

E C T

Essential Collective Theatre

**THE
FIGHTING
DAYS**

STUDY GUIDE

Table of Contents

Director's Note.....	3
About the Author.....	3
Summary of Play.....	3
Creative Team and cast.....	3-4
Thematic Overview.....	4-5
Show Curriculum Connections	
Grade 7.....	5
Grade 8.....	5
Grade 9.....	5-6
Grade 10.....	6
Grade 11.....	6-7
Grade 12.....	7
Character Background	
Nellie McClung.....	7
Francis Beynon.....	8
Lily Beynon.....	8
George McNair.....	8
Historical Context.....	8-9
Present Day Connections.....	10-11
Pre-Show Questions.....	11
Post-Show Questions.....	11
Activities to Do with Your Class Before the Show.....	11-16
Activities to Do with Your Class After the Show.....	16-19
Sources.....	19-20
About ECT.....	20

Production Sponsor for *The Fighting Days*:



ECT also gratefully acknowledges support from the following:



Director's Note

At ECT, we strive to create theatre that helps us to understand our world a little more, and to celebrate the stories that are important to Canada and to our region. This is a play that I first saw when I was a high school student in Winnipeg, and I am thrilled to be producing it here in Niagara in 2016. I have always been proud to know that Canadians like Francis Beynon and Nellie McClung fought for the rights of women in this country, and were successful in achieving the vote for women, even before the US or Britain! *The Fighting Days* is a play about people who see injustice or inequality in their world and are willing to work hard to change people's minds, and ultimately to change the rules, so that our world is a better place for everyone. We can all take inspiration from this kind of story!

- Monica Dufault, Artistic Director, Essential Collective Theatre

About the Author

Wendy Lill was born on November 2nd 1950 in Vancouver, British Columbia. She was a writer for the CBC, and wrote the scripts for several radio plays there. She has written many live theatre plays, four of which received nominations for the Governor General's Award for English-language Drama, including *The Occupation of Heather Rose* (1987), *All Fall Down* (1994), *The Glace Bay Miner's Museum* (1996), and *Corker* (1999). Her play, *Memories of You* (1989) was nominated for a Chalmers Canadian Play Award.

Of course she was not just a playwright. In 1997 Lill was asked to run for the federal election for the NDP party. She became a Member of Parliament and surprised her opponents when she won her riding by 2000 votes. She was re-elected in 2000 and served a second term. During her time as an MP, she was a strong supporter of the arts and helped pave the way for major studies surrounding the arts and government. Those studies examined the federal government's role in supporting the arts and culture, the role of big box stores in relation to book publications, and the importance of public broadcasting in protecting Canada's cultural sovereignty. Wendy Lill is also a vocal advocate for human rights, children and youth, and people living with disabilities. She lives in Nova Scotia.

Summary

Francis: "I believe in the vote for women, all women, and I am going to keep fighting for it!"
The Fighting Days, Act I, scene 6.

Set in Winnipeg in the early 1900's, *The Fighting Days* explores the fight against oppression and for the female vote. It follows Francis Beynon, her sister Lily, as well as Nellie McClung and newspaper editor George McNair, as they work to build support to give women the right to vote. However, they must face the question - should ALL women have the right to vote? Should a woman who was born in Canada have the same rights as a woman who was born elsewhere? While struggling with these questions, these women also must deal with the impending war and the impact that this has on nationalist ideas and gendered expectations.

Creative Team

Playwright: Wendy Lill
 Director: Monica Dufault
 Set and Props Design: David Antscherl
 Costume Design: Roberta Doylend
 Lighting Design: Jacqueline Costa
 Sound Design: Ethan Rising
 Production Manager: Tommy Hurst
 Stage Manager: JoAnna Black
 Assistant Stage Manager: Geneviève Bain
 Wardrobe Assistant: Jo Pacinda
 Marketing materials developed by: Marcus Tuttle
 Study Guide Created by: Kristen Smyth and Mark Harrigan

Cast

Francis Beynon: Reanne Spitzer
 Lillian Beynon: Christina Nicolaou
 Nellie McClung: Jenny L. Wright
 George McNair: Darren Keay

Themes

Freedom

The Fighting Days looks at the concept of freedom and the many definitions that it has for different people. To Nellie, Francis, and Lily, freedom meant the right to vote and to have a voice in the way that their country was run. For others, this term might mean religious freedom, or the right to education, or freedom from oppression. With so many different interpretations of the word, what IS freedom? How can it be achieved? Is freedom for some the same as freedom for all?

Public vs Private

Throughout *The Fighting Days*, the women must negotiate how they are perceived in public and how they act in private. For most of the play, the women manage to keep these two spheres separate. Nellie McClung, while in public, appears to support the right of all women to vote federally. However, she privately told the Prime Minister to only give Empire women (those who are British descendants) the right to vote for the time being. She is sure to keep her private life and public life separate, for fear of how she will be perceived by others. Francis Beynon, however, is unable to keep her two lives separate. In *The Fighting Days*, Francis brings her private opinions into her public image, resulting in angry readers of her newspaper column, threats, and forced resignation from her job. This play explores the intersection of these two spheres, and shows the consequences of keeping them separate, as well as them overlapping.

Oppression

Oppression is explored in *The Fighting Days* in many different ways. First and foremost, this play deals with the women's suffrage movement, and the fight for the right to vote. The play

shares the internalized gender inequality in both men and women in the early 1900's. At this time, it was believed that men should go to school, provide for their family, and go off to war, while women stay home and take care of their family. The women in *The Fighting Days* had a revolutionary idea - that women should be allowed to have a voice in the way that their country is run. The play chronicles some of the obstacles that these women had to go through, including the intersectionality of gender and race. As one letter to the editor in the play says, "Can we bear dilution by the ignorance, low idealism and religious perversity of the average foreigner? I say no! We must keep them back. Give us good sound British stock women, already civilized, already subject to both earth and heaven for conduct". Though women wanted rights, many felt as though only some women should be given them. *The Fighting Days* explores the theme of oppression, and what it means to have multiple layers of it.

Curriculum Connections to *The Fighting Days*

Grade 7

Dramatic Arts

B1.1 engage actively in drama exploration and role play, with a focus on examining multiple perspectives related to current issues, themes, and relationships from a wide variety of sources and diverse communities

B3.1 compare and contrast how social values are communicated in several different drama forms and/or styles of live theatre from different times and places

Grade 8

Dramatic Arts

B1.1 engage actively in drama exploration and role play, with a focus on examining multiple perspectives and possible outcomes related to complex issues, themes, and relationships from a wide variety of sources and diverse communities

B2.1 construct personal interpretations of drama works, connecting drama issues and themes to social concerns at both the local and global level

History

B1.1 analyse key similarities and differences in the experiences of various groups and communities in present-day Canada and the same groups in Canada between 1890 and 1914

B1.2 analyse some of the challenges facing different individuals, groups, and / or communities in Canada between 1890 and 1914

B1.3 analyse actions taken by various groups and / or individuals in Canada between 1890 and 1914 to improve their lives and compare these actions to those taken by similar groups today

B3.5 identify a variety of significant individuals and groups in Canada during this period (1890 - 1914) and explain their contributions to Canadian heritage and / or identity

Grade 9

Dramatic Arts (ADA10)

B1.2 interpret short drama works and identify and explain their personal response to the works

B2.1 identify and explain the various purposes that drama serves or has served in diverse communities and cultures from the present and past

B2.4 identify ways in which dramatic exploration promotes an appreciation of diverse cultures and traditions

C3.3 demonstrate an understanding of theatre and audience etiquette, in both classroom and formal performance contexts

Grade 10

Dramatic Arts (ADA2O)

B2.2 explain how dramatic exploration helps develop awareness of different roles and identities people have in society

C2.1 identify ways in which dramatic expression and performance reflect communities and cultures, past and present

C2.2 describe how drama is used for various purposes in a range of social contexts

C3.3 demonstrate an understanding of theatre and audience etiquette, in both classroom and formal performance contexts

History (CHC2O)

A2.3 apply the knowledge and skills developed in the study of Canadian history when analysing current social, economic, and / or political issues

B2 analyse some key interactions within and between different communities in Canada, and between Canada and the international community, from 1914 to 1929, and how they affected Canadian society and politics

B2.4 explain the goals and accomplishments of some groups and / or movements that contributed to social and /or political cooperation during this period

B2.5 describe attitudes towards and significant actions affecting ethnocultural minority groups in Canada during this period

B3.1 explain how various individuals, organizations, and specific social changes between 1914 and 1929 contributed to the development of identity, citizenship, and heritage in Canada

B3.3 describe some significant developments in the rights and lives of women in Canada during this period

Civics and Citizenship (CHV2O)

B1.1 describe some civic issues of local, national, and / or global significance and compare the perspectives of different groups on selected issues

B1.3 explain why it is important for people to engage in civic action, and identify various reasons why individuals and groups engage in such action

C1.1 assess the significance, both in Canada and internationally, of the civic contributions of some individuals and organizations

Grade 11

Dramatic Arts (ADA3M)

B1.2 analyse drama works to determine how they communicate ideas about issues, culture, and society

B2.4 explain how different types of theatre mirror cultural diversity and local or regional concerns in Canadian and global societies from the past and present

World History (CHT3O)

A2.3 apply the knowledge and skills developed in the study of world history since 1900 when analysing current social, economic, and / or political issues, in order to enhance their understanding of these issues and their role as informed citizens

B1.1 compare some key social roles, institutions, and / or developments in two or more regions of the world during this period (1900-1919)

B2.3 describe the goals of some major social reform movements in different societies during this period (1900-1919)

Politics (CPC3O)

B1.3 describe some challenges or barriers to political engagement

B1.5 explain, with reference to the perspectives of bystanders and upstanders, why people choose to take action on, or not get involved in, political issues and analyse possible consequences of both stands

B3.2 analyse the impact of some issues of political importance, with a particular emphasis on issues related to equity, human rights, and / or the environment

B3.3 identify actions that have been taken to address issues of political importance, and assess the effectiveness of these actions in achieving their objective

C1.2 explain the role of various individuals and groups in Canada in changing specific laws or policies, and assess the significance of the changes

C1.3 describe the main goals and strategies of some individuals and groups / movements that have brought about and / or are attempting to bring about greater socio-political equality, and assess their effectiveness

Grade 12

Dramatics Arts (ADA4M)

B1.2 analyse a variety of contemporary and historical drama works to explain and evaluate how they communicate themes and dramatize issues

B2.1 demonstrate an understanding of how drama questions social and cultural conditions in a variety of Canadian and global drama sources and traditions

Canada: History, Identity, and Culture (CHI4U)

D1.1 analyse some key social developments as well as dominant social attitudes and values during this period (1867-1945)

D2.3 analyse the goals, strategies, and effectiveness of a variety of reform movements / organizations during this period (1867-1945)

D3.1 explain the contributions of various individuals to Canadian society and politics during this period (1867-1945)

Character Background

Nellie McClung

Born on October 20, 1873, Nellie McClung grew up during a time when most women were disenfranchised. Despite the common belief at the time that only boys should attend school, McClung's parents insisted that she should have an education. She began schooling when she was ten years old and was an outstanding student. At the age of sixteen, she was awarded a teaching certificate from the Normal School in Winnipeg.

