

Teaching Artist: Jennifer Hill	Project: A Celebration of Balance
Grade Level: 3rd, 4th, 5th	Core content: Math / ELA
Summary of the Lesson: Students are introduced to the circus skill of balancing an object. Through learning the concepts of balance and center of gravity, and experimentation with different objects, they will be able to identify the center of gravity in a variety of objects. From their observations, notetaking, and experiences, students will craft lines of poetry.	
Vocabulary: Balancing/Circus Vocabulary Try, Fail, Try Again Center of gravity Balance Horizontal Vertical Writing Vocabulary: Simile Third person point of view Poem Verb	Materials: Plastic grocery bag pencil paper

ARTS LESSON STRUCTURE: Attention, Review, Teach, and Support

ATTENTION How will you prepare the students for the lesson?

Model balancing a variety of objects (feather, toilet plunger, feed bag, broom, spinning plate). Ask them to pay attention to the size of the objects.

REVIEW: What will you review? What is the academic vocabulary for the lesson?

Center of gravity, balance, horizontal, vertical, simile, third person POV, verb, poem

TEACH: What will you do to teach the content?

ATTENTION/INTRO

Model balancing a variety of objects (feather, toilet plunger, feed bag, broom, spinning plate). Ask them to pay attention to the size of the objects.

End with question: What did you notice about the size of each of these objects?

(The length of the objects is at play here)

Review vocabulary – balance, horizontal, vertical,

CONNECTION

Model an attempt at balancing a pencil two ways – vertically and horizontally. Have students try, and fail and try again.

Review vocabulary – center of gravity

History & Definition of center of balance Archimedes, Greek mathematician, physicist, engineer, astronomer, and inventor.

Show video on center of balance [Lesson 1 - The Idea of the Center of Gravity - Demonstrations in Physics](#)

Lesson Plan Template

Question: What did you notice about trying to balance the pencil horizontally and vertically? What changed?

(The size of the object is at play here, distribution of weight)

Engage students to use imaginations – they are tightrope artists.

Stand on the line.

Raise a foot. How does your body adjust to balance?

Kick other leg back.

Bring arms out.

Ask students to write down any verbs associated with what they noticed.

Model how to balance the plastic grocery bag. Try different parts of the body – back of hand, tip of finger. Knee, elbow, etc. Model how to take a bow.

CREATION

Read poem generated from balancing an object.

Encourage students to practice again and take notes on what they see – colors, shapes? What does it look like to you? What can you compare it to?

Stop and write.

Remind what a simile is (show quick vocab?)

Practice again with the bag, this time paying attention to any sounds you hear.

Stop and write.

Practice again, this time paying attention to the feeling it gives you – what emotions are in this experience?

Stop and write.

Name your object based on a quality it has, or what it reminds you of, or just something playful and fun. Use your imagination.

What quality does this object have that you like right now?

Lesson Plan Template

Start your poem with “you,” as if you are talking directly to the object.

Use your the sensory description to build your lines.

In the last lines of your poem, ask the object to bring you the quality in it you admire.

COMPLETION

Encourage students to say one or two lines of their poem while balancing their objects.

Model. Encourage the practice of memorizing the poem, and balancing the object at the same time.

Support: What will you assign the students to complete and how will you support their learning?

Balance attempts (failures and successes) of plastic bag and pencil/pen
Supported by modeling both success and failure, sharing of tips, vocabulary

Practice of balance using body, making adjustments
Supported by modeling, tips, and vocabulary

Notes of observation
Supported by modeling, showing of notes

Writing of lines for poem
Supported by verb list for inspiration, review of vocabulary, modeling

Practice of balancing object and reciting lines of poem
Supported by modeling, extension exercises