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# Preface

“Ms. Henderson, Josh hit Me!”

“I did not. She hit me first!”

After working with middle school students for five years, I’ve learned that no matter who started it, both kids will think they’re right. Instead of trying to mediate, I went back to my desk and wrote the argument down. Thus, *The Flip Side* was born...

*The Flip Side* is a unique collection of monologs that give student actors a chance to do what they like best: argue! If lawyers have made a career out of finding the opposing argument then middle schoolers have made it an art form! Though all the monologs may not be in direct contrast to each other, they do offer an alternate view on a similar situation. Students should have no trouble finding a topic that they can identify with. For instance, your class jock may have fun presenting “Jungle Gym Fever,” a monolog on the joys of P. E., while another student may relate to “P.U. or P. E. Stinks!” The monologs are best presented as a pair so your class can see the difference in the two points of view. The monologs are also a good way for those particularly hard-headed kids to see what it’s like to walk a mile in another’s shoes.

When my Advanced Drama class, The Stargazers, presented *The Flip Side* to our school, the curtain opened to a stage full of students all placed back-to-back. Some students stood, some were sitting in chairs or on the floor, but the idea of being placed back-to-back helped the actors communicate to the audience that the opinions were in contrast to each other. It should go without saying that there are a multitude of other staging options as well. Props in *The Flip Side* are minimal and most can be mimed. Remember that the lines are not written in stone. If something doesn’t feel natural, change it! Most importantly, have fun with the monologs. Arguing doesn’t always have to be a negative thing.

By the way, I never did figure out who hit whom first...

Heather H. Henderson