



The Lament of the Green Bean by Elinor Roos

Director's Notes

Focus:

Food Security - the impact of where our food is from on other places and the environment as a whole.

Learning outcomes:

- I understand what food security means and why it's important.
- I understand some problems with wasting food
- I know where my food comes from and what goes into it.

Big questions learners will explore

- How important is it to buy produce grown in your own country?
- What is the impact of food security on our country?
- What steps can we take as individuals to combat food security and have a more self-sufficient approach to food production?

Synopsis / Story Version

The story version in italics below has been created by Jonathan Hall, a Primary Deputy Head Teacher for you to read out loud to your class either on the day or some time before to introduce your class to the play.

The trouble with food is that it's the things we find tastier- burgers, chips- pizza- that are the things that tend to be less than healthy for us. Though we may all eat- and even like- vegetables it's hard to get worked up by a plate of carrots in the same way we would a double cheeseburger with fries.

And there's something else, something we don't really tend to think about on a day to day basis- and that's where the food we eat- or don't eat- comes from. Say it's a vegetable or fruit grown in another country.

That fruit or vegetable is going to need watering to grow- and if it's a hot country people are going to want that water to drink. And then how about the fuel it takes to fly that fruit or vegetable over here? That's not very good for the environment, all those exhaust gases being pumped out into the atmosphere...

This is a story about the choices we make with our food- and about some of the potential consequences of those choices.

We start- fittingly enough for a story about food- at tea time in a present day English home. The children sitting down to eat are excited by what's on offer. Sausages! Hooray! Chips! Fantastic! But then what's this? Green beans. Kenyan Green beans. Something the children turn their noses up at, never mind the effort it took the Kenyan farmers to grow them- especially the lavish use of their precious, precious water. Use of water which means less water for the Kenyans themselves.

Watching this the Kenyan Green Beans are sad - don't the children realise? They're even sadder when the children say a big 'no' to another offering - healthy but bruised 'ugly fruit'. Instead they demand.... Chocolate! Not stopping to think for one moment about of the global implications of this choice (Ingredients from Malaysia and Indonesia needing to be flown to the chocolate plant)

These are not good choices to be making - certainly not on a regular basis. And like any choice we make - there are consequences.



The story jumps forward to the world of 2040 - a world where thanks to the choices made in the past there's hot hot weather in this country. Far too hot to play outside and inside expensive and extensive air conditioning is the norm... the big old rainforests- they're things of the past, their soaring beautiful birds now extinct. The children we met in the first part of the story are now grown up- in fact they are now grandparents, trying to describe this beautiful lost world to their grandchildren as they sit in their underground shelters (the only cool place to be). And in trying to explain where this world has gone they bitterly lament their past eating habits, habits which didn't seem so bad at the time, but over time had these disastrous consequences.

Fortunately, our magical Green Beans are on hand, first to recreate the long lost swallows from the Grandparent's memories - and then to give the children another chance by resetting the clock back to 2015. Here the children- now fully aware of their responsibilities to the planet are able to have the chance to make more responsible- and healthier- choices about the food they eat.

Are these choices you would make?

Top Tips for putting on your Play in a Day.

Before you start:

1. Read and familiarise yourself with the play and decide on roles prior to the day. You know your pupils better than anyone; who will want speaking parts? Who can take a leadership role in a group movement piece? Who works well with who? You may want to pre-prepare the lines printed on card for pupils to hold. I suggest numbering/naming these cards so they know when to say their line.
2. Decide how you want to stage the play; where will it be performed? Where will you position your audience? Do you need to put the pupils somewhere when they are off stage? (*see staging configurations for ideas*)
3. Look at the requirements of the script in terms of costume and props so you are prepared on the day. Props and scenery could be made in advance as part of a cross-curricular approach.
4. You can always use pupils for roles other than acting. For example, someone could be in charge of costume and props, another could be responsible for the music or sound effects.

