

Unit 3: Playwriting
Theater, Grades 7 and 8
19 Class Meetings

Created May 2021, Updated May 2022

Essential Questions

- How do you write a play?

Enduring Understandings with Unit Goals

EU 1: Playwrights bring their stories to life through characters, dialogue, and setting.

- Employ improvisational theater activities to develop character, dialogue, and setting.
- Analyze different methods of storytelling.

EU 2: Playwrights communicate meaning through their plays.

- Construct the framework of a play through inquiry questions.
- Refine and revise plays to effectively communicate meaning.

Standards

National Core Arts Standards:

Theatre

TH:Cr1.1.8 a. Imagine and explore multiple perspectives and solutions to staging problems in a drama/theatre work.

TH:Cr1.1.8 b. Imagine and explore solutions to design challenges of a performance space in a drama/theatre work.

TH:Cr1.1.8 c. Develop a scripted or improvised character by articulating the character's inner thoughts, objectives, and motivations in a drama/theatre work.

TH:Cr2.1.8 a. Articulate and apply critical analysis, background knowledge, research, and historical and cultural context to the development of original ideas for a drama/theatre work.

TH:Cr2.1.8 b. Share leadership and responsibilities to develop collaborative goals when preparing or devising drama/theatre work.

TH:Cr3.1.8 a. Use repetition and analysis in order to revise devised or scripted drama/theatre work.

TH:Cr3.1.8 b. Refine effective physical, vocal, and physiological traits of characters in an improvised or scripted drama/ theatre work.

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TH:Cr3.1.8 c. Implement and refine a planned technical design using simple technology during the rehearsal process for devised or scripted drama/ theatre work.

TH:Pr4.1.8 a. Explore different pacing to better communicate the story in a drama/theatre work.

TH:Pr4.1.8 b. Use various character objectives and tactics in a drama/theatre work to overcome an obstacle.

TH:Re7.1.8 a. Apply criteria to the evaluation of artistic choices in a drama/theatre work.

TH:Re8.1.8 a. Recognize and share artistic choices when participating in or observing a drama/theatre work.

TH:Re9.1.8 b. Apply the production elements used in a drama/theatre work to assess aesthetic choices.

TH:Re9.1.8 a. Respond to a drama/ theatre work using supporting evidence, personal aesthetics, and artistic criteria.

TH:Re9.1.8 c. Formulate a deeper understanding and appreciation of a drama/ theatre work by considering its specific purpose or intended audience.

TH:Re8.1.8 c. Apply personal aesthetics, preferences, and beliefs to evaluate a drama/theatre work.

TH:Re9.1.8 a. Respond to a drama/ theatre work using supporting evidence, personal aesthetics, and artistic criteria.

TH:Cn11.1.8 a. Use different forms of drama/theatre work to examine contemporary social, cultural, or global issues.

ISAAC Vision of the Graduate Competencies

Competency 1: Write effectively for a variety of purposes.

Competency 2: Speak to diverse audiences in an accountable manner.

Competency 3: Develop the behaviors needed to interact and contribute with others on a team.

Competency 4: Analyze and solve problems independently and collaboratively.

Competency 5: Be responsible, creative, and empathetic members of the community.

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Unit Content Overview

1. Analyze how plays are different from films as well as other literary forms.

- Read examples of the same story in each format.
- Compare and contrast the different formats to playwriting.
- **Key Terms and Vocabulary:**
 - Short Story
 - Poem
 - Screenwriting
 - Animated Film
 - Storytelling
 - Play

2. Investigate the different elements of playwriting.

- Employ theatrical exercises to fully understand each element.
- **Key Terms and Vocabulary:**
 - 8 W's of Character Development
 - Character
 - Objective
 - Setting
 - Plot
 - Revision
 - Dialogue
 - Monologue
 - Improvisation
 - Script
 - Cue
 - Stage directions
 - Script
 - Thought Tracking
 - Soundscape
 - Exposition
 - Inciting Incident
 - Rising Actions
 - Climax
 - Falling Action
 - Denouement

3. Create individual plays.

- Write their own play section by section.
- Apply each element of playwriting.
- Revise their plays using self-review and peer-review methods.
- **Key Terms and Vocabulary:**
 - Peer-Review
 - Self-Review
 - Character Descriptions
 - Cast

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4. Share plays with classmates through a play reading celebration.

- **Key Terms and Vocabulary:**

- Table read
- Cold Read
- Cast List

Interdisciplinary Connection:

- ELA: character, setting, dialogue, script, writing, plot elements

Daily Learning Objectives with *Do Now Activities*

Students will be able to...