Nellie McClung fought for the rights of women for most of her life. She became one of the Famous Five in the fight for women to be classified as "persons" in the Person's Case of 1929. McClung also was appointed to the Board of Governors of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, becoming the first Canadian woman ever to take on that role.

Francis Beynon

In *The Fighting Days*, Francis Beynon vows to fight for all women when it is discovered that only women of British heritage would be given the right to vote. In real life, Francis Beynon did that, and more. She threatened to reveal the inequity of the bill unless it was changed to be more inclusive. Under this pressure, the bill was changed and passed on January 27, 1916. After the bill was passed, Beynon said, “if there is any lesson in the success of the women of Manitoba for the less fortunate provinces of Canada, it is the necessity of getting a great body of people working for this reform. Every such movement will have its outstanding women, who by their force of character and platform ability will make a magnificent contribution to the cause, but back of this there must be a great body of quiet workers who act like a leaven upon the solid mass of public opinion... Their work is a complementary and both are essential to the success of any great movement”.

Lily Beynon

Lily Beynon had a strong impact on the success of the fight for women to vote. After hearing about a successful theatrical approach to fighting for a cause in Vancouver, Lily suggested that the women in Manitoba create a “mock parliament”. This mock parliament featured women in the roles of power as female members of parliament, and men asking for the right to vote. This humorous presentation was extremely successful and helped women to secure the right to vote. It was also Lily that noticed that the draft bill contained the right for women to vote, but not hold office. She informed her sister Francis, and eventually the bill was revised and passed.

George McNair

George McNair is a fictional character in *The Fighting Days*. Though he is not based on the life of a real person, the views expressed by him throughout the play are reminiscent of the views of many men in the early twentieth century.

Historical Context

Canada’s Involvement in WW1 and the Conscription Crisis

When World War 1 broke out, Canada did not actively choose to go to war. Canada was considered a self-governing dominion of the British empire, and thus when Britain declared war, so too did Canada. However, Canadians initially entered the war with fervor. According to Desmond Morton, a writer for the Canadian Encyclopedia, “much of Canada’s War effort was launched by volunteers. In total, 400,000 Canadians voluntarily travelled overseas to volunteer for the war effort, and when the initial summons was made by then Militia Minister Sam Hughes, 33,000 Canadians arrived to begin training (even though Hughes only called for 25,000).

However, World War 1 would dismantle romanticized notions of war for many countries. Many would learn the horrors of war, and by 1916, volunteer rates had dropped significantly. So much so that by May of the following year, Prime Minister Borden, a believer that this was Canada’s time to shine as a country, decided that conscription would be a necessary measure.

This decision split Canada, as Canadians carried passionate feelings towards one side or the other. In favour of Borden's decision were mainly English-speaking Canadians and recent British immigrants. Those against consisted of farmers (whose sons would be registered, yet were needed to help at home), trade unionists, non-British immigrants, pacifists, and French-Canadians, with "almost every French-Speaking Member of Parliament" against conscription. Regardless of the opposition, Borden passed the Military Service Act in August of 1917. This made all male Canadians ages twenty to forty-five subject to call-up for military service.

The benefits of the Act are questionable in retrospect. When it came into effect there were many evasions, and of those that were registered, 93% asked for exemptions. Overall, of the 400,000 Canadians who were registered, only 100,000 were drafted, and even then only 24,132 actually served on the front lines. Ultimately, every soldier who arrived overseas did help to bolster the Canadian war effort. In total approximately 425,000 Canadians went overseas to fight and serve during World War I.

As well, the conscription debate echoed other concerns that had been boiling. Specifically, as Wendy Lill's play points heavily to, women's right to vote. In 1917, Borden passed the Wartime Elections Act, which allowed female relatives of soldiers the ability to vote on a federal level. The Wartime Elections Act would conveniently be passed just before the federal election where Prime Minister Borden was campaigning for conscription. Simultaneously, the Act also stripped voting rights from those who were born in an Enemy country before March of 1902 (except if they had a relative in the Canadian forces). Canadian Annual Review states that the Wartime Election Act "brought in a large electorate of women voters who would probably be friendly to the government, and disenfranchised a large western element which was undoubtedly hostile to both government and war policy" (Adams, 279). This aspect of the Act is challenged between Francis and Nellie, as Nellie focuses on the fact that women would gain the right to vote, while Francis articulates the unjust nature of giving some citizens the right to vote while stripping other individuals of that right.

Women's Rights

In the early 1900's, before the start of World War I, the role of women was to raise a family and to take care of their household while their men provided for them. "It was through motherhood that women achieved a higher moral status. In practice, however, this idea relegated women to a maternal role, denying them any significant participation in other aspects of society" (Marsden, 3). Work in the home was considered as lesser than work outside of the home, as it was unpaid. However, the start of the first World War meant that women had to fill the positions that were left empty by soldiers going to war. This was the first step of women getting power and discovering what they were capable of.

