

One-Person Show

Description

In a one-person show, you assume the identity of a book character, a historical figure, a famous scientist, or an artist at work—and you stay in character throughout the performance and through its conclusion. This sort of performance allows you to show how your research or project “fits” into the world—how your theme or topic relates to the world in terms of people, places, culture, and time period. Taking on the persona of a historical person allows you to have some fun interacting with your audience as you stay in character while talking with them about their modern lives. Not only will you be demonstrating how much you have learned about your person, you will be practicing your oral presentation or acting skills and your thinking-on-your-feet skills.

Planning

1. Decide who you will be—you need not be a famous person; you can take on the role of a “regular” person in any time period or line of work, as long as you can relate the person to the topic of your research.
2. Figure out what the central message is that you want your character to give the audience. Are you teaching about a person’s life and how he or she was influenced to make a discovery? Are you sharing what it was like to be a member of the upper class in a different time period? Are you showing how hard it was to exist without modern conveniences?
 - a. What is the central moment your show will focus on? What changed your world? What happened after this moment?
 - b. What are the important moments that led up to the central moment? What was happening in your life?
 - c. Did the central moment change you?
 - d. What people did you spend time with? What was your family like? How did you spend your free time? What kinds of thoughts ran through your head?
3. Other decisions to make:
 - a. What will you wear?
 - b. What props will you need?
 - c. What words will you speak or actions will you demonstrate?
 - d. What message will you give?
 - e. What will you tell the audience about the life of your character?

4. List some questions that your character might ask the audience members during the show.
5. Outline or storyboard your performance.
6. Practice your performance (in costume) and get feedback from someone you trust.
7. Read the Rubric for Performance Assessment so that you know how your performance will be evaluated.
8. Gather all the materials and props you'll need, and first practice your part alone and then with a person you trust as your audience. Make sure your audience asks you questions and don't hesitate to engage him or her in conversation.
9. When you are ready, ask your teacher to schedule class time for your show.

Assessing

1. Ask your audience members and teacher to fill out a Rubric for Performance Assessment. Fill one out yourself.
2. Based on the rubric results, do you think your audience enjoyed your performance? Do you think they learned the information and concepts you wanted to convey?
3. What were the things you did best? What things do you want to learn how to do better the next time?

Technology Connection

1. Create a podcast (www.commoncraft.com/show) by recording and/or filming your show.
2. Share with others through VoiceThread (<http://voicethread.com>).
3. Make a 30-second ad for your show at this site for easy, free video production:
<http://www.animoto.com>