

The Amazing People Club®



The Amazing People Teaching Strategies Tool Kit

From podcasts to role-play, from hot-seating to balloon debates, Amazing People Club resources lend themselves brilliantly to active engagement strategies. This pack is full of engaging ideas for starters, activities and plenaries. Be sure to also check out our live classroom case study [HERE](#).

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All of these strategies can be used successfully with any BioView®, to actively engage pupils in learning about the amazing person in question, and bringing their world to life.

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Inspirational Stories

BioViews® featured in the series, explore the lives of an extensive range of the world's most amazing people – from William Shakespeare to Walt Disney; Marie Curie to Albert Einstein; and Michelangelo to Florence Nightingale.

Deep learning occurs when students are trying to make sense of material, relating to previous knowledge, thinking critically, relating evidence to conclusions and examining the logic in arguments.

Many of the techniques combine, introducing a BioView® with exploring what the students may already know, putting them in a position of power. The techniques all require students to convert information from one mode to another, turning BioView® text and audio-visuals into physical and vocal representations, conversions that make the brain work harder. They all support co-operative group work, encouraging pupils to interpret, question, speculate and justify together.

This kit has been authored by Penny Alexander - a Secondary School Drama Teacher and former Head of Media and Film Studies. She has trained teachers across all subjects in the use of Active Engagement strategies.

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Amazing Starters

60 Second Challenge

Students write down everything they can already think of, to do with the amazing person.

Verbal Tennis

Divide the class into two groups, who take it in turns to say a word associated with the amazing person. No word can be repeated. The game can be scored as in tennis, or football.

Post-It Note On The Head

Pupils work out who the amazing person written on their Post-it note is, by asking yes/no questions of their neighbour.

Taboo

Describe a famous person to a partner without saying the taboo words e.g. their name and occupation.

Welcome To My World

Playing a BioView® as pupils enter the classroom can be a powerful way to get them thinking about what the lesson's learning will be about. Write a key question or simply Who, What, When, Where, Why on the board.

Set The Amazing Scene

When students enter the classroom, props or costumes suggesting the amazing person are laid out for them to consider, actively engaging them in questioning from the beginning. It could be Newton's apple, Coco Chanel's perfume or handbag...

Who might they have belonged to? Why they are here? What they are for? Where did they come from? When were they used?

Tune In

There are lots of great ways to help pupils 'tune in' to a BioView®. Ask them to close

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their eyes, put their head on the desk and take some deep breaths. Let your voice calm and quieten as you narrate them into listening to the BioView®. Describing where the BioView® might be taking place on a sensory level can be really powerful.

To help them focus, ask students to pull out key moments, facts, or questions to share with the group, or give pairs or small groups a focus question to discuss and offer feedback on, after listening.

Pairs Discussion BioView® Clip

In pairs discuss: What do I already know? What did I learn from the BioView®? What do I want to find out?

Bingo

Students listen for key words in the BioView® and mark off on a card.

Word Cloud

To open up a theme or issue ask everyone to quickly say one word that comes to mind after listening. Create a word cloud on the board to reflect on as the lesson goes on.

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Main Activities

On The Amazing Hot seat

Teacher on the hot seat, as an amazing person, can be incredibly powerful. Older and more able pupils may also be keen to take on being hot seated by the class. Hot seating tips:

- Explore possible questioning lines beforehand as a class.
- Focus on a key dramatic moment in time.
- Make it clear that the pupils are responsible for making the guest welcome and addressing them as a guest in the room. If they take responsibility for this, the teacher can promise to concentrate on really bringing the character to life for them.
- Signal you are going into role. E.g. a countdown before sitting down in the hot seat or re-entering the space.
- There's no need to put on an accent or act, unless you feel completely comfortable doing so, in which case it's worth warning pupils you will do this. Often simple changes to your body language, the tone and pace of your voice can quickly and effectively signal, you are someone else without provoking giggles.
- A simple prop or small piece of costume can also help to signal you are another character.
- If you don't know the answer, change the subject, ask them why they want to know, say no comment, or say pause, step out of role to double check and count back into role.
- Pause the questioning if anyone loses concentration, refocus and then count down again.

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Amazing Interviews

Once they know the amazing person a little better, students can also work in pairs and take it in turns to hot seat each other. Counting down or starting with a still image, or focusing on a dramatic moment from the BioView®, helps with engagement here. Students can use the ‘pause button’ if they get stuck.

Putting students ‘in role’ as journalists or TV researchers, can help deepen the interview. Interviews could be recorded as podcasts or videos, or turned into newspaper articles.

Amazing Still Image

Ask pupils to crystallize a key moment or moments within a BioView®. These are also sometimes referred to as tableaux, freeze frames, living pictures or frozen pictures. Still image tips:

- Encourage pupils to use facial expressions, different levels and gestures.
- Ask them to use space carefully so everyone can be seen.
- Give them a tight time limit and count them down to freeze.
- Still images can work in groups, pairs, individually or as a whole class.
- They can be used to summarize learning.
- Still images can be interesting if ‘framed’ by the teacher as newspaper photographs, paintings, sculptures or monuments, or what another character witnessed.
- They can be used to quickly decide upon the casting and agree the start, middle and end point for a role play.
- The class could be asked to bring their images to life spontaneously for a 20 second burst, the class could then sit down and one or two groups could ‘spotlight’ or replay their scene to the class.

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Shoulder Tapping

This could take place after pupils have listened to a BioView® for the first time. Ask everyone to keep their heads on desks and eyes closed and tap students on the shoulder to ask them for a word or sentence about what they have just heard.

