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FINE & PERFORMING ARTS
FAMILY & CONSUMER SCIENCE
HEALTH & PHYSICAL EDUCATION

RAHWAY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION

Content Area: Fine & Performing Arts

Course: Theater Arts

Grade Level: 8

This curriculum is part of the Educational Program of Studies of the Rahway Public Schools.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Patricia Volino-Reinoso, Program Supervisor: VPS, FAC, Physical Education

The Board acknowledges the following who contributed to the preparation of this curriculum.

Hailee Ross

Dr. Tiffany A. Beer, Director of Curriculum and Instruction

Subject/Course Title:
Theater Arts
Grade 8

Date of Board Adoption:
August 26, 2025

RAHWAY PUBLIC SCHOOLS CURRICULUM

Theater Arts: 8th Grade

PACING GUIDE

Unit	Title: Theater Arts: Grade 8	Pacing
1	Ensemble Building	5 weeks
2	Acting and Scene Study	5 weeks
3	Theater for an Audience	10 weeks

UNIT 1 OVERVIEW

Content Area: Theater Arts

Unit Title: Ensemble Building

Target Course/Grade Level: Theater Arts: Grade 8

Unit Summary: In this introductory unit, students will establish a foundation in acting, focusing on physicality, vocal control, and ensemble collaboration. They will engage in ensemble-building exercises and understand the importance of trust and communication in performance.

Approximate Length of Unit: 5 weeks

LEARNING TARGETS

NJ Student Learning Standards:

- 1.4.8.Pr4.a. Rehearse a variety of acting techniques to increase skills in a rehearsal or theatrical performance that assist in the development of stronger character choices.
- 1.4.12.prof.Pr5a. Identify and explore different pacing options per character to better communicate the story in a theater work.
- 1.4.12.prof.Pr5b. Explore and discover character choices using given circumstances in devised or scripted theater work.
- 1.4.2.Cr1c. Identify ways in which voice, gestures, movements, and sounds may be used to create or retell a story in guided drama experiences (e.g., process drama, story drama, creative drama).

Career Readiness, Life Literacies, and Key Skills:

- CRP4. Communicate clearly and effectively and with reason.
- CRP6. Demonstrate creativity and innovation
- 9.1.12.A.3. Analyze the relationship between various careers and personal earning goals.
- 8.1.12.D.5. Analyze the capabilities and limitations of current and emerging technology resources and assess their potential to address personal, social, lifelong learning, and career needs.

Interdisciplinary Connections and Standards:

NJSLS ELA:

- NJSLSA.SL1. Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- L.SS.8.1. Demonstrate command of the system and structure of the English language when writing or speaking.
- SL.AS.8.6. Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

NJSLS Social Studies:

- 6.1.2.CivicsPD.1: *Engage in discussions* effectively by asking questions, considering facts, listening to the ideas of others, and sharing opinions.

Unit Understandings:

Students will understand that...

- Effective collaboration is essential in ensemble work.
- Trust and communication enhance performances and build a supportive acting community.
- Physical and vocal warm-ups are foundational tools in acting.

Unit Essential Questions:

- How does trust within an ensemble impact the overall performance?
- Why are warm-ups and exercises important for actors?
- What makes an actor's performance convincing and authentic?

Knowledge and Skills:

Students will know...

- Basic acting terminology and concepts. (e.g., projection, articulation, ensemble)
- The importance of trust, communication, and collaboration in theater.
- Basic vocal and physical warm-up techniques for actors.

Students will be able to...

- Participate in and lead ensemble-building activities to develop trust and collaboration.
- Perform basic vocal and physical warm-ups with focus and clarity.
- Demonstrate a solid understanding of stage presence and focus.

EVIDENCE OF LEARNING

Assessment:

What evidence will be collected and deemed acceptable to show that students truly “understand”?

- A variety of **formative assessments** will be used throughout the lesson, such as checks for understanding and class participation. Peer Reviews, Warm-ups, Participation Rubric
- Summative: Performance Rubric, theater Terminology Quiz

Learning Activities:

What differentiated learning experiences and instruction will enable all students to achieve the desired results?

- Improv Games
- Ensemble Work

RESOURCES

Teacher Resources:

- Youtube
- Google Classroom

Equipment Needed:

- Computers

UNIT 2 OVERVIEW

Content Area: Theater Arts

Unit Title: Acting and Scene Study

Target Course/Grade Level: Theater Arts: Grade 8

Unit Summary: In this unit, students will learn advanced acting techniques based on Stanislavski's system, Meisner Technique, and Uta Hagen's 9 Questions. They will perform scene studies, working to apply these techniques to build believable characters and authentic performances.

