Once Upon A Time...
5th Grade

Concepts
- Animal interactions with their environment tell natural stories.
- Narrative stories have a plot, point of view, setting and conflict
- There is a set of vocabulary associated with theatre.

Objectives
- Students will observe ancient animals and their environments.
- Students will write and present a narrative piece that includes a plot, point of view, setting and conflict.
- Students will use theatre vocabulary to describe experiences.

Outline
1. In one classroom session before visiting the Museum, review theater vocabulary and apply it during a discussion about observations of animals and environments presented in the Age of Mammals Hall.
2. During a trip to the Museum explore the Age of Mammals, where students will be assigned to specific environments to continue observing and begin writing their narrative story.
3. Back in the classroom, students will finish their story and write a script that will be presented or performed for the rest of the class.

Duration
Pre-Visit: 40 minutes
Museum Visit: 60 minutes
Post Visit: 50 minutes

Location
Age of Mammals Hall

Supplies
- Worksheet(s)
- Pencil
- Clipboard (optional)
- Age of Mammals Images (included)

Standards
CCSS ELA
W.3, W.7, SL.6
CA State
ELA Writing
1.0, 1.1, 2.1
VAPA
Development of Vocabulary or Theatre 1.1

Vocabulary
Script · Plot · Exposition · Rising Action · Climax · Falling Action · Resolution · Point of View · Setting · Conflict · Protagonist/Antagonist · Personification · Monologue · Dialogue
Pre-Visit
In your classroom, print out and distribute the theater vocabulary list worksheet to students and have them look it over. Then, show the A Prehistoric Story images (below) to the class. You may choose to do this as a digital slide show, or printing and passing around images below. Discuss the images using the theatre vocabulary, using the following questions are prompts to help guide the discussion:

- How might we describe the setting in this image?
- What different points of view are present in this image?
- Who are the characters in this environment?
- What might their relationships be?
- Who might the protagonist be? What do you see that makes you say that?
- Who might the antagonist be? What do you see that makes you say that?
- What might be the conflict in this picture?
- If the blank boxes were thought or voice bubbles, what might they read?

If you like, pre-plan designate student groups and assign environments before the Museum visit.

Museum Visit
Distribute the graphic organizer worksheet (Elements of a Story) to students. Gather students in front of the cheetah exhibit (“What is a Mammal” exhibit case) and ask the following questions:

- What characters do you see here?
- What is the setting?
- We are seeing one moment in this story. What might have happened before this moment? What might happen after?

Next, lead the students to the Mezzanine of the Age of Mammals in front of the “Understanding Environments” wall and divide them into groups of four or five. Assign each group a starting point. There are four environments, all of which are located in what is now Southern California:

- La Brea Tar Pits (27 thousand years ago)
- The Mojave Desert (10 million years ago)
- Los Angeles Basin (15 million years ago)
- Ventura County (40 million years ago)

Students should use their graphic organizer (Elements of a Story) to take notes on their assigned environment. Make sure the students are using critical thinking as they collaborate and take notes.

Post-Visit
Have students get together in their groups from the Museum and compare notes. Each group should first complete a story map worksheet (Story Map) based on their observations environment from the Museum. Then, using the story map and notes, the group should compose a short script based on the story map.

As a culminating activity, ask each group to present or perform their story for the other groups. The class should use new vocabulary to describe the theatrical experience. Assess student work using the rubric below.

Variations & Extensions
- Look at Charles Knight paintings of ancient ecosystems on Rotunda Mezzanine for additional inspiration (adjacent to Age of Mammals hall).
- Have students create costumes and/or set pieces to enhance their scenes.

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A Prehistoric Story

Ancient Environments in Southern California
Once Upon A Time...

In Ventura County 40 Million Years Ago...

Marsh Environment
In the Los Angeles Basin 15 Million Years Ago...

Marine Environment
Grassland Environment

In the Mojave Desert 10 Million Years Ago...
Once Upon A Time...

The La Brea Tar Pits

In the middle of Los Angeles 27,000 years ago...
Theatre Vocabulary List

Look over the vocabulary below, and be prepared to use these theater terms!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vocab</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Script</td>
<td>The written text of the story to be performed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plot</td>
<td>The events of the story.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exposition</td>
<td>Background information that helps inform the story.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rising Action</td>
<td>Events building up to the climax of the play.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Climax</td>
<td>When the conflict of the plot is resolved; the highpoint of the play.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Falling Action</td>
<td>Events occurring after the climax of the play.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resolution</td>
<td>When the problem or conflict has been solved. When agreement is made.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Point of View</td>
<td>The way a certain character sees things and its importance (each character has a different point of view).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting</td>
<td>Where the story takes place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict</td>
<td>The problem or difficulty that propels the story and makes it interesting.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Protagonist</td>
<td>The character that propels the action of the play.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Antagonist</td>
<td>The character that creates the conflict in the play.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personification</td>
<td>The attribution of personal nature or character to an inanimate object or notion.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monologue</td>
<td>Words/text spoken by a single actor usually alone on stage.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dialogue</td>
<td>Words/text spoken between two or more actors.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sense Memory</td>
<td>An acting technique used to deepen or strengthen an actor’s portrayal. Example: Remembering the specific smell or pine trees when you are doing a scene in the woods.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cue</td>
<td>The signal that tells an actor what to do next. Most ‘cues’ are thought of as lines the other actor says before you say your line. However, a cue can be a line in the play or a light going on or off or a sound. Anything that is the signal for something to happen on stage.</td>
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Elements of a Story

Using the image you have been assigned, fill out the graphic organizer below to detail the story elements you see. Feel free to add deeper meaning and creativity to certain aspects, and be specific!
Script and Presentation Rubric
Grades are assigned for the entire group.

Student Names:

(✓+ = Above Average; ✓ = Average; ✓- = Below Average, point values to be determined by teacher)

1. Script ✓+ ✓ ✓- ______ / ______ pts

2. Costumes/Props ✓+ ✓ ✓- ______ / ______ pts

3. Characterization ✓+ ✓ ✓- ______ / ______ pts

4. Staging ✓+ ✓ ✓- ______ / ______ pts

5. Time on task ✓+ ✓ ✓- ______ / ______ pts

TOTAL = _______ / _______ pts

Additional Comments: