

Improvising a Monologue

Environment: Literary and Ludic

Social Practice: Improvise a brief monologue on a subject of interest.



Communicative Activities: Recreational expression

Product: Game: Improvised Monologues

Reader: *Standing Alone*

Achievements:

- Review genres of monologues.
- Plan a monologue.
- Present a monologue.
- Encourage feedback.

1 Read the definition of monologues. Then read the fragments of monologues below and discuss with a partner which type of monologues these are.  

A long speech given by a person in a story, movie, play, etc. is known as a **monologue**. There are several types of them. **Comedic monologues** are very popular because they keep the audience laughing. They criticize everyday situations such as work, school, friends and family in a funny way. On the other hand, **dramatic monologues** are a type of poetry. They are ideas from a character in a play or a participant in a **poetry stand** without any interruptions. The topics are serious and make the audience reflect deeply upon them. Finally, there are **interior monologues**. They are normally found in novels and represent the characters' **thoughts** as if they were talking to themselves. It's like being inside the head of the character! We can follow their experiences as if we were looking through their eyes.



I must be getting somewhere near the center of the earth. "Wait for me, Mr. White Rabbit. I'm coming, too!" How curious! I never realized that rabbit holes were so dark... and so long... and, Oh! This is very peculiar... floating book shelves... clocks... **cupboards**... pictures... I must be dreaming. I believe I have been falling for five minutes, and I still cannot see the bottom!

The brightness of her **cheek** would shame those stars. It is my lady. Oh, it is my love! Oh, I wish she knew how much I love her.



She's talking, but she's not saying anything. So what? Her eyes are saying something. I will answer them. I am too bold. She's not talking to me.

Two of the brightest stars in the whole sky had to go away on business, and they're asking her eyes to twinkle in their places until they return.





"Good evening, ladies and gentlemen! I just flew into town from Palmdale... and boy, are my arms tired! Ha! They have terrible restaurants in Palmdale. The other day, there was a **fly** in my soup. I said, 'Waiter, what is this fly doing in my soup?' And he said, 'The **backstroke**.' Ha, ha, ha!"



If you want to learn more about monologues for teenagers, visit this link to see some examples <https://www.stagemilk.com/monologues-for-teenagers/>

► Discuss the questions below.

1. Who's Alice talking to?
2. Who's Romeo talking to?
3. Who's the man talking to?
4. Did you like any monologue in particular? Why?

2 Listen to a student improvising a monologue. Discuss the questions below.  

- What type of monologue is it: dramatic, comic or interior?
- How does she sound: happy or angry?
- Is her tone of voice clear?
- Does her use of body language show her feelings? Why?




How Much Do I Know?

Read and reflect on the questions below. 

1. How often do you think people talk to themselves? Why do you think they do this?
2. When did you last talk to yourself or express your thoughts out loud?
3. Have you seen films that include monologues? What was their purpose?
4. Do you think you could perform a monologue? Why or why not?

Time to Read! 

In this unit, you will read a text called *Standing Alone*, which includes information on body language and tips that can help you to adjust your body language so that you deliver a great improvised monologue. Remember that you will see this icon  that shows which pages we suggest you read along the unit.

Glossary Tip 

Once you found the definition for a word you didn't know, include in your notes the example the dictionary is giving. Always keep an example from a book, magazine or dictionary you can use as a reference in case you are not sure how to use the new word. Don't forget to consult the Glossary at the back of the book to find the definition for the highlighted words in this unit.

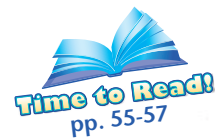
3 Read and listen to a fragment of Hazel's monologue. Discuss the questions below and give examples to justify your answers.   10 

"My best friend"

I am Hazel and something horrible happened to me at school this morning. It was so awful!
 Don't bother asking me about that. Really, if I have to think about it, I'll just get so upset... I won't talk about it or I may just break down and cry.
 Well, I'll just give you a **hint**; it's about that traitor, liar, bad friend Leslie; she drives me nuts!
 On the one hand, she acts like she's my best friend. We sit together at lunch every day and we are always supporting each other in the most difficult situations; oh, but I was obviously wrong to put my trust in her. She knows it's my thing to be the class clown. I'm the funny one!
 Doesn't she know that? Of course she does!



1. What is the monologue about?
2. Is she talking about something that happened to her or someone else?
3. Does she use informal or formal language?
4. Does she talk about her feelings openly?