Approximate Length of Unit: 5 weeks

LEARNING TARGETS

NJ Student Learning Standards:

- 1.4.8.Pr4.a. Rehearse a variety of acting techniques to increase skills in a rehearsal or theatrical performance that assist in the development of stronger character choices.
- CRP4. Communicate clearly and effectively and with reason.
- 1.4.12.prof.Pr5a. Identify and explore different pacing options per character to better communicate the story in a theater work.
- 1.4.12.prof.Pr5b. Explore and discover character choices using given circumstances in devised or scripted theater work.
- 1.4.2.Cr1c. Identify ways in which voice, gestures, movements, and sounds may be used to create or retell a story in guided drama experiences (e.g., process drama, story drama, creative drama).
- 1.4.8.Re7a. Describe and record personal reactions to artistic choices in a theatrical work.

Career Readiness, Life Literacies, and Key Skills:

- CRP4. Communicate clearly and effectively and with reason.
- CRP6. Demonstrate creativity and innovation.
- 9.1.12.A. Analyze the relationship between various careers and personal earning goals.
- 8.1.12.D.5. Analyze the capabilities and limitations of current and emerging technology resources and assess their potential to address personal, social, lifelong learning, and career needs.

Interdisciplinary Connections and Standards:

NJSLS ELA:

- NJSLSA.SL1. Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- L.SS.8.1. Demonstrate command of the system and structure of the English language when writing or speaking.
- SL.AS.8.6. Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

NJSLS Social Studies:

- 6.1.2.CivicsPD.1: *Engage in discussions* effectively by asking questions, considering facts, listening to the ideas of others, and sharing opinions.

Unit Understandings:

Students will understand that...

- Acting is a craft that requires thoughtful character analysis, emotional truth, and technique.
- Objective, obstacle, and tactic are core tools actors use to create intentional, believable performances.
- Advanced acting techniques (Stanislavski, Meisner, Hagen) offer different paths to truthful performance.
- Rehearsal is a process of discovery, collaboration, and refinement—not just memorization.

Unit Essential Questions:

- How do actors create believable, emotionally honest characters?
- Why is understanding a character's objective and obstacles important to a performance?
- How do different acting techniques (e.g., Stanislavski, Meisner, Hagen) help actors connect to their roles?
- What is the role of rehearsal in developing a character and refining a scene?
- How do actors use text analysis to inform their performance choices?

Knowledge and Skills:

Students will know...

- The core principles of Stanislavski's system, Meisner Technique, and Uta Hagen's 9 Questions.
- The concept of objectives, obstacles, and tactics in acting.
- The role of emotional truth in performance and its application in character development.

Students will be able to...

- Analyze a script to identify a character's objectives, obstacles, and tactics.
- Apply acting techniques (Stanislavski, Meisner) to build a character and deliver a convincing performance.
- Perform a scene with strong emotional depth, reacting truthfully to imaginary circumstances.

EVIDENCE OF LEARNING

Assessment:

What evidence will be collected and deemed acceptable to show that students truly "understand"?

- A variety of formative assessments will be used throughout the lesson, such as checks for understanding and class participation. Peer Reviews, Warm-ups, Participation Rubric, Weekly Journal Checks, Peer feedback sessions
- **Final Assessment Assessments: Performance Practical** Performance Rubric

Learning Activities:

What differentiated learning experiences and instruction will enable all students to achieve the desired results?

- Uta Hagen's 9 Questions, character breakdown
- Stanislavski Method
- Meisner Truth Activity
- Scene Blocking
- Acting Coaching
- Peer Table Talks/Reflections

RESOURCES

Teacher Resources:

- Youtube
- Google Classroom

Equipment Needed:

- Computers

UNIT 3 OVERVIEW

Content Area: Theater Arts

Unit Title: Theater for an Audience

Target Course/Grade Level: Theater Arts: Grade 8

Unit Summary: Students work as an ensemble to put together, rehearse, and perform a small play using improvisation, character creation, and thematic exploration for an audience. The focus is on creative expression, collaboration, and ensemble storytelling.

