

Unit 4: Give Us the Story!

Dance Grades 7 and 8

21 Meetings

May 2026

Essential Questions

- How does the choreography in a musical tell a story?

Enduring Understandings with Unit Goals

EU 1: Dance can tell a story in a musical by moving the plot forward through choreography.

- Analyze how the plot moves forward with dance in a piece of musical theater.
- Demonstrate and create a piece of musical theater choreography that is plot driven.

EU 2: Dance can tell a story in a musical by reflecting the characters and setting of the show.

- Distinguish the difference between a musical number where the setting of the show is highlighted through choreography and a musical number where the choreography moves the plot forward.
- Analyze the kind of movement a choreographer chooses for specific characters.
- Organize, plan and produce a piece of musical theater dance that reflects the setting and characters of the musical.

Standards

National Core Arts Standards:

DA:Cr1.1.8 a. Implement movement from a variety of stimuli (for example, music, observed dance, literary forms, notation, natural phenomena, personal experience/recall, current news or social events) to develop dance content for an original dance study or dance.

DA:Cr1.1.8 b. Identify and select personal preferences to create an original dance study or dance. Use genre- specific dance terminology to articulate and justify choices made in movement development to communicate intent.

DA:Cr2.1.8 a. Collaborate to select and apply a variety of choreographic devices and dance structures to choreograph an original dance study or dance with a clear artistic intent. Articulate the group process for making movement and structural choices

DA:Cr2.1.8 b. Define and apply artistic criteria to choreograph a dance that communicates personal or cultural meaning. Discuss how the criteria clarify or intensify the meaning of the dance.

DA:Cr3.1.8 a. Revise choreography collaboratively or independently based on artistic criteria, self-reflection, and the feedback of others. Articulate the reasons for choices and revisions and explain how they clarify and enhance the artistic intent.

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DA:Pr4.1.8 b. Analyze and select metric, kinetic, and breath phrasing and apply appropriately to dance phrases. Perform dance phrases of different lengths that use various timings within the same section. Use different tempi in different body parts at the same time.

DA:Pr4.1.8 c. Direct energy and dynamics in such a way that movement is textured. Incorporate energy and dynamics to technique exercises and dance performance. Use energy and dynamics to enhance and project movements.

DA:Pr5.1.8 a. Embody technical dance skills (for example, functional alignment, coordination, balance, core support, clarity of movement, weight shifts, flexibility/range of motion) to replicate, recall, and execute spatial designs and musical or rhythmical dance phrases.

DA:Pr6.1.8 a. Demonstrate leadership qualities (for example commitment, dependability, responsibility, and cooperation) when preparing for performances. Use performance etiquette and performance practices during class, rehearsal and performance. Document efforts and create a plan for ongoing improvements. Post- performance, accept notes from choreographer and apply corrections to future performances.

DA:Re.7.1.8 a. Describe, demonstrate and discuss patterns of movement and their relationships in dance in context of artistic intent.

DA:Re.7.1.8 b. Explain how the elements of dance are used in a variety of genres, styles, or cultural movement practices to communicate intent. Use genre- specific dance terminology.

DA:Re8.1.8 a. Select a dance and explain how artistic expression is achieved through relationships among the elements of dance, use of body, dance technique and context. Cite evidence in the dance to support your interpretation using genre specific dance terminology.

DA:Re9.1.8 a. Use artistic criteria to determine what makes an effective performance. Consider content, context, genre, style, or cultural movement practice to comprehend artistic expression. Use genre-specific dance terminology.

DA:Cn10.1.8 a. Relate connections found between different dances and discuss the relevance of the connections to the development of one's personal perspectives.

DA:Cn11.1.8 a. Analyze and discuss, how dances from a variety of cultures, societies, historical periods, or communities reveal the ideas and perspectives of the people.

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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. Analyze how the plot moves forward with dance in a piece of musical theater.

Demonstrate and create a piece of musical theater dance that is plot driven.

Examples:

- Newsies, *Seize the Day*
- Newsies, *Carrying the Banner*

Key Terms and Vocabulary

- Ensemble
- Tableau
- Musical Theater
- Plot
- Setting
- Conflict

2. Analyze the kind of movement a choreographer creates for specific characters.

Character Introduction in a song.

- Understand the purpose of an opening number.
- Dance the abbreviated choreography in the number.