Near the end of the war, it was expected that women would go back to their previous roles of homemakers once the men returned to take over the paid positions. "Most people saw [women in the workplace] as a case of women 'pitching in' and 'all pulling together' during the crisis, rather than a permanent change in the status and roles of women" (Marsden, 65). Unsurprisingly, women did not want to go back to their previous roles. They had been given responsibility, power, and a chance to prove that they could do more than raise a family. An essay published in 1917 made a case of the importance of the work that women do, both in the workplace and in the home. As men were returning, most women were either in the workplace or in training to be in the workplace, and many did not want to go back to pre-war conditions.

Present Day Connections

Using Satire to Affect Change

There are many different ways to create change. Some use violence, some use mental tactics, and some use humour. As Lorna Marsden says about women's suffrage in her book *Canadian Women and the Struggle for Equality*, "getting change meant using the means available, and violence was not seriously considered as one of those means" (257). Nellie McClung used the resources that she had available, and this led her to use humour and satire. She staged a "mock parliament" in which a gender-swapped parliament session would take place, with men asking women for the right to vote. McClung met with the Premier of Manitoba (who was completely against women's rights), and studied his mannerisms and sayings to create a truly authentic satirical representation of him. Of what she was trying to accomplish with this, Nellie McClung states, "we had one desire: to make the attitude of the government ridiculous and set the whole province laughing at the old conception of chivalry, when it takes the form of hat lifting, giving up seats in street cars, opening doors and picking up handkerchiefs, pretending that this can ever be a substitute for common, old-fashioned justice!" (113). The accuracy of McClung's representation, in combination with the humour infused into the play, made the piece an instant success. It was very cleverly written, such as this passage from the show:

"In this agricultural province, the man's place is the farm. Shall I call man away from the useful plow and harrow and talk loud on street corners about things that do not concern him? Politics unsettle men, and unsettled men means unsettled bills - broken furniture and broken vows - and divorce... when you ask for the vote you are asking me to break up peaceful happy homes - to wreck innocent lives" (Chakrabarty, 110).

While not everyone agreed with what McClung was saying, the humorous way that she presented her argument made an impact.

Satire is still used in the present day as a way of getting messages across. Comedians such as John Daly, Samantha Bee, Stephen Colbert and John Oliver use comedy and satire as a method to get people thinking and talking about important issues.

Some examples:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WFjDBvRxcbM>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rHFOWlMCdto> (note: some strong language used)

Xenophobia

In *The Fighting Days*, Nellie McClung chooses to fight for the right for British born and descendant women to vote, but not Canadian women from other countries. This "us versus them" mentality continues to exist today. We have witnessed the recent "Brexit" vote in the UK, where a majority of Britains voted to leave the European union, following the slogan "Britain for the British". US presidential candidate Donald Trump has promised to build a wall on the United States/Mexico border to prevent Mexicans from entering their country. While the people of Syria continue suffer regular attacks, many countries refuse to accept Syrian refugees. These are just a few examples. It is 2016, and xenophobia is still very real.

Women's Rights Today

While long strides have been made towards gender equality in schooling, voting rights and within the workplace, women and men do not share equal rights around the world. There are countries where girls are discouraged from going to school, and sometimes even prohibited from attending classes. Some nations still do not have voting rights for women. It would be interesting to ask Francis and Nellie what they think of the state of the world today.

Pre-Show Questions for Your Class

What is a democracy?
 What does freedom mean to you?
 What does it mean to be able to vote?
 How does life in 1910 differ from life today?

Post-Show Questions for Your Class

Do you think that the issues that were presented in *The Fighting Days* are present in today's society?
 What is a social issue that is happening now that you feel should change?

Activities to Do With Your Class Before the Show

Hand Hypnosis

Time Allotted: 5 - 10 minutes

Materials Needed: none

Curriculum Connections:

Grade 7:

B2.1: Construct personal interpretations of drama works, connecting drama issues and themes to their own and others' ideas, feelings, and experiences

Grade 8:

B1.1: Engage actively in drama exploration and role-play, with a focus on examining multiple perspectives and possible outcomes related to complex issues, themes, and relationships from a wide variety of sources and diverse communities

Grade 9 (ADA10):

A2.2: Use a variety of conventions to develop character and shape the action in ensemble drama presentations

B2.3: Explain how dramatic exploration helps develop group skills and appreciation of communal values

Grade 10 (ADA20):

A3.2: Use a variety of voice and movement techniques to support the creation of character or atmosphere during rehearsal

B2.3: Describe ways in which different types of dramatic exploration helps develop awareness of different roles and identities people have in society

Grade 11 (ADA3M):

A3.2: Use a range of techniques and acting approaches to refine performance during rehearsal

B2.2: Identify ways in which drama can influence personal growth, relationships with others, and aesthetic judgement

Grade 12 (ADA4M):

A2.1: Use the elements of drama to achieve specific purposes in drama works

A3.2: Use different acting approaches to explore and depict character in a variety of situations

Why This Activity?: This activity invites students to explore how it feels to hold power over their peers, as well as how it feels to have no power. In *The Fighting Days*, the women are fighting for their right to have a voice in the country that they live in, though they hold no power. This activity recreates the feeling of wanting to have a say in what you can do, but not being able to.