- Differentiate a play from other literary formats and films.
 - *Complete the sentence in the theater journal.... What is a play? What plays have I seen?*
- Create a one-minute play with dialogue and conflict.
 - *Venn Diagram on the wall to be filled in with sticky notes comparing and contrasting plays, films, and other literary formats.*
- Design a plot sequence for a well-known story. *
 - *Write in your theater journal. Do you think there must be dialogue to create a play? Why or Why not?*
- Apply the concept of the 8 W's of character development.
 - *Put the plot sequence terms in order in the diagram on the wall.*
- Employ theatrical improvisation to further develop characters.
 - *Turn and talk to a partner and together remember the 8 W's of character development.*
- Develop an individual story sketch and plot diagram.*
 - *Turn and talk to a partner and recall why playwrights write monologues for characters.*
- Construct what the audience sees onstage through Stage Directions.
 - *In your theater journal, write- what are stage directions?*
- Apply concepts of exposition and inciting incident to create section one (the beginning) of the play using the script formatting worksheet. *
 - *Gallery walk looking at images that might inspire a story..*
- Connect complications and climax to create section two (the middle) of the play. *
 - *Review section two of the script formatting worksheet.*
- Apply concepts of falling action and denouement to create section three (the end) of the play. *
 - *Review section three of the script formatting worksheet.*
- Revise plays with self-review and peer-review methods. *
 - *Complete any missing sections of your play.*
- Experience and celebrate classmates plays through table reads of each student's play.*
 - *Review the cast list for each play reading.*

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Instructional Strategies/Differentiated Instruction

- Whole group instruction
- Visuals of instructions for assignments
- Plan for the Day (Visual and Aural)
- Scaffolding (Building on theater skills)
- Repetition
- Imagery
- Silent Cues
- Visual learning, Aural Learning, Kinesthetic learning
- Sentence starters
- Student-led instruction
- Teacher modeling
- Written feedback
- Think-pair-share and small-group discussions
- Accountable talk
- Homework
- Small group instruction
- Virtual tools: Online examples of plays, films, scenes
- Conferencing
- Theater Journals
- Rehearsal
- Performance
 - Playwriting Scoring Guide

EL Differentiated Instruction

- Word walls with visuals of playwriting vocabulary.
- TWPS (Think, write, pair, share)
- Pre-reading strategies
- Culturally responsive teaching
- Explicit modeling of dance steps by teacher
- Key Vocabulary
- Graphic organizers
- Strategic grouping
- Non-verbal Assessment

Assessments

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENTS:

- Do Now
- Warm-up participation
- Student discussions and responses
- Accountable Talk Discussions
- Theater Journal Entries
- Improv Playwriting Activity Participation (EU 1)

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- Plot Sequence Worksheet (EU 1)
- Monologue (EU 1)
- Plot Diagram (EU 2)
- Beginning of Play (EU 2)
- Middle Of Play (EU 2)
- End of Play (EU 2)
- Self and Peer Revision Checklists (EU 2)
 - Future Rubric Assessment in 2021-2022

SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENTS:

- Plot Diagram Worksheet (EU 1 & EU 2)
- Final Play (EU 1 & 2)
- Performance Task- “Playwriting Celebration!” (EU 1 and EU 2)

Unit Task

Unit Task Name: Performance Task- “*Play Celebration*”-Playwriting Table Read Festival

Description: Students will write an individual play using the tools we learn in the beginning of the unit. Students will use script writing format designed by the Eugene O’Neill Young Playwrights Festival. They will create character descriptions and a cast list for the play and with the teacher cast their play using other classmates. We will have a table read of each student’s play over 3 days so each student can hear their play performed aloud and all students can share in each other’s work. There will be a scoring guide for the play itself, as well as participation in the table read. (EU 1 and EU 2)

Note: Students will have the option to submit their play to the Eugene O’Neill Young Playwrights Festival in February.

Evaluation: Summative Assessment and Responsibility Rubric.

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Unit Resources

- Video Resources of Online scenes
- Images to post for gallery walk
- Laptops
- Visual vocabulary cards
- Smart Board
- Google Slides/ Power Point Presentations
- Speakers
- Sticky notes
- 8 W's of Character Development
- Venn Diagram
- Worksheets: Plot Diagram, Plot Sequence
- Paper
- Pencils/ Pens
- Tables
- Chairs
- Theater Journals
- Chart Paper
- Tape