

Drama technique 4:

Hot-seating



Drama-Teachers.com

1 What it is ?

Hot-seating is a drama strategy where a student takes on the role of a character and answers questions from others.

It's a simple but powerful way to explore motivation, backstory, and personality in the safety of a fictional context.

The technique encourages quick thinking, a deeper understanding of characterisation, and empathy, while also developing performance and improvisation skills.

2 How it works



Seat the group in a semi-circle with one chair placed a little apart; this is the hot-seat.

Choose or assign one student to sit in the seat and become a character from a play, novel, or devised piece.

The student then answers questions from other students, in role, drawing on evidence from the text or their own imagination.

- Questions can cover the character's past, relationships, dilemmas, secrets, or future plans
- The teacher can model questions or provide prompts to assist

3 When to use it



- Exploring new characters
- Devising original scenes and fleshing out backstories
- Building confidence
- Examining dilemmas
- Supporting characterisation
- Cross-curricular (PSHE, History, English)

4 Teaching tips



- Set clear ground rules about listening and taking turns
- Encourage students to stay in character
- Model questions
- Create a supportive atmosphere
- Vary the format through individuals, pairs and groups

5 Extension ideas



- Run a press conference, with several characters being questioned at once
- Hot-seat the author, e.g. Arthur Miller on his intentions in *The Crucible*
- Explore a character at a different point in time –
- Record the hot-seating activity for later analysis