

## THE IMPORTANCE OF ROLE-PLAYING IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING

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**Annotation:** *The main purpose of this article is to show the role of role-playing in the profit of education for children. Because nowadays role-playing is not enough in education. So children` facial expression do not work well. If role-playing is taught from childhood, it will have a major impact on children` future.*

**Key words:** *role-playing, games, original characters, debate, language skills, fantasy, modern, medieval, steam punk*

Role play in any classroom brings a range of benefits. It adds variety to a lesson, which can be fun and motivating for students. It broadens the possibilities for language production by taking students beyond their own lives and experiences. Role play can also help with group dynamics; quieter students can take on the role of a much more forthright person and are encouraged to communicate more readily. Role-playing or roleplaying is the changing of one's behavior to assume a role, either unconsciously to fill a social role, or consciously to act out an adopted role. While the Oxford English Dictionary offers a definition of role-playing as "the changing of one's behavior to fulfill a social role" in the field of psychology, the term is used more loosely in four senses: To refer to the playing of roles generally such as in a theatre, or educational setting; To refer to taking a role of a character or person and acting it out with a partner taking someone else's role, often involving different genres of practice; To refer to a wide range of games including role-playing video game (RPG), play-by-mail games and more to refer specifically to role-playing games. Many children participate in a form of role-playing known as make believe, wherein they adopt certain roles such as doctor and act out those roles in character. Sometimes make believe adopts an oppositional nature, resulting in games such as cops and robbers. A role-playing game is a game in which the participants assume the roles of characters and collaboratively create stories. Participants determine the actions of their characters based on their characterisation, and the actions succeed or fail according to a formal system of rules and guidelines. Within the rules, they may improvise freely; their choices shape the direction and outcome of the games.

Role-playing can also be done online in the form of group story creation, involving anywhere from two to several hundred people, utilizing public forums, private message boards, mailing lists, chatrooms, and instant-messaging chat services to build worlds and characters that may last a few hours, or several years. Often on forum-based

roleplays, rules, and standards are set up, such as a minimum word count, character applications, and "plotting" boards to increase complexity and depth of story. There are different genres of which one can choose while role-playing, including, but not limited to, fantasy, modern, medieval, steam punk, and historical. Books, movies, or games can be, and often are, used as a basis for role-plays (which in such cases may be deemed "collaborative fan-fiction"), with players either assuming the roles of established canon characters or using those the players themselves create ("Original Characters") to replace—or exist alongside—characters from the book, movie, or game, playing through well-trodden plots as alternative characters, or expanding upon the setting and story outside of its established canon.

**Decide What Language Skills you're Working On**

Before you start a role play with your class, you need to be clear on what language skills you want them to develop. Is the role play designed to help them with the future tense, with question forms or with a certain vocabulary group? Are you trying to help them with set phrases used to negotiate or just with their fluency and ability to talk under pressure? Being clear in your aims for the role play will inform the preparation and follow up activities you choose to do.

**Prepare your Students**

Assess the level and age of your class in order to prepare them effectively for the role play. A lower level class may need more initial input in identifying the language they'll need for the role play. You could do preliminary activities where they practice the language in written form or through a reading task. It may be helpful to write key language (phrases or sentences they may use) up on the board as a reference. Higher level classes will need less initial input but they'll still get more out of the activity if you can prepare them by describing the role play situation and getting them to suggest phrases and words that may be useful.

**Don't Prepare Your Students**

Another way of helping students to learn language is by throwing them into a role play without any preparation whatsoever. In doing so, they recognize the specific language they lack for this particular situation. If you choose to do role plays in this way, it is important to continue the activity with a structured language finding section, followed by another, hopefully improved, attempt at the role play.

**Choose a Format**

There are lots of different ways to structure role plays in the classroom. Much will depend upon the size of your group and the characters of the students within it. Here are a few ideas:

**Debate an issue** – Split your class into two groups. Give each group an opposing point to debate and give them time to formulate their arguments.

**Information Gap** – Divide your class into pairs. Both students are given a card containing missing information, so the two cards make a whole. They have to ask questions of their partner to fill in the gaps.

**Conflict Situation** – Putting your students in a role play conflict situation encourages them to use persuasive and conciliatory language. You could have them pretend to be an arguing neighbor or a complaining customer.

**Phone Call** – Put your students into pairs and get them to sit back to back. This means they can't rely on

body language or gestures to aid understanding. Get them to “make a phone call” to book a hotel room or confirm an appointment. Group Planning – Divide your class into groups. Give them the task of brainstorming or planning something. It could be a party for a five year old or the design of a new tech product. Once finished, they can present their ideas to the rest of the class.

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