Key Terms and Vocabulary:

- Opening Number
- Character

3. Distinguish the difference between a musical number that highlights setting and one that highlights characters.

- Understand how the plot moves forward through this number.

Key Terms and Vocabulary

- Plot
- Setting
- Conflict

Interdisciplinary Connection:

- Social Studies: Cultures, history
- Music: Rhythm, music styles, tempo
- Math (Geometry): Lines, shapes, angles in movement
- Theater: Storytelling through dance
- ELA: Parts of a story

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Daily Learning Objectives with *Do Now Activities*

Students will be able to...

- Construct six different tableaux to depict the plot of the Musical.
 - *What is different about a musical than a play?*
- Examine the characters in the musical
 - *Gallery walk of character photos.-Oklahoma, Hairspray, A Chorus Line, Hamilton-Use sticky notes to write what you notice about these characters. What show do you think it is?*
- Arrange and produce a dramatization of Day in the Life of a character using a song from the show
 - ⊖ *Why might a choreographer choose dance instead of dialogue to move a scene forward?.*
- Apply choreographic concepts to create movement based on character and story.**
 - ⊖ *How does dance help create a sense of time and place (like 1950s New York or a magical kingdom)?*
- Compare and contrast 2 musical numbers in the show.
 - ⊖ *Why are dance numbers important to the story?*
- Design movements to illustrate the character's response to the conflict.
 - *Watch the video. Describe an emotion the dancer expresses in the video. What movements or expressions does the dancer use to show the emotion?*
- Arrange and assemble movements to create choreography that adds to dance technique vocabulary****
 - *What can inspire choreography?*
- Devise a choreographed unified piece working in small groups and evaluate each groups' piece through constructive feedback **
 - *Choreographers make choices about shapes, formations, and gestures. Why do you think those choices matter in telling the story?*
- Assemble tableau and movement to create a unified piece. **
 - *Watch America from West Side Story. Discuss how this dance shows characters' hopes, struggles, or opinions.*
- Create verbal introductions for the dance piece giving necessary background knowledge.
 - *Write down at least 3 facts you'd like to share with the audience about our dance.*
- Produce a complete dance.
 - *What is a story arc? How do you notice that in our dance?*
- Rehearse and Revise the dance using all elements on the performance checklist.
 - *Write down your rehearsal goals.*
- Perform Dance for another dance class.
 - *How do you feel about performing?*
- Rehearse dances from other units to create a dance concert
 - *What was your favorite dance we have done this year in dance class? Why?*
- Reflect on the performance
 - *What were 2 things that went well and one thing that 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 dance skills)
- Repetition
- Imagery
- Silent Cues
- Visual learning, Aural Learning, Kinesthetic learning
- Paragraph frames and sentence starters
- Student-led instruction
- Teacher modeling
- Written feedback
- Think-pair-share and small-group discussions
- Accountable talk
- Homework
- Small group instruction
- Small group devising
- Conferencing

EL Differentiated Instruction

- Word walls with visuals of dance 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

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Assessments

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENTS:

- TWPS
- Daily Participation Checklist
- Student discussions and responses
- Accountable Talk Discussions
- Freeze frame plot tableau (EU 1)
- Musical Plot Worksheet (EU 1)
- Character Statue (EU 1)
- Small group choreography devising
- Constructive responses to peer work
- Written Choreography
- Performance Task- “Give us the Story!” Dance Performance of a devised musical number. (EU 1 & 2)

SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENTS:

- Student Choreography
- Performance Task- “Extra! Extra- Give us the Story!” (EU 1 & 2)

Unit Task

Unit Task Name: “Give us the Story!”

Description: In this task, students will employ dance skills to perform a performance that reflects the plot, setting and characters of a musical. Students will start by identifying the plot of the story as well as how choreography helps to move the plot forward. (EU 1) They will then employ choreography using dance technique skills we have learned in class to perform our own version of a specific song in a musical. (EU 1) Through improvisational activities, they will design choreography to introduce the setting and characters in the story. (EU 2).

Evaluation: Unit Task Scoring Guide

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Unit Resources

- Musical materials such as videos, soundtracks, and plot summaries.
- Props
- Basic Costumes
- Laptops
- Desks
- Smart Boards
- Google Slides/ Power Point Presentations
- Music
- Speakers
- Paper
- Pencils/ Pens