, get out of my face before I punch you-"

Choral Reading - Planning Steps

(For the teacher to use in guiding students through the process)

1. Decide on words or phrases to say in unison, and practice them together.
2. Decide on sections for two-part style and practice them.
3. Practice both the unison and two-part sections twice.
4. Decide on multi-part sections and practice them.
5. Read the entire excerpts aloud, incorporating all decisions about unison, two-part and multi-part words and phrases.
6. Make changes to improve the reading. Read aloud again.
7. Now decide on words or phrases that should be spoken loudly or softly.
8. Practice again, this time focusing attention primarily on volume.
9. Decide on words and phrases that should be spoken quickly or slowly.
10. Practice again, focusing primarily on tempo.
11. Now decide on rhythmic aspects of the performance. Which words or phrases should be spoken in a brisk or clipped manner (staccato) and which should be spoken in a smooth or melodic manner (legato).
12. Practice again, incorporating all the decisions made so far.
13. Decide on a time to incorporate a pause or silence into the excerpt. Practice again.
14. Decide on any sound effects to add. Practice again.
15. Decide on the physical positioning of the performers when they present their excerpts.
16. Complete a final run-through.