Body language and facial expressions

| Dos | Don'ts |
|---|--|
| 1. Make eye contact. Look at your audience in the eye; they will feel more engaged with you. | 1. Look down or into space. If you do this, it shows that you are unprepared or not interested in the audience. |
| 2. Open your arms. This posture shows that you feel confident about your message. | 2. Fold your arms. This shows that you are not enthusiastic about the monologue or that you are uncomfortable. |
| 3. Smile. This shows you are a credible, confident and trustworthy person. | 3. Play with an object. This shows you as impatient, nervous, and restless and could distract your audience. |
| 4. Use facial expressions. They can make your audience understand the meaning of your message. Let your emotions come out while expressing your ideas. | 4. Move your legs. This shows that you are not prepared or just bored with the whole situation. |

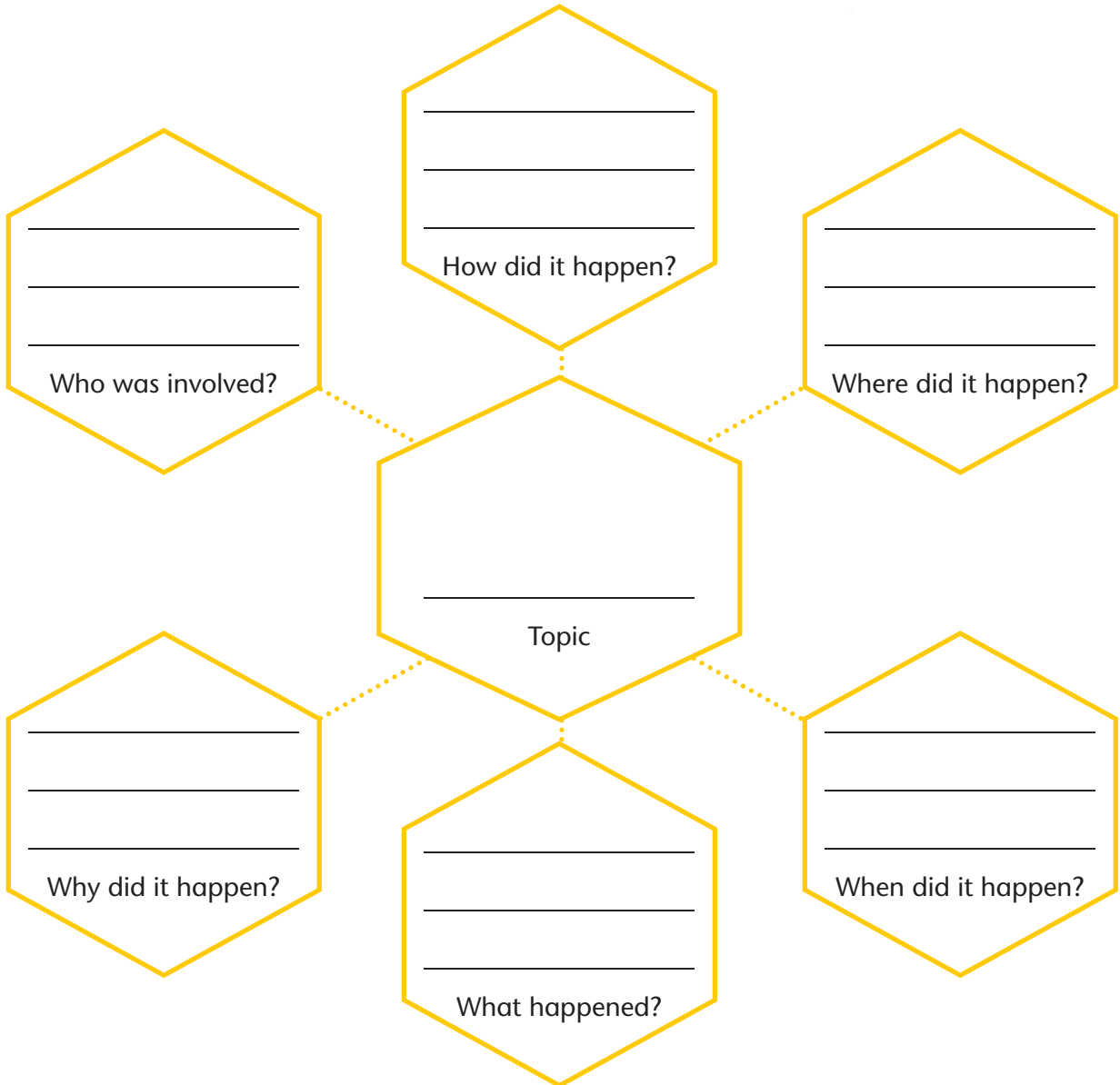
► Read Hazel's monologue again and discuss which gestures and body language she uses. 

