

Suggested Answers for Teachers
Scene 7: An Object Theatre story
'Never Make Your Teacher's Life Miserable!'

1. Before watching

- This performance is called 'Never Make Your Teacher's Life Miserable!'. What do you think this is going to be about?

Students' own answers

- The main character is a teacher, Gordon. What objects could be chosen to make a teacher?

Students' own answers

2. While watching

- What objects are used to make Gordon, the mother, the sister and the dog, Fido?

Gordon is made from a whoopee cushion and some baby pyjamas. The mother is made from a blonde wig, some red fashion glasses and a rose. The sister, Mary, is a Santa Claus soft toy. The dog is a yellow toy elephant.

- What does the puppeteer do to show that the teacher is asleep?

He makes a snoring sound and moves the head up and down to show that the teacher is breathing in his sleep.

- Look at the way the puppeteers are making Gordon walk to school. How do they do it?

One puppeteer is moving his feet and the other his head and left arm. As they move his feet, they slide them backwards to give the effect of the puppet moving forward.

- Why does Gordon dislike his students?

Gordon dislikes his students because they don't listen to him, they play tricks on him and they give him lots of homework.

- What objects do they use to make the student?

They use a school bag for the body, highlighter pen tops for the eyes and skipping rope handles for the hands.

- Why are these suitable objects for a student?

It's because they are all objects that a student would use.

- How do you know that Gordon is frustrated with his student after she plays a trick on him?

He sighs and lowers his head. This is a very good example of the use of 'body language' to express a character's feelings without using dialogue.

- On the second morning, why is Gordon already awake when his mother comes into his bedroom?

He is looking forward to playing tricks/getting revenge on his students.

- What three things does Gordon do to his students on the second day?

He doesn't listen to them; he plays a trick on them, and he gives them lots and lots of homework.

- What did the students promise to do at the end of the second day?

They promised never to ignore him, never to play tricks on him and to always mark their exercises in class and never to give Gordon homework again.

- What do you think is clever about this Object Theatre performance?

Students' own answers

- What is the moral of the story?

The moral of the story is to give your teachers and students a happy life.

3. After watching the video

- Choose one or two characters in the story and think of other objects you could use to make them.

Students' own answers.

- Choose one character in the story. Watch the scene again and study the way the puppeteers create this character's body, voice and movement. Try copying the way the puppeteers create this character. You can use different objects but try to find ones which can be moved in similar ways.

Character: Gordon (teacher)	
Body	<i>2 puppeteers: plaid baby pyjamas for the body and a whoopie cushion for the head</i> <i>Sometimes Gordon is made by one puppeteer when the other puppeteer is busy</i>
Voice	<i>deep voice</i>
Movement	<i>coordinated movements of head and body, putting his arm over his face to sleep, brushing off the dog,</i>

Character: May (sister)	
Body	<i>toy Santa</i>
Voice	<i>whisper, 'shrugging shoulders'</i>
Movement	<i>looking down on Gordon sleeping, moving along the ground as if with very short legs</i>

Character: Mother	
Body	<i>blonde wig, an artificial rose, a pair of sunglasses</i>
Voice	<i>deep voice, angry tone, words one by one ('YOU HAVE TOO')</i>
Movement	<i>shaking the head, sighing, slowing bobbing from side to side when walking</i>

Character: Fido (the dog)	
Body	<i>toy elephant</i>
Voice	<i>high-pitched</i>
Movement	<i>quick small movements forwards and sideways (with barking), licking</i>

Character: student	
Body	<i>a child's bag and skipping ropes for hands</i>
Voice	<i>high-pitched 'evil/naughty' voice</i>
Movement	<i>e.g. laughing (small sudden movements up and down)</i>

- Revise what you have learnt about the plot of a good story and identify the different elements of the plot of 'Never Make Your Teacher's Life Miserable.'

Elements of Plot	Content
Opening	<i>Gordon, a teacher, is asleep and his family tries to wake him up.</i>
Problem or conflict	<i>Gordon doesn't want to go to school because he doesn't like his students.</i>
Rising action (attempt, failure)	<i>Gordon goes to school and his students are nasty to him.</i>
Rising action (learning)	<i>Gordon has an idea. He decides to play tricks on his students.</i>
Climax	<i>The tables are turned! Gordon plays tricks on his students, who are upset.</i>
Falling action	<i>The students promise not to be naughty again.</i>
Resolution	<i>Gordon and his students are happy together.</i>

- Think of ways you could adapt this story with different characters, setting or plot. See the material for Scene 4 to get more ideas here.

Students' own answers

- Your teacher may ask you to produce a performance of this scene or an adaption of it.