

Help! Performing artists are coming. What should I do?

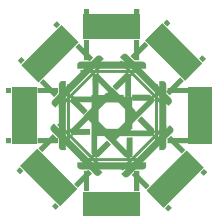
By Tone Cronblad Krosshus and Elisabeth Hovde Johannesen

Does the performing art visit come as a surprise to you sometimes? Or do you need some tips on how to work with performing art experiences with your students?

In this tool sheet you will find suggestions for methods you can use, regardless of whether you have a no, little or plenty of time to prepare.



Photo: Kulturtanken/Marte Glanville



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Unfortunately, there is no recipe for how a performing art visit can be made fun, educational and relevant. All kinds of performing arts are unique and performing art encounters occur in interaction between the works of art, the students and the teachers. However, here are some *suggestions* on how to frame these meetings, depending on how much time you have.

You're in a hurry!

You learned 15 minutes ago that artists are coming today.

Suggestion 1: «Use a sheet of paper»

Before:

- Hand out a blank sheet of paper to the students.
- Ask them to write the title of the performing art visit.
- Give them 5 minutes to write down what they think is going to happen.

After:

- Invite students to share one word that they think described the experience.
- Give them a post-it note where they write down the word they've circled. Write the title in the middle of the blackboard and ask students to hang their post-it note around.
- Start a dialogue.

Suggestion 2: «Have a chat»

Before:

- Share the title of the performing art visit and tell the students what artistic expression is coming! Tell them EVERYTHING you know about that performing art expression. Be honest about not knowing more.
- Divide the students into groups of four and invite them to discuss what they themselves know about that performing art expression.

After:

- Again, have students sit down in groups. Ask them to answer the question, "What surprised us?"
- Start a classroom dialogue.



Suggestion 3: «Use the blackboard»

Before:

- Write the title of the performing art visit on the blackboard and create an association map with the students.
- DON'T ERASE IT!

After:

- Observe the blackboard together. Read aloud all the words that are there.
- Agree with students on five of the words that may relate to the visit. Discuss why.
- Use the five words in a dialogue.



Photo: Kulturtanken/Erik Brandsborg



You have lots of time

You find out that performing artists will visit you in three days.

Suggestion 1: «What is it all about?»

Before:

- Find information about the performing artists with the help of your students! You can also divide students into groups and give them different assignments.
- Visit the room where the experience will take place, along with your students. Talk about prior knowledge and notions the students have about what they think is going to happen.
- Give students specific assignments to look for during the art experience. Examples include looking for sounds, characters, actions, costumes, facial expressions, textures, shapes, things and emotions. Does anyone notice something they think no one else sees?

After:

- Lead a conversation based on the following questions:
 - What happened?
 - What did you see?
 - What did you notice?
 - What did you hear?
 - What were you thinking?
 - How did you feel?
- Try together to find out: What was this all about?
- How can the topics be explored further in other subjects?

Suggestion 2: «What a feeling!»

Before:

- Choose 2 or 3 emotions the experience is about (for example infatuation, jealousy, loneliness).
- Invite students to explore these feelings with their bodies. What does a person who is lonely/jealous/in love look like?
- Choose one of the emotions. Ask the students to stand in "freeze" while expressing the feeling. After 5 seconds, say "switch". The pupils should then find another bodily expression of the same feeling. Say "switch" again, and so on.
- Start a dialogue about the feelings you've explored.

After:

- Write down the title of the art production and the feelings you have explored.

Individually:

- Have students choose ONE feeling. Ask them to write down how this feeling was expressed during the art experience. For example: "I thought about loneliness, then..."

In groups:

- Allow the students who have chosen the same feeling to sit together. Students read out their sentences. The group creates four new sentences that define the feeling.
Example: "Loneliness is..."

In the class:

- The groups present their sentences to the class.



Suggestion 3: «Be specific!»

Before:

- Bring specific objects to be explored in advance of your visit. Talk about what artistic expression is coming, but nothing more.
- Divide into groups of 3-5 students.
Distribute an item to each of the groups. Allow students to explore the object by activating the senses.
- Let them explore the object with their minds:
 - Where have I seen this before?
 - What is it used for?
 - By whom? When? How?
- Ask students to discuss what the object may have to do with the visit?

After:

- Ask your students to connect the performing art experience to the object by:
 - Take a picture of the object and write down their experience of the performance.
 - Discuss how the object can be seen as a symbol for the artwork.
 - Reflect on why the performing artists chose to include this object (or not).
 - Retell the performance through the object's perspective.

You have an ocean of time

You learned about the performing art visit at the start of the school year and have included it in the annual plan.

Suggestion 1: «What does this have to do with us?»

Before:

- Explore with your students:
 - Why are the performing artists visiting us?
 - What does performing art tell us?
 - How will the performing artists tell us this?
 - Why would we find this interesting?

After:

- Explore further with your students:
 - What did the performing arts experience tell us?
 - Why is this performing art experience about us?
 - Contact another class that will experience the same production. Meet them on Zoom or Teams. Tell them why the performing art visit was such a good fit for you. Ask them to do the same to another class.



Suggestion 2: «Either – or ...»

Before:

Alternative 1:

- Send letters to students in an e-mail from a made-up character. The letter must contain prompts that have to do with the theme or art expression of the visit.

Alternative 2:

- Find an expert (on the theme or art expression) in your local community who can come to visit.

After:

Alternative 1:

- Ask students to write a review of the visit that they send to the fictional character.

Alternative 2:

- Ask the students to send a letter to the expert, in which they formulate some thoughts on the way the topic was treated during the performance.

Suggestion 3: «If I were someone else»

Before:

- Pretend that the class is a fictional group (for example, a jury, a circus troupe, an aid organization, factory workers, Vikings, etc.). Have students create fictional characters that belong to this unit.
- Have students explore the group and the fictional characters in different ways. For example, they can create a podcast, keep a diary, create a TV show, a poster, or sketch an overview map.

After:

- Have students process the experience as if they were the fictional character.
 - How would the character have reacted?
 - What kind of feedback would the character have given?
- Let students explore the experience as if they were the fictional character. For example, they can write a complaint, a review, or create a news story.



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Kulturtanken – Arts for Young Audiences Norway

- The Cultural Schoolbag(TCS) Norway is a national government agency responsible for providing art and culture to children and youth. Kulturtanken holds the national responsibility for the Cultural Schoolbag and operates under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Culture, collaborating with the Ministry of Education in their work on the Cultural Schoolbag program.

