

# Tableau Vivant: Bringing Literature to Life as People Pictures

This activity was extremely popular during the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and can be adapted for use with literature quite well. You are going to create a “living” picture. First, you have to select the subject. You might choose a famous person, an historical moment, or a scene from a favorite work of literature. The key is that the picture must be familiar enough to be recognized so that when it comes time to guess, the guessers will have a reasonable chance of figuring it out.

## The Steps

### **Split the Group:**

If you have a large group, divide it in two. If you have a small group, leave them all together and you will serve as the audience.

### **Assign a Director:**

The director is in charge of putting the picture together. The director will select a historical moment or a moment from a book you have been reading. The Director will then use the people in the group as living statues to make a picture of that moment.

### **Prepare**

Both teams work at the same time. Give them five minutes to put the picture together. (If you are working with two teams, have them work on either side of the room.) When they have both completed work on their pictures, you decide on which group will go first. Have the second group take a moment to remember their positions and then ask the second group to become the audience for the first group. Have the audience walk around and through the picture. Insist they not say anything, not guess. Tell them just to look.

After a minute or so, each viewer is allowed to ask one question. No guessing yet. When they have all asked a question of the director, (The statues are still in place.) then, if they have a guess, they can raise a hand and the teacher gets to pick who guesses. If they can't guess, they each get to ask another question.

Once the scene has been guessed, then the other team assumes the “statue” positions and the first group becomes the audience.

If the group is small, then it will be your job to walk about, do the viewing, ask questions, and make a guess.

### **Extras:**

If you want to get fancy, you might allow each team to back up their Tableau with a black board in case they need any visual elements.