Description: Divide the students into pairs. Ask the students to label themselves as either “A” or “B”. “A” will be the leader at first, while “B” will be the follower. Instruct “A” to hold out their hand, and instruct “B” to put their nose a few inches from “A”’s hand. Wherever “A” moves their hand, “B”’s nose must follow. Remind the students to be respectful of their classmates, and to ensure that they are safe at all times. After both students have had a turn being the leader and the follower, begin a discussion about power dynamics, and how it felt to have all of the power, and how it felt to have no power.

Taking it Further: Bring the class together and have one student lead the entire class. Discuss how it feels to lead a group and to be powerless in a group. Explore what it means when the teacher (someone who holds the power in a classroom setting) becomes powerless to their students.

Chair Statures

Time Allotted: 10 - 15 minutes

Materials Needed: One chair for every student

Curriculum Connections:

Grade 7:

B1.1: Engage actively in drama exploration and role play, with a focus on examining multiple perspectives related to current issues, themes, and relationships from a wide variety of sources and diverse communities

B1.3: Plan and shape the direction of the drama by working with others, both in and out of role, to generate ideas and explore multiple perspectives

Grade 8:

B1.2: demonstrate an understanding of the elements of drama by selecting and manipulating multiple elements and conventions to create and enhance a variety of drama works and shared drama experiences

B1.3: Plan and shape the direction of the drama by negotiating ideas and perspectives with others, both in and out of role

Grade 9 (ADA10):

B1.3: Identify aesthetic and technical aspects of drama works and explain how they help achieve specific dramatic purposes

B2.3: Explain how dramatic exploration helps develop group skills and appreciation of communal values

Grade 10 (ADA20):

A1.2: Select and use appropriate forms to present identified issues from a variety of perspectives

B2.2: Explain how dramatic exploration helps develop awareness of different roles and identities people have in society

Grade 11 (ADA3M):

A2.1: Highlight selected elements of drama and subordinate others to achieve specific purposes

A2.2: Use a variety of drama conventions to establish a distinctive context or role in original or adapted works

B1.2: Analyse drama works to determine how they communicate ideas about issues, culture, and society

Grade 12 (ADA4M):

A2.2: Use a variety of drama conventions to help identify and incorporate new or emerging ideas in drama works they are developing

A3.1: Demonstrate an understanding of how different acting and staging techniques reflect and support different purposes in drama

B1.1: Use the critical analysis process to reflect on and justify or revise decisions in creating drama works

Why This Activity?: This exercise invites the students to challenge their ideas of power and how it is represented. In *The Fighting Days*, Nellie, Lily, and Francis are thought of as lesser because they are female. However, they proved that they were strong fighters and deserved to have a say despite their gender. Though they looked like a certain type of person because of their gender, they proved to be more than that. This activity is trying to recreate this challenging of preconceived notions with chairs.

Description: Divide students into groups of 3. Tell them that using ONLY three chairs, each group must create a sculpture that represents a bystander, a bully, and a victim. After the sculptures have been created, have all of the students walk to each sculpture to see what their peers have created. Give each group a chance to explain to the class why they positioned the chairs in the way that they did.

Taking it Further: When the students are looking at each sculpture, try to get them thinking outside of the box. If a sculpture features one chair (the bully) on top of another (the victim) with the third off to the side (the bystander), ask them if the chairs could also represent the other roles. For example, could the bystander chair be the bully who is watching their destruction from afar? Could the bystander be the chair on top of the victim, trying to protect them?

Glancers vs Starers

Time Allotted: 5 - 10 minutes

Materials Needed: none

Curriculum Connections:

Grade 7:

B1.1: engage actively in drama exploration and role play, with a focus on examining multiple perspectives related to current issues, themes, and relationships from a wide variety of sources and diverse communities

B1.2: demonstrate an understanding of the elements of drama by selecting and combining several elements and conventions to create dramatic effects

Grade 8:

B1.2: demonstrate an understanding of the elements of drama by selecting and manipulating multiple elements and conventions to create and enhance a variety of drama works and shared drama experiences

B1.3: plan and shape the direction of the drama by negotiating ideas and perspectives with others, both in and out of role

Grade 9 (ADA10):

A1.3: use role play to explore, develop, and represent themes, ideas, characters, feelings, and beliefs in producing drama works

B2.3: explain how dramatic exploration helps develop group skills and appreciation of communal values

Grade 10 (ADA20):

A2.1: select and combine the elements of drama to achieve a variety of purposes in ensemble presentations

B2.2: explain how dramatic exploration helps develop awareness of different roles and identities people have in society

Grade 11 (ADA3M):

A3.2: use a range of techniques and acting approaches to refine performance during rehearsal

B1.2: analyse drama works to determine how they communicate ideas about issues, culture, and society

B2.2: identify ways in which drama can influence personal growth, relationships with others, and aesthetic judgement

Grade 12 (ADA4M):

A3.2: use different acting approaches to explore and depict character in a variety of situations

B2.2: describe ways in which their personal experiences in drama have influenced their attitudes to others and their own world view

Why This Activity?: This activity explores the relationships between power, and the feeling of being both powerless and powerful. In *The Fighting Days*, the women fight for their rights, despite the amount of men who are trying to stop them. This activity explores the feeling of not having control over others, and only yourself.