Shoulder tapping can also be really useful once a key moment has been created as a still image. Once students are in a still image ask them to think what their character is thinking or seeing. Tap individuals on the shoulder and ask:

- What can they see? Hear? Smell? How do they feel? What's happening?
- An alternative, is to ask each pupil to come up with a line of dialogue or the answer to a question e.g. How are you feeling?

Writing In Role

Ask students to write as the amazing person, in a letter or diary entry.

- Give the document a very tight focus and discuss the character's aims and feelings first.
- To allow their subconscious minds to really flow, put a tight time limit on the task and tell pupils not to worry about neatness, spellings, grammar and layout. These can be honed in future drafts.
- Narrating pupils into role, before they write, can be really helpful.
- Don't forget social media. What if this person could have sent a text, facebook update or written a blog post at a key moment? What would they have said?

Narration

Teacher narrates the students into a situation they are about to role-play, write about or imagine. Describe the setting using all the senses and use pace, volume, and tone of voice, to help set the scene.

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Amazing News Report

Students share a section of the BioView® as a radio or television news report. Tips:

- Discuss the conventions they might use beforehand. E.g. reporter in studio, reporter on location, studio interview, action clip or replay, voiceover, vox pops.
- Agree a basic structure, e.g. reporter in studio then reporter on location interviewing, then action replay with voiceover. More able students can add to this list.
- Designate a ‘screen’ area when students perform using chairs or tables as markers.

These could be recorded to allow students to evaluate their work on a particular issue or event.

Podcasting

Amazing People BioViews® can be a powerful way to inspire students to use their own voice, whether it's to record an interview or radio show around a character, to speak in role as an amazing person, to give their opinion on an amazing person, or to make their own lessons or resources for other students to use in the future.

Podcasts are a great way to share learning from the classroom with parents, governors and other teachers and students. The beauty is that with careful planning and a little editing, valuable and engaging resource can be created. Teachers can create revision podcasts or resources to use, each time a topic is taught. Like BioViews®, podcasts communicate quickly and effectively, freeing up more time in a lesson.

All that is required is a PC or Mac, a decent microphone, free software such as Audacity and an RSS feed which is free and easy to set up. Googling ‘schools podcasting’ brings up lots of great resources on how to get started.

Teacher In Role/Whole Group Role Play/Simulation

Press conferences, meetings, court rooms, debates and community gatherings can all be explored as a whole group role play. They are most useful when the pupils are feeling

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confident with the amazing person and the issues they have raised. Tips:

- Question what the room/space you are meeting in looks/smells/feels like.
- Ask your students how you could rearrange the room to make the role-play believable.
- Question how the participants would behave.
- Consider using prompt cards and allowing pupils time to prepare arguments in pairs or small groups in advance.
- Start with a still image and ask pupils to show their character through facial expressions, and body language to help build belief.
- Choose a role that will allow you to control the drama from within. Low status roles can also be very powerful if ground rules are agreed beforehand, particularly if a more able student leads in and introduces the ‘character’ to the rest of the group.

Amazing Role-Play

Role play can be spontaneous or rehearsed, although very often a 30 second burst of spontaneous role play that comes out of a focused still image, is much more powerful than a scene that is rehearsed for half a lesson!

- Pairs – you can divide the class into A’s and B’s, and brief them as characters separately, to explore a difficult, emotional or tense moment, in an amazing person’s life. Give the group who isn’t being briefed questions to discuss while you attend to the other group. Role play cards are another way to brief different characters. Pairs are also great for TV or newspaper interviews. Count students down into role and use a still image to help them focus on being a different character.
- Small groups - Using still images (see above) as a tool to structure role play, can be a very powerful way to illuminate a key moment in an amazing person’s life,

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without losing the accuracy of historical events. Be careful to ensure there are enough characters for everyone in the group when deciding on group numbers.

Amazing People Balloon Debate

Balloon debates are an exciting way to debate the skills, influence and inspirational qualities of Amazing People. Balloon debates can work as a whole class, where individuals, pairs or small groups can be allocated different characters to ‘defend’. Teacher in role, as the owner of the balloon, can help to steer and prompt debate and add tension.

Alternatively, for more able groups and older students, or groups who are more familiar with the amazing people involved, balloon debates can happen in small groups with a presentation, in order to feedback, on the decisions made. Role cards based on the BioViews® can help pupils prepare.

Students are told - *You are in a hot air balloon that is losing height rapidly and therefore you need to lose some weight. In which order do you throw people out and why?*

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Amazing Plenaries

Finish the lesson in a way they will remember next time they see you...

Just A Minute

Pupils talk on a topic without hesitation for a minute.

Vox Pops

Pairs have 30 seconds to interview each other about their feelings on the amazing person or the theme or issue they have raised.

Whole Group Still Image

The pupils make a 'monument' in recognition of the key moments or achievements in the amazing person's life.

Word Cloud

Pupils write down all the words they associate with today's learning.

Timeline

Pupils create a timeline of events. This could be a physical time line of images or people, a washing line across the classroom, a line on the white board, post-it notes on the wall, or an individual timeline in exercise books.

Character Summary

Summarize the amazing person in five bullets, or with words inside a character shaped outline.

Statements

Compose two statements to explain what we have learnt about this amazing person and how we have learnt it.

Social Media

Write a text or status update this character would send (if they were alive today or had one last message to send). These could be collected on post-it notes and used to start the

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next lesson.

Epitaph

Write the amazing person's epitaph.

Book Jacket

Write the blurb for a book about this person's life.

Hot Seat The Class

Ask questions of the whole class in role. When did you? Why did you? What made you?

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