

**Unit 4: Technical Theater  
Theater, Grades 7 and 8**  
15 Class Meetings

*Created May 2021, Updated May 2025*

**Essential Questions**

- How does technical theater help to tell the story of the play?

**Enduring Understandings with Unit Goals**

**EU 1:** There are many different technical elements in theatrical productions.

- Investigate and understand the basic elements of technical theater.
- Connect the different jobs in technical theater to the corresponding technical element.

**EU 2:** Design of technical elements and collaboration of technical responsibilities is essential to clear storytelling in a musical.

- Design and create technical elements to help tell the story.
- Apply the elements of technical theater to a story.

**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: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.

**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.

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**TH:Pr5.1.8 b.** Use a variety of technical elements to create a design for a rehearsal or drama/theatre production.

**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:Cn11.2.8 b.** Identify and use artifacts from a time period and place to develop performance and design choices in a drama/theatre work.

**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.

**Unit Content Overview**

**1. Investigate and understand the basic elements of technical theater.**

- Learn about each element individually.
- Use elements we have from past productions to understand each element experientially.
- **Key Terms and Vocabulary:**
  - House
  - Wings
  - Proscenium
  - Crossover space

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- **Curtains (Fire Curtain)**
- **Box Office**
- **Front of House**
- **Scrim**
- **Fly System**
- **Automation**
- **Backdrops**
- **Flats**
- **Periakts**
- **Stage Directions**
- **Number Line**
- **Lighting**
- **Costumes**
- **Scenery**
- **Props**
- **Sound Effects**
- **Theatrical Make-up/ Hair**
- **Prompt Book**
- **On Book**
- **Call Times**
- **Places**
- **Cue**

**2. Apply the elements of technical theater to a musical.**

- Read the musical aloud.  
Investigate and contribute to the design slide show.
- Take on a technical theater role in the musical.
- **Key Terms and Vocabulary:**
  - Design (er) (Lighting, Sound, Costume, Stage Manager, Scenic Designer)
  - Stage Manager
  - Director

**3. Design and create technical elements to help tell a story.**

- Assess your technical theater responsibilities.
- Connect the different jobs in technical theater to the corresponding technical element.
- Take ownership of your technical theater role.
- Create your cue sheet.
- Create a design that connects to the musical.

**Interdisciplinary Connection:**

- ELA: character, setting, plot
- Art: Design elements
- Social Studies: Greek theater
- Advisory/ESL Learning: collaboration, leadership, ownership, communication

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**Daily Learning Objectives with *Do Now Activities***

**Students will be able to...**

- Connect the parts of technical theater to its purpose in a production.
  - *In your theater journal answer... What is Technical Theater?*
- Compare and contrast different types of stages.
  - *Name all the different places that can be a stage-*
- Connect to the story of the show through theatrical activities.
  - *Based on the title of the show write in your Theater journal what you think it may be about.*
- Analyze a Director's Concept is and how it guides the production.
  - *What are some different themes in the musical?*
- Distinguish the different elements of set design.
  - *What is a set and how does a set help tell the story of a musical?*
- Investigate how scenery and props expand on a story.
  - *How do technical elements help tell the story without any words?*
- Compare and contrast different ways lighting can be used theatrically.
  - *In your theater journal write down as many different sources of light as you can think of.*
- Assess how sound design and sound effects can change a production.
  - *What things need to be heard in theater? Who needs to hear it?*
- Apply storytelling and setting concepts to costume design choices.
  - *Do you agree or disagree with the statement that good backstage work is invisible? Why or why not?*
- Interpret the importance of theatrical make-up and hair.
  - *What is the difference between regular make-up and stage make-up?*
- Take ownership of a technical theater role.
  - *How do backstage roles work together with onstage roles?*
- Apply theatrical concepts to the technical design of the musical.
  - *What's the difference between designing for your own imagination and designing for an audience?*
- Apply technical elements (assigned technical elements) to rehearsal for the tech rehearsals.
  - *What qualities or skills are most important for someone working behind the scenes?*
- Connect costumes and make-up to set up a full dress rehearsal.
  - ⊖ *How do tech crews solve problems when something doesn't go as planned during a performance?*
- Reflect on the performance and rehearsal process.
  - *Write down what you felt like went well with setting up and making things for the show and what you felt was challenging.*

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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
- Conferencing
- Theater Journals
- Rehearsal
- Performance

**EL Differentiated Instruction**

- Word walls with visuals of theater and technical theater 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:**

- TWPS
- Daily Participation Checklist
- Student discussions and responses
- Accountable Talk Discussions
- Theater Journal Entries
- Director's Concept Worksheet.
- Guided notes.

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- Roles in the theater review worksheet. (EU 1)
- Technical Cue Sheet
- Prop List
- Costume Plot

### **SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENTS:**

- Technical Theater Test on Edulastic (EU 1 and EU 2)
- Performance Task- *“Technical Design and Production Challenge”* (EU 1 & EU 2)

### **Unit Task**

**Unit Task Name:** Performance Task- *“Technical Design and Production Challenge”*

**Description:** Students will work on a technical theater element that is part of the musical. They will be assigned this element and their class will be responsible for making sure it is ready for the musical rehearsals and performances (EU 2) Students will create their assigned technical elements for the musical and put those elements into action as a part of setting up the musical and doing the musical strike (in school). (EU 1 & 2) They will reflect on the technical design process as well as how their technical assignment fit into the performance itself. (EU 1 & EU 2)

**Evaluation:** Summative Assessment Scoring Guide

### **Unit Resources**

- Video Resources of theatrical elements
- Parts of a theater labelling worksheet.
- Stage Management-Roles in the theater review worksheet.
- Scripts for current show
- Director’s Concept worksheet.
- Costume box
- Set pieces from old shows
- Lighting gels
- Prop box
- Sound effect website
- Laptops
- Visual vocabulary cards-Put on each part of the theater
- Smart Board
- Google Slides/ Power Point Presentations
- Speakers
- Sticky notes

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- Paper
- Pencils/ Pens
- Craft materials
- Drawing paper
- Colored pencils
- Fabric swatches
- Glue
- Tables
- Chairs
- Theater Journals
- Chart Paper
- Tape