Description: Divide the students in half. Separately, tell one half that they are glancers. When passing people, they can make eye contact with them, but must quickly look away. Tell the other half that they are starers. They must try and make eye contact with everyone they pass for as long as possible. After these instructions have been given, tell all of the students to walk around the space, either glancing or staring at their peers as they pass. After this has gone on for a few moments, sit all of the students down to have a discussion. You can ask questions such as “How did the starers feel when the glancers wouldn’t maintain eye contact with you?”, “How did the glancers feel not being able to maintain eye contact?”, “What frustrated you about the role you were given?”, or “If you had a choice, would you want to be a glancer or a starer? Why?”.

Status - Movement, Tableaux, and Voice

Time Allotted: 10 minutes

Materials Needed: A deck of cards (numbered ones only) OR enough pieces of paper for each student, each with a number between 1 - 10 on it

Drama Curriculum Connections:

Grade 7:

B1.2: demonstrate an understanding of the elements of drama by selecting and combining several elements and conventions to create dramatic effects

B2.1: construct personal interpretations of drama works, connecting drama issues and themes to their own and others’ ideas, feelings, and experiences

Grade 8:

B1.2: demonstrate an understanding of the elements of drama by selecting and manipulating multiple elements and conventions to create and enhance a variety of drama works and shared drama experiences

Grade 9 (ADA1O):

A1.3: use role play to explore, develop, and represent themes, ideas, characters, feelings, and beliefs in producing drama works

A3.2: use a variety of expressive voice and movement techniques to support the depiction of character

Grade 10 (ADA2O):

A2.2: use a variety of conventions to create a distinct voice that reflects a particular global, social, or personal perspective

A3.2: use a variety of voice and movement techniques to support the creation of character or atmosphere during rehearsal

Grade 11 (ADA3M):

A1.3: create and interpret a range of characters using a variety of acting approaches

B3.2: analyse their use of the creative process in drama activities, and explain what they learned from it and how that learning can be applied in work and other social contexts

Grade 12 (ADA4M):

A2.2: use a variety of drama conventions to help identify and incorporate new or emerging ideas in drama works they are developing

A3.1: demonstrate an understanding of how different acting and staging techniques reflect and support different purposes in drama

Why This Activity?: This activity invites students to explore status by using their body and their voice. In *The Fighting Days*, women are not given a choice over their status. They are assigned this at birth, based on their gender and/or race. This activity does not give the students a choice in their status, and they must find a way to represent this and explore how it feels.

Description: Students are each given either a card or a piece of paper with a number on it. Tell the students that the number on their card/paper indicates their status, and to keep their number a secret. If they have a low number, they have a low status, and if they have a high number, a high status. Instruct the students to move around the room silently, embodying the status that they were given on their card. Once you feel that they are doing well, tell them that they can begin interacting with their peers and using their voice. After about a minute, tell the students to stop moving and take up a pose that they feel best represents their status. At this time, you should go around to each student and tap them on the shoulder. When they are tapped, the students should say either one word or one sentence that describes how they feel about being the status that they are.

Taking It Further: When students are given their cards, choose one student to stand away and not receive a card. This student should observe the activity as described above. After the students have created their tableaux and said their word/sentence, the student must try and put the other students in order from lowest status to highest status. This variation forces the other students to ensure that their representation of their status is clear enough to be interpreted properly.

Headline Tableaux

Time Allotted: 10 - 15 minutes

Materials Needed: Headlines from newspapers (preferably real, but can be made up if necessary)

Drama Curriculum Connections:

Grade 7:

B1.1: engage actively in drama exploration and role play, with a focus on examining multiple perspectives related to current issues, themes, and relationships from a wide variety of sources and diverse communities

Grade 8:

B2.1: construct personal interpretations of drama works, connecting drama issues and themes to social concerns at both the local and global level

Grade 9 (ADA10):

A1.1: use a variety of print and non-print sources

B2.4: identify ways in which dramatic exploration promotes an appreciation of diverse cultures and traditions

Grade 10 (ADA20):

A1.1: develop interpretations of issues from contemporary or historical sources

A2.2: use a variety of conventions to create a distinct voice that reflects a particular global, social, or personal perspective

Grade 11 (ADA3M):

B1.2: analyse drama works to determine how they communicate ideas about issues, culture, and society

C1.1: identify and describe the forms, elements, conventions, and techniques used in a variety of drama styles, and explain how they help achieve specific purposes and effects

Grade 12 (ADA4M):

A2.1: use the elements of drama to achieve specific purposes in drama works

A3.2: use different acting approaches to explore and depict character in a variety of situations

Why This Activity?: This activity allows students to use their inference skills to develop possibilities from a real world issue. *The Fighting Days* features women who made headlines fighting for their rights. The stories accompanying these headlines were both positive and negative. This activity invites students to explore both positive and negative sides of the story, based on their own personal experiences.

Description: Divide the students into small groups of 3-5 people. Give each group a headline from a newspaper. Preferably, this headline should be about a social justice issue. Using this headline, students need to create a tableau of what they think the picture accompanying this headline would be. After these have been created, they should present their tableaux to the class, and explain how they interpreted the headline.

Taking It Further: After each group has created one tableau of what the headline is describing, have them create a tableau for what they think happened prior to this headline and a tableau for what they think will happen next. Alternatively, you can prompt students to write a newspaper article based on their headline and tableaux.