Product Step 1



You will participate in a game of improvising monologues. Follow the steps.

1. Choose a topic for a monologue.
2. Make a mind map to organize the ideas in the monologue. Guide yourself with the questions in the boxes and write some key words (essential ideas) to remember what you want to say.





3. With the ideas in the mind map, make a card with your notes.
4. You will make a catalogue of body language for monologues. Think about facial expressions, posture, and hand gestures you can use.

- 4 Read and listen to the second part of Hazel's monologue. Now identify the beginning, middle and end of the monologue.   11 

I mean, listen to this joke: Why did the skeleton not go to the party? Cause he had nobody to go with!! See? Funny, right?
I know!
Well... Leslie stole my joke and told it to a group of third graders; she tried to be so funny! Everyone in second grade knows that joke is mine!

I'm never ever for as long as I live, even if I live to be 100, ever going to talk to Leslie again!
Oh! It's Leslie. Hello...
What?! You got **backstage** tickets to Ed Sheeran? Get out! Of course I would love to go with you! Oh my gosh, I'm so excited!
Leslie is the best friend one could ever have!
Ed Sheeran!

- Listen to some extracts from the monologue again and pay attention to the phrases below. Discuss how Hazel sounds when she says them.   12

Well, I'll just give you a hint;
She acts like she's my best friend.
oh, but I was obviously wrong to put my trust in her.
I mean, listen to this joke...
Well... Leslie stole my joke and told it to a group of third graders.

Paraphrasing and use of fillers


Paraphrase


Do not spend too much time thinking about one word or phrase. If you do not remember a word in English, try to say a similar thing in a different way. Use synonyms and phrases, such as: *It's some kind of..., It's a thing for..., I was like..., etc.*

Use fillers

It is natural to hesitate while you are speaking. You can sound more natural using fixed expressions to fill these moments of empty silence: *Huh, uh, erm, um, well, so, like, I mean..., You know... It's, um, really more normal than you think.*

- Now that you read about paraphrasing and fillers, identify these strategies in Hazel's monologue.

 If you want to know how to improve your storytelling techniques, visit this link <https://www.thoughtco.com/storytelling-improv-games-2713209>


Time to Read!
pp. 58-59

5 Read another monologue and identify the following.  


- Type of monologue
- The structure: beginning, middle and end
- The speaker's feelings
- Language strategies such as fillers or pauses

Well, I really miss Toby. I can't believe Mom made us give him away to my cousins. I knew she didn't really like him. But now we've **moved** so far away and I don't know if I'll ever see him again.

I mean, he was definitely smart, and I wouldn't have changed him for any other dog in the world. Toby was supposed to be the whole family's dog, but he was really mine, you know? Who did he wait for after school? Me! And when anyone threw his ball, I was the one he always brought it back to. And at night, it was always my bed he slept in. So before we moved here, Mom **found out** we weren't allowed to have any pets. It's, um... really sad.

Sometimes I dream about Toby. He has his ball in his mouth, and he's... like... looking for me. And I'm saying, "Here, Toby. I'm right here." But he doesn't hear me, and he can't see me, and I'm saying, "I'm right here. Toby. I'm right here." And then, I don't know, I guess I wake up... I don't know if Toby dreams about me.




- ▶ **Discuss with a partner how the speaker would sound (sad, happy, excited, angry, etc.). Then read the monologue aloud.** 

How Am I Doing?

Discuss in your Product team. 

How many different types of monologues do you know now? Can you remember some of their characteristics? Is body language important for eliciting emotions? Have you decided what type of monologue you would like to use in your Product? Do you have some topics in mind already?

6 Choose one of the monologues from this unit and perform it in small groups. There are some suggestions. 

- Read the monologue you chose.
- Don't try to memorize it; just remember important details.
- Consider body language (facial expressions and posture).
- Consider the tone and volume of voice to express appropriate emotions.

► Use the following rubric to reflect on your performance and your partners'.

| How did you feel about... | Comments |
|--|----------|
| 1. the structure of the monologue? Was there a beginning, middle and end? | |
| 2. use of body language? Did you use appropriate gestures to show emotions? | |
| 3. voice projection? Where you clear and was the volume appropriate according to the topic? | |
| 4. use of fillers as part of improvisation? Did you use fillers or pauses to organize your ideas as you spoke? | |
| 5. confidence? How did you feel improvising a monologue? | |