

# *Big Drive*

## Lesson Plan



## Objective

Give students the opportunity to explore creative techniques by working together on a project. Develop students' openness to others, listening skills and respect for the different personalities of their peers. Teach them to communicate their ideas clearly and allow others to express their ideas.

## Target audience

Elementary grades 2 to 4.

## Connections

Visual arts  
Languages  
Social sciences



## Equipment

DVD player, television, blank paper, art supplies, magazines for clippings.

## Lesson plan summary

This lesson plan will enable students to explore the concepts of waiting, creativity and group projects while stressing the importance of the unique contribution of every participant. The *Big Drive* deals, somewhat nostalgically, with the magic of creativity, the spirit of cooperation and an era when technology did not play such a significant role in individual entertainment. The lesson plan includes two activities linked to these topics and a recap activity.

## Start-up and preparatory activity

Approximate duration: 50 minutes

Begin by discussing the concepts of waiting and boredom with the students. The discussion should get them to consider the role that technology plays in their activities, identify possible alternative solutions and view creativity as a means of communicating and interacting with others.

## Start-up

Start the discussion by asking students to explain what “waiting” means in their own words. Write their ideas on the board and then ask them to describe a situation in which they had to wait for a long time.

- Were they bored by the situation? Were they impatient?
- Were they alone?
- As they waited, were they inclined to think? Day-dream? Doze off? Fidget? Come up with ideas (either specific or vague)?
- Did they do something to pass the time? If so, what?

## Preparatory game: In my bubble

**Scenario:** Ask students to imagine they have to take a very long train trip seated next to another passenger, but they can't talk to the passenger.

Ask each student to draw a circle on a blank sheet of paper. To help them get the feeling they are traveling alone, have students put the activities that will keep them busy during the trip *inside* their “bubble” (using drawings or words). They can borrow ideas from the notes on the board. Then, have students put activities they can share with their fellow traveller *outside* their bubbles (reminding them that they are not allowed to talk to that person). Go around the class and encourage students to say what their activities are (both alone and with the other traveller). Next, ask students to decide if some of the activities involve:

- Technological devices (digital player, portable video game, computer, television, cell phone, tablet, etc.);
- Imagination (fiction, make-believe, fantasy, etc.);
- The surrounding environment (looking at the countryside, drawing a portrait of other passengers, counting the seats, etc.).
- Stressing cooperation (each traveller must get along with the others in order to communicate) and the possibility of communicating without words through creativity, talk with the students about their findings.





## Activity 1: Limitations? No way!

Approximate duration: 50 minutes

**Step 1:** Watch the first segment of the film in class—up to 3 min 33 s or until the father stops the car. Ask the students to summarize what they have just seen. Use the following questions:

Can you describe how each girl in the car behaves?  
What do they do to pass the time?  
Why does their father interrupt their activity?

**Step 2:** Ask the students to imagine the rest of the film. Use the following questions as springboards:

What happens when we're in a car and don't have access to technology (the way it was in the "old days")?  
How can we make a situation less boring without using technology?  
How might the girls be creative?

**Step 3:** Suggest that the students observe what the four sisters do next by watching the rest of the film. Point out to them that as soon as the girls work together, boredom gives way to ingenuity: the countryside moves, the horizon takes on strange shapes and objects come to life. Despite the limitations they felt at the beginning of the film, each girl blossoms by improvising a role that is complementary to the others. Ask the students to identify the limitations (heat, distance, monotony, etc.) and explain how each of the characters was able to change the situation.

## Activity 2: The window becomes a "screen"

Approximate duration: 60 minutes

**Step 1:** Tell your students they're going to work in teams to create a fantasy scenario. Ask them to imagine that their ideas will come to life in the environment around them, just like in the story of *The Big Drive*.

If your classroom has a window, tell your students to use what they see outside as inspiration. For example, if a street, playground, park or mountain can be seen from the window, that will become the "setting" for their story. Next, each team will give a short presentation to share their scenario with the class.

Variation: If you prefer, give each team a picture of a place (a photo clipped from a magazine is ideal). The pictures can be of the sea, the desert, the countryside, an urban centre, etc. Any and all places have potential. Each team's picture will be the "screen" where their scenario will play out.



**Step 2:** Divide the class into teams with equal numbers of members. Before they break into groups, ask each student to briefly answer the following questions (see note below):

1. What do you like to do when you're alone?
2. What's your favourite meal?
3. What job would you like to do?
4. What season do you like best?

The answers will be used to create a story and present it.

**Step 3:** Each team member contributes one answer to create the story.

As an example, a team could use the following elements for its creative activity:

- The playground's landscape (or a picture of a desert)
- Read a book (answer from student 1)
- Spaghetti (answer from student 2)
- Fireman (answer from student 3)
- Winter (answer from student 4)

That's the basis for the story! The team is now ready to create a short scenario. Each member must incorporate his/her answer into the story, find a way to adapt it to the answers of the other team members and incorporate it into the specific setting. Encourage students to let their imaginations run wild and create amazing fantasy scenarios!

**Step 4:** At the end of the activity, each team presents the result of the experiment to the class. It is important to follow the activity with a discussion stressing each student's contribution. You can also remind the class that what appeared to be a limitation became a tool and source of inspiration, even if it didn't seem likely in the beginning that the answers could fit together.

### Recap activity: The exquisite corpse (Surrealist game)

Groups of 3 to 5 students

Ask your students to describe a character artistically through improvised collaboration, similar to what happens in *The Big Drive*.

Using the “exquisite corpse” method—a collaborative creative technique in which each participant contributes to a composition—students merge their ideas into a creation, adding their individual voices to a collective undertaking. Each “exquisite corpse” can then be presented to the class, enabling students to consider a collective piece they helped create.

This technique involves inserting words or images one after the other to form an improbable sequence. There are no narrative structure limitations (see reference documents below).

### Objective sharing

Have your students explain what bores them. Help them understand that boredom often results from inactivity, lack of interest, the absence of pleasure or monotony. Ask them to verbally describe attitudes that can bring a person out of this state of lethargy (or weariness) and make these situations more interesting and constructive. Make sure that all students participate in this collective awareness-raising exercise by expressing their ideas.



### References

(for more information on the “exquisite corpse”)  
[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Exquisite\\_corpse](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Exquisite_corpse)  
*Le Surréalisme, les enfants terribles de l'art*, Éditions Palette, 2006. In French.  
*Le Surréalisme*, from the *Que sais-je?* collection, Presses universitaires de France, 2003. In French.

**Note:** This lesson plan has been designed for students of various age groups. You can adapt it to meet the needs of your students and select questions that are age-appropriate for your group.