Activities to Do With Your Class After the Show

Letter to the Editor

Time Allotted: 25 - 30 minutes

Materials Needed: paper, pens

Drama Curriculum Connections:

Grade 7:

B1.1: engage actively in drama exploration and role play, with a focus on examining multiple perspectives related to current issues, themes, and relationships from a wide variety of sources and diverse communities

Grade 8:

B1.1: engage actively in drama exploration and role play, with a focus on examining multiple perspectives and possible outcomes related to complex issues, themes, and relationships from a wide variety of sources and diverse communities

B1.4: communicate feelings, thoughts, and abstract ideas through drama works, using audio, visual, and/or technological aids for specific purposes and audiences

Grade 9 (ADA1O):

A2.1: use the elements of drama to suit an identified purpose and form in drama presentations

B2.4: identify ways in which dramatic exploration promotes an appreciation of diverse cultures and traditions

Grade 10 (ADA2O):

A1.1: develop interpretations of issues from contemporary or historical sources as the basis for drama

A1.2: select and use appropriate forms to present identified issues from a variety of perspectives

A2.2: use a variety of conventions to create a distinct voice that reflects a particular global, social, or personal perspective

Grade 11 (ADA3M):

A1.2: select and use appropriate drama forms to present a variety of adapted or original drama works

B2.3: identify ways in which drama can influence the broader community

Grade 12 (ADA4M):

A1.2: select and use a variety of drama forms to present original drama works

B2.4: describe different approaches used to explore universal concepts and themes in the drama of diverse cultures

Why This Activity?: This activity allows students to think about an issue that they are personally interested in and passionate about. It allows them to share their opinion with their peers in a way that is of interest to them. In *The Fighting Days*, Francis works as a writer who must respond to letters that are written to her. The authors of these letters write because they are passionate about something and want their view and voice to be heard. This activity will help students have their voice heard by their peers, just as Francis heard many others'.

Description: Ask students to think of a social justice issue (racism, sexism, ableism, police brutality, government corruption, etc) that they are passionate about. They must write a "letter to the editor" expressing this opinion and trying to tie it to current and past events.

Taking It Further: Students can turn this letter into a monologue, which they can perform to the class. Alternatively, they can use a recording device (such as a camera, a phone, or a computer) and record video blog posts based on their letter.

Town Hall

Time Allotted: 30 minutes

Materials Needed: none

Drama Curriculum Connections:

Grade 7:

B1.1: engage actively in drama exploration and role play, with a focus on examining multiple perspectives related to current issues, themes, and relationships from a wide variety of sources and diverse communities

B1.3: plan and shape the direction of the drama by working with others, both in and out of role, to generate ideas and explore multiple perspectives

Grade 8:

B1.1: engage actively in drama exploration and role play, with a focus on examining multiple perspectives and possible outcomes related to complex issues, themes, and relationships from a wide variety of sources, and diverse communities

B1.2: demonstrate an understanding of the elements of drama by selecting and manipulating multiple elements and conventions to create and enhance a variety of drama works and shared drama experiences

Grade 9 (ADA1O):

A1.3: use role play to explore, develop, and represent themes, ideas, characters, feelings, and beliefs in producing drama works

B2.3: explain how dramatic exploration helps develop group skills and appreciation of communal values

Grade 10 (ADA2O):

A1.2: select and use appropriate forms to present identified issues from a variety of perspectives

A2.2: use a variety of conventions to create a distinct voice that reflects a particular global, social, or personal perspective

Grade 11 (ADA3M):

A1.3: create and interpret a range of characters using a variety of acting approaches

B1.1: use the critical analysis process before and during drama projects to assign roles within the group, monitor the group process, and modify the roles and process as needed

Grade 12 (ADA4M):

A1.3: create and interpret a wide range of characters using a variety of acting approaches

A2.1: use the elements of drama to achieve specific purposes in drama works

Why This Activity?: This activity presents an issue to the students and allows them to take a side and fight for it. *The Fighting Days* tells the story of women fighting for an issue that they are passionate about, and told not to fight for it because they were women. In the present time, children are told that they are too young to have opinions on a lot of issues (despite the fact that many of these issues directly affect them). This activity invites the students to take a side of an issue and fight passionately for or against it.

Description: Ahead of time, think of an issue that you would like your students to explore. If you have done the Letter to the Editor activity, think of an issue that many students used. Choose one or two students and take them aside to give them their instructions. Tell them that there are to be a security detail in the drama, and that they must do whatever they feel is necessary once the drama begins. Now, turn to the entire class and tell them that a town hall is about to begin to discuss a current issue. You should now take your position at the front of the room as the leader of this meeting (depending on the context of the issue, you could be a mayor, a judge, etc). In role, explain the issue to the students, and tell them that you have gathered them there to try and figure out a solution. From here, the drama should unfold. Students can get into roles and take a position on the issue. If necessary, you can prompt students by pointing at someone and saying things such as “And today we have a special guest, the director of the school board, (insert name that is NOT the student’s)! Do you have an opinion on the matter?”. Let the drama take off and see what the students come up with. End the town hall either when it has reached its logical conclusion, or when a set time limit is reached.

Taking it Further: Have a student run the town hall. This person must have strong leadership qualities. You can participate in another role if you choose to do so.