Approximate Length of Unit: 10 weeks

LEARNING TARGETS

NJ Student Learning Standards:

- 1.4.8.Pr4.a. Rehearse a variety of acting techniques to increase skills in a rehearsal or theatrical performance that assist in the development of stronger character choices.
- CRP4. Communicate clearly and effectively and with reason.
- 1.4.12prof.Pr5a. Identify and explore different pacing options per character to better communicate the story in a theater work.
- 1.4.12prof.Pr5b. Explore and discover character choices using given circumstances in devised or scripted theater work.
- 1.4.2.Cr1c. Identify ways in which voice, gestures, movements, and sounds may be used to create or retell a story in guided drama experiences (e.g., process drama, story drama, creative drama).
- 1.4.8.Re8a. Investigate various critique methodologies and apply the knowledge to respond to a theatrical work.
- 1.4.8.Cn10a. Examine a community issue through multiple perspectives in a theatrical work.
- 1.4.8.Pr5a. Examine how character relationships assist in telling the story of devised or scripted theater work.
- 1.4.8.Cr2a. Articulate and apply critical analysis, extensive background knowledge, sociohistorical research, and cultural context related to existing or developing original theatrical work.
- 1.4.8.Cr2b. Actively contribute ideas and creatively incorporate the ideas of others in existing or original theatrical work demonstrating mutual respect for self and others and their roles sharing leadership and responsibilities in preparing or devising theater.
- 1.4.12prof.Cr2b. Examine the collaborative nature of the actor, director, playwright, and designers, and explore their interdependent roles.

- 1.4.8.Cr1a. Identify, explore, and imagine multiple solutions and strategies in staging problems in a theatrical work.
- 1.4.8.Cr1b. Identify, imagine and practice solving multiple design/technical challenges of a performance space in a theatrical work.
- 1.4.8.Cr1c. Explore, describe and develop given circumstances of a scripted or improvised character in a theatrical work.

Career Readiness, Life Literacies, and Key Skills:

- CRP4. Communicate clearly and effectively and with reason.
- CRP6. Demonstrate creativity and innovation.
- 9.1.12.A.3. Analyze the relationship between various careers and personal earning goals.
- 8.1.12.D.5. Analyze the capabilities and limitations of current and emerging technology resources and assess their potential to address personal, social, lifelong learning, and career needs.

Interdisciplinary Connections and Standards:

NJSLS ELA:

- NJSLSA.SL1. Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- L.SS.8.1. Demonstrate command of the system and structure of the English language when writing or speaking.
- SL.AS.8.6. Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

NJSLS Social Studies:

- 6.1.2.CivicsPD.1: *Engage in discussions* effectively by asking questions, considering facts, listening to the ideas of others, and sharing opinions.

Unit Understandings:

Students will understand that...

- theater can be created from real stories, ideas, or emotions—not just scripts.
- Collaboration and creativity are key to building an original performance.
- Devising encourages risk-taking and ensemble support.

Unit Essential Questions:

- How do we tell a story through performance without a script?
- What makes an ensemble work effectively?
- How can I express my voice and creativity in a performance?

- What happens when theater artists use their imaginations and/or learned theater skills while engaging in creative exploration and inquiry?
- How, when, and why do theater artists' choices change?
- How/why do theater artists transform and edit their initial ideas?
- How do theater artists fully prepare a performance or design?

Knowledge and Skills:

Students will know...

- The concept of devised theater, which involves creating an original piece of theater from scratch, often through improvisation and collaboration.
- How to use improvisation as a tool for generating raw material and discovering ideas for a performance.
- Techniques for brainstorming and group collaboration to develop a shared vision for a performance.
- The process of structuring a devised performance, including beginning, middle, and end, as well as how to incorporate a theme or central idea.
- The importance of ensemble work in creating a unified performance, where each member contributes to the overall story or message.
- Ways to refine and rehearse original material, including editing and reworking scenes based on feedback and rehearsal insights.

Students will be able to...

- Create and develop original content by generating ideas, scenes, and characters based on a common theme.
- Collaborate effectively with an ensemble to create a cohesive performance that communicates a shared message or story.
- Use improvisational skills to generate raw material for the devised piece.
- Write, edit, and refine scenes, monologues, and movement sequences to create a well-structured piece.
- Perform as part of an ensemble, incorporating individual characters and moments into the larger group narrative.
- Reflect on the devising process and give constructive feedback to peers during rehearsals and performances.

EVIDENCE OF LEARNING

Assessment:

What evidence will be collected and deemed acceptable to show that students truly “understand”?

- A variety of formative assessments will be used throughout the lesson, such as checks for understanding and class participation. Peer Reviews, Warm-ups, Participation Rubric, Weekly Journal Checks, Peer feedback sessions
- **Final Assessments:** Performance Rubric

Learning Activities:

What differentiated learning experiences and instruction will enable all students to achieve the desired results?

- Brainstorming
- Improv Scenes
- Playwriting
- Devising Labs (Students will be in small groups, and each group will work on a different part of the script)

RESOURCES

Teacher Resources:

- Youtube
- Google Classroom

Equipment Needed:

- Computers