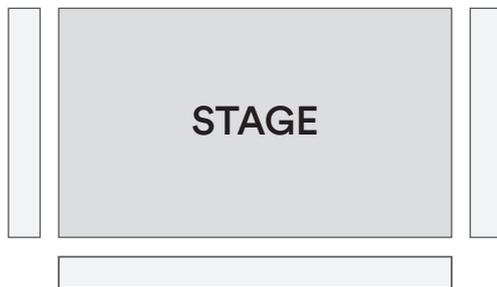
On the day:

1. Use the warm ups to get pupils ready for the day. Explain what the play is about and how we can teach others through theatre. Get them excited by the project.
2. Assign roles quickly and make sure everyone always has something to work on, whether that's their section of the play or helping create a prop or piece of costume.
3. Set out where the audience will be when rehearsing so the pupils are aware of their performance space and how it will be performed.
4. If you have extra help in the room (TA's) use them to create the movement sequences whilst you work with pupils with speaking parts or vice versa. The videos for movement are really useful and pupils can learn straight from the video.
5. Make the play your own, be creative and take ideas and suggestions from your pupils too. Enjoy it!

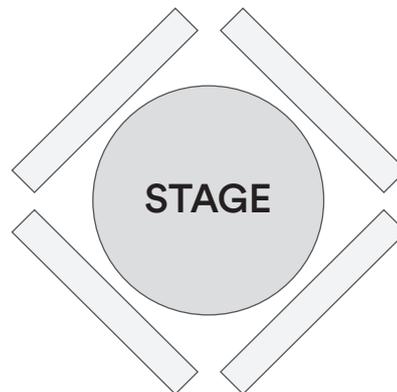
Staging Ideas

You may have a stage in your school hall which is great but don't feel you must use it. There are many ways you could stage your play. The audience could be sat on the stage with the pupils performing on the hall floor for example. Below are a few examples of ways you could stage the performance. You will need to consider what is available to you and what you need from a performance space- do you need a hidden off stage area for example.

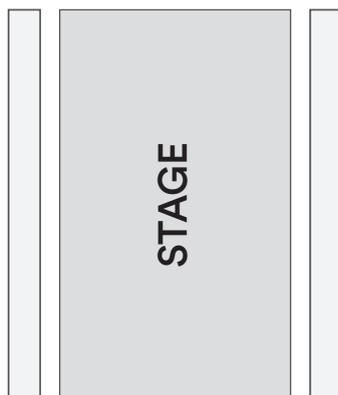
Thrust



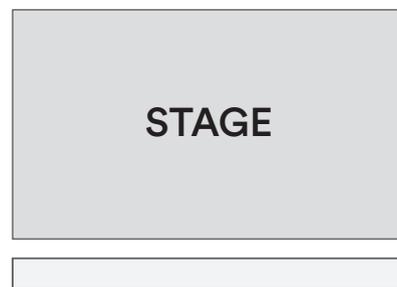
In the Round



Traverse



End on





Rehearsals

Starter Games / Activities

Stage Directions Game

Great for: Warming up the pupils and creating an understanding of stage directions.

All pupils gather in the middle of the space. Explain to them this is centre stage. We always say the actor is the most important person on the stage, therefore the stage directions are their left and their right as they face the audience. Upstage is behind them (usually the furthest away from the 'audience') and downstage is in front of them (closest to the 'audience'). Call out each stage direction one by one, the pupils have to run to that location as quick as possible, last one there is out. This student can then call out the next instruction to keep them involved. This should familiarise pupils with the stage directions on the stage and help you later on with blocking the play. There are some fun instructions to add in too. Round of applause: Clapping round in a circular motion or turning around as they clap. Scrub the stage: Bending down the mime scrubbing the stage floor. Hang a light: reaching up to adjust a light. Take a Bow: over the top bowing and curtseying. You can create your own call and response instructions to add in. e.g. You say "Romeo, Romeo" the pupils reply "Wherefore art thou Romeo?". This can be a really useful tool to gather pupils in a particular area of the space at any time throughout the day hopefully make your job a lot easier!

Runner Beans (and other beans!)

Great for: Warming up pupils.

Pupils find a space in the room, walk around the space being careful not to bump into anyone else. Teacher to call out instructions. Runner Bean: pupils run on the spot. Baked Bean: pupils curl up in a ball on the floor. Jumping Bean: pupils jump up and down. Broad Bean: pupils stretch their legs and arms out as wide as they can. Coffee Beans: pupils imitate coughing.

Agreement Line Activity

Great for: Getting pupils thinking and sparking discussion and debate.

Ask your pupils to stand in the centre of the space.