Political Voices

Time Allotted: 40 - 60 minutes

Materials Needed: none

Drama Curriculum Connections:

Grade 7:

B1.1: engage actively in drama exploration and role play, with a focus on examining multiple perspectives related to current issues, themes, and relationships from a wide variety of sources and diverse communities

B1.3: plan and shape the direction of the drama by working with others, both in and out of role, to generate ideas and explore multiple perspectives

Grade 8:

B1.1: engage actively in drama exploration and role play, with a focus on examining multiple perspectives and possible outcomes related to complex issues, themes, and relationships from a wide variety of sources and diverse communities

B2.1: construct personal interpretations of drama works, connecting drama issues and themes to social concerns at both the local and global level

Grade 9 (ADA1O):

B2.1: identify and explain the various purposes that drama serves or has served in diverse communities and cultures from the present and past

B2.2: explain how dramatic exploration can contribute to personal growth and self-understanding

Grade 10 (ADA2O):A1.3: use role play and characterization to explore personal and social issuesA2.2: use a variety of conventions to create a distinct voice that reflects a particular global, social, or personal perspectiveGrade 11 (ADA3M):B1.2: analyse drama works to determine how they communicate ideas about issues, culture, and societyB2.3: identify ways in which drama can influence the broader communityB3.2: analyse their use of the creative process in drama activities, and explain what they learned from it and how it can be applied in work and other social contextsGrade 12 (ADA4M):B2.1: demonstrate an understanding of how drama questions social and cultural conditions in a variety of Canadian and global drama sources and traditionsB2.2: describe ways in which their personal experiences in drama have influenced their attitudes to others and their own world view**Why This Activity?:** This activity allows students to hold a vote on an important issues. They do not get a say in who gets to vote, mimicking real world situations, such as the lack of voting for women in *The Fighting Days*.**Description:** Brainstorm an idea with your class about an issue that they are passionate about. Some examples are:

- Should conscription be allowed?
- Should we raise the minimum wage?
- Should the voting age be lowered?
- Should the age to be eligible to drive be raised?
- Should the legal drinking age be raised?

Once a topic has been decided on, divide the class into two groups. One group will be allowed to discuss and vote on the matter, while the other group is not allowed to speak on the matter. After this has played out, pick a new topic and switch the groups. Have a discussion about how it felt to not have a voice in something that mattered to them.

Taking It Further: Read the Mock Parliament excerpt from Nellie McClung's book, *Purple Springs* (available online at: <http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/mcclung/purple/purple.html>, p. 273) to the class. Invite the students who were not allowed to vote to create a satirical representation of those who are allowed to vote.

Sources

"Conscription, 1917" *Canadian War Museum*. Pars 1-2, 6-9.

Warmuseum.ca/firstworldwar/history. Aug 12th 2016.

Adams, Jad. *Women and the Vote: A World History*. Oxford University Press, 2014. Print.

Battles for Social Justice. James Lorimer & Company, 2011. Print.

Chakrabarty, Moushumi. *Champions of Women's Rights: Leading Canadian Women and their English*, John R. Daniel Panneton. Ed. "Wartime Elections Act" *The Canadian Encyclopedia*.

Pars 1-4. Published Feb 7th 2006. Revised Sept. 18th 2015.

<http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/wartime-elections-act/> Accessed Aug 9th 2016.

Heard, Andrew. "Canadian Independence" <http://www.sfu.ca/~aheard/324/Independence.html> Accessed Aug 20th 2016.

Jones, Richard, J.L. Granatstein. "Conscription" *The Canadian Encyclopedia*. Par 4-6.

Published Feb 6th 2006. Revised Aug 12th 2014.

<http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/conscription/> Accessed Aug 10th 2016.

- Marsden, Lorna R. *Canadian Women and the Struggle for Equality*. Oxford University Press, 2012. Print.
- McClung, Nellie. *The Stream Runs Fast: My Own Story*. Thomas Allen Publishers, 2007. Print.
- Morton, Desmond. Marshall, Tabitha and Richard Foot. Ed. "First World War (WWI) " *The Canadian Encyclopedia*. Pars 3-5. Published Aug 5th 2013. Rev. June 17th 2015. <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/first-world-war-wwi/> Accessed Aug 7th 2016.
- Ontario Ministry of Education. *The Ontario Curriculum Grades 1-8: The Arts*. Queen's Printer for Ontario, 2009. Print.
- Ontario Ministry of Education. *The Ontario Curriculum Grades 11 and 12: The Arts*. Queen's Printer for Ontario, 2010. Print.
- Ontario Ministry of Education. *The Ontario Curriculum Grades 9 and 10: The Arts*. Queen's Printer for Ontario, 2010. Print.
- Preston, Richard A. Foot Richard. Ed. "Military Service Act. *The Canadian Encyclopedia*. Pars 4-7. Published Feb 7th 2006. Revised Aug 15th 2014. <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/military-service-act/> Accessed Aug.10th 2016.

About ECT

Essential Collective Theatre is a not-for-profit corporation and registered charity that exists to:

- Produce contemporary Canadian plays, with a focus on new plays and Niagara-based work;
- Support and dramaturge new play development;
- Foster, connect and celebrate the Playwright;
- Mentor local emerging artists
- Tell stories that hold up a mirror to the Niagara Region

Contact us at:

Essential Collective Theatre
 366 St. Paul Street
 St. Catharines, ON L2R 3N2
 Phone: 289-228-4830
www.ectheatre.ca
info@ectheatre.ca