

# Fish Out Of Water

Playwriting

**Grades:** 11-12

**Educational Objective:** The students will demonstrate their ability to understand the Clash of Context principle of comic writing by writing several fish out water ideas.

**Materials Needed:** All students need paper and pencils. A Fish Out of Water movie clip (Freaky Friday, Trading Places, Little Mermaid, Sister Act, etc.)

**Hook:** Watch the Fish Out of Water clip.

**Step 1:** Explain Clash of Context, which is taking something from its usual place and sticking it where it doesn't belong – Like a lounge singer in a convent. Give a couple of examples like Crocodile Dundee in New York, Eddie Murphy in a country/western bar in 48 Hours, a hockey player playing golf, the Munsters. Have them think and give examples from films or T.V.

**Step 2:** Now have them think of their own. Have them write down three Clashes of Context. Give them 3 or 4 minutes. Have everyone read them to the class. Some examples, Kid president, Lunar golf, prison beauty pageant, Pee Wee Herman Boxing.

**Step 3:** Take three of them and have several students improv them.

**Step 4:** Now explain that Clash of Context does not just have to be physical juxtaposition. It could be in a Wildly Inappropriate Response (WIR). This is some kind of DIRE ATTITUDE to a PETTY CIRCUMSTANCE or vice versa. For example, a Character so afraid of drowning that she faints when she takes a drink of water. You can find these in many Monty Python or Saturday Night Live sketches. Have the class think of examples they've scene on TV or Movies or Plays.

**Step 5:** Write these 10 circumstances on the board: Funeral, barbeque, baseball game, death row, firing a worker, wedding night, at the beach, church, nightclub, asking for a date, accepting a humanitarian award. Have them each write on paper a WIR for each one. Explain that all they have to do is ask themselves what the logical response is for that situation and just find the opposite or an equally wrong answer and they've got it. For example: A Funeral. Silent Respect is appropriate. The WIR would be everyone has kazoos, or dressed as Disney Characters, or lighting fireworks, etc. Go down each scene and have everyone read their WIR to the class.

**Step 6:** Now explain the Law of Comic Opposites. First Create a character with a strong comic perspective – Super Neat, Adrenalin Junkie, Scared of Everything, etc. Then find the exact opposite and put that perspective into another character. Lock them in a room and there you go. Examples - The Odd Couple, The African Queen, Tommy Boy, 48 Hours, etc. Have them come up with there own comic opposites. Scrooge marries a spendthrift, nerd and jock roommates, priest inherits a bar, etc. Have them each write three. Give 4 or 5 minutes. Have them read them to the class.

**Step 7:** Choose 3 of them to improv as before.