Explain that there is an imaginary line running down the centre of the space, one end of the line represents 'Agree' and the opposite end of the line represents 'Disagree'. The middle of the line is 'Don't Know'.

Explain that you are going to read out a series of statements. If they agree with the statement, they should go and stand at the end of the line that is 'Agree'. If they disagree they should go and stand at the end of the line that is 'Disagree'. If they are not sure or don't know what they think they should stay in the middle.

After they have taken up their positions, ask your pupils to explain why they have chosen their position. After hearing from several pupils, give your group the opportunity to change their position if they have changed their mind following what others have shared.

Repeat the process for each statement.

Agreement Line Statements

- The low price of food is more important than how it is made
- Young people are responsible for what they eat
- It doesn't matter how my food is made as long as it tastes good
- Doing exercise is more important than eating healthy
- It's really important what my food looks like
- Rich people should pay more for their food
- It is important to buy locally grown produce when you can

Tip: This activity can also be used to measure learning. Ask the pupils how much they think they know about the topic of the play you've chosen. e.g. How much do you know about Food Security. Encourage pupils to be as honest as possible. Take a photo of the pupils on the agreement line prior to working on the play and revisit the question afterwards. This can create a before and after photo sequence and show a change in the understanding of the chosen topic.

Curriculum Links

This play would work well as part of topics on Healthy Eating, Climate, Farming, the Rainforest or a study of an African country.

English Spoken language

- All pupils should be enabled to participate in and gain knowledge, skills and understanding associated with the artistic practice of drama.
- Pupils should be able to adopt, create and sustain a range of roles, responding appropriately to others in role.
- They should have opportunities to improvise, devise and script drama for one another and a range of audiences, as well as to rehearse, refine, share and respond thoughtfully to drama and theatre performances.

Science

Pupils should

- Explore examples of human impact (both positive and negative) on environments and the negative effects of population, development and deforestation.
- recognise the impact of diet, exercise, drugs and lifestyle on the way their bodies function
- Learn how to keep their bodies healthy and how their bodies might be damaged by an unhealthy diet.

Geography

Teaching should equip pupils with knowledge about diverse places, people, resources and natural and human environments, together with a deep understanding of the Earth's key physical and human processes.



Place knowledge

- Pupils should understand geographical similarities and differences through the study of human and physical geography of a region outside the United Kingdom

Human geography

- Pupils should describe and understand key aspects of: human geography, including: types of settlement and land use, economic activity including trade links, and the distribution of natural resources including energy, food, minerals and water

PHSCE links: World food supply, Third World issues, Diet and Nutrition, Caring for the Planet, Protecting Rainforests, Global warming, the work of charities such as Oxfam and Christian Aid.

Topic in more detail - Food Security.

In its narrowest terms food security means that enough food is available, whether at the global, national, community, or household level. Currently the world is facing a potential crisis in terms of food security. The challenge then, is to provide the world's growing population with a sustainable, secure supply of safe, nutritious, and affordable high-quality food.

Britain imports 40% of the total food consumed and this is rising, making us a non-self sufficient country in terms of food production; we rely on imports on such a large scale. Whilst it appears that our supermarkets are full there's a supply chain behind it all that is sensitive to economic and environmental events. For example, too much or too little rain can reduce harvests or disease could wipe out livestock.

This play looks at food security through green beans and their journey from Kenya to the waste bins of British children. An important factor in terms of the way we consume food is the amount of food waste produced on a daily basis. Pupils will gain some insight into the wider context of where our food comes from and how it is made.



Further Reading and Useful Sources

- World Health Organisation (www.who.int) - particularly the pages on nutrition and diet, physical activity and health, climate change, food safety.
- National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (www.nice.org.uk) - particularly the lifestyle and wellbeing section

Food security

Population Health - Professor Tim Lang

<http://youtu.be/SW0upTpIxN4>

In this presentation Professor Tim Lang, Professor of Food Policy at City University London talks about the future of food. This was one of the sources of inspiration for Rhiannon Tise's play.

Sustainable diets

The Future of Food: Sustainability - Kath Dalmeny

<http://youtu.be/KJJj4qjUO3k>

In this presentation, Kath Dalmeny of Sustain: The Alliance for Better Food and Farming talks about sustainability and food. This presentation was one of the sources of inspiration for Eleanor Cook's play.