

Grade 6-8 Theatre Curriculum Overview Quarterly Exploratory Class

In this course students will gain a basic understanding of theatrical elements, principles, and conventions as well as develop their acting skills. Students will study selected theatrical material as well as identify and categorize historical/cultural heritages and theatrical conventions. Students will plan a dramatization, take part in its production, and discuss the results. Students will study characterization to expand the definition of characters. Students will develop confidence, learn warm up strategies and practice different skills to cope with the public speaking anxiety.

Suggested Course Sequence*:

Unit 1: Elements of Theatre: 2-3 Weeks

Unit 2: History of Arts and Culture: 2-3 Weeks

Unit 3: Performance: 2-3 Weeks

Pre-Requisite: None

Unit Overview

Content Area: Elements of Theatre 2-3 Weeks

Unit Title: Unit 1 Job Responsibilities and Different Forms of Theatre

Grade Level: 6-8

Unit Summary:

In this unit, students will gain in-depth understanding of theatrical elements, principles, and conventions as well as develop their acting skills.

Interdisciplinary**Connections:**

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.

NJSLSA.SL2. Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

21st Century**Themes and Skills:**

CRP2. Apply appropriate academic and technical skills.

CRP4. Communicate clearly and effectively and with reason.

CRP6. Demonstrate creativity and innovation.

CRP12. Work productively in teams while using cultural global competence.

Learning Targets

Standards (Content and Technology):

CPI#:	Statement:
NJSLS 1.1.8.C.4	Define the areas of responsibility (e.g., actor, director, producer, scenic, lighting, costume, stagehand, etc.) and necessary job skills of the front and back-of-house members of a theatre company.
NJSLS 1.4.8.A.2	Identify works of dance, music, theatre, and visual art that are used for utilitarian and non-utilitarian purposes.
NJSLS 1.4.8.A.5	Interpret symbolism and metaphors embedded in works of dance, music, theatre, and visual art.
NJSLS 1.4.8.A.6	Differentiate between "traditional" works of art and those that do not use conventional elements of style to express new ideas.
NJSLS 1.4.8.A.7	Analyze the form, function, craftsmanship, and originality of representative works of dance, music, theatre, and visual art.
NJSLS 1.4.8.B.1	Evaluate the effectiveness of a work of art by differentiating between the artist's technical proficiency and the work's content or form.
Technology Standard 8.1.5.A.1	Select and use the appropriate digital tools and resources to accomplish a variety of tasks including solving problems.

Unit Essential Question(s):

- How do we respond emotionally to diverse works of theatre?
- How do different components contribute to the overall theatrical performance?
- How do symbolism and metaphor contribute to meaning in the arts?

Unit Enduring Understandings:

- All roles of a production team are valuable and interdependent
- Adjusting elements of style, setting, music, props, lights, and color integrated with the performers creates a unique aesthetic experience for the audience.
- Knowledge of spatial and sensory awareness, movement, and other techniques establish theatre preparation and warm-up techniques, including strategies for safe and correct use of the voice.

- The status of traditional theatrical roles (including director, stage manager, designers, operators, actors, producers) often dictates hierarchical structure within a production.

Unit Learning Targets/Objectives:*Students will...*

- Identify the members of a production team and explain how these roles are interdependent
- Understand how sound and lighting create mood in performance events.
- Identify key jobs integral to producing a play (e.g., actor, director, set designer, lighting designer, sound designer, costume designer.) and research the duties and responsibilities of these positions
- Interpret symbolism and metaphors used in selected theatre masterworks; apply metaphor and symbolism in the creation and performance of an original scene, and interpret symbolism and metaphors used in theatre scenes created by peers.
- Differentiate between "traditional" and non-traditional theatre masterworks and analyze the form, function, craftsmanship, and originality of the work.
- Differentiate among basic formal structures and technical proficiency of artists in peer and professional theatrical productions and use rubrics and scoring guides to evaluate the effectiveness of a theatre work.

Evidence of Learning**Formative Assessments:**

- Maintain a theatre portfolio over time (paper or digital) with journal reflections, research ideas, notation, videos, photographs, clippings about theatre from magazines and newspapers, theatre resources and performance "notes."
- Evaluate informal in-class performances and video evidence of student performances using observation, discussions, drawings, video, and simple student-created rubrics

Summative/Benchmark Assessment(s):

- Maintain a theatre portfolio over time (paper or digital) with journal reflections, research ideas, notation, videos, photographs, clippings about theatre from magazines and newspapers, theatre resources and performance "notes."

Resources/Materials (copy hyperlinks for digital resources):

- PowerPoint: Elements of Drama
- Video: Elements of Drama
- Elements of Drama Lesson Plan
- Glossary of Terms

Modifications:

- Special Education Students
Create a visual identifying the elements of theatre.
Create a picture dictionary of theatre terminology.
Provide alternative response choices to questions on the elements of theatre.
- English Language Learners
Create a world wall with key theatre terms/vocabulary.
- At-Risk Students
Incorporate student choice in activities.
Use a graphic organizer to categorize elements of theater.
Repeat directions as needed.
- Gifted and Talented Students
Create and lead the class in a theatre games, activities, or process drama techniques.

Lesson Plans

Lesson Name/Topic	Lesson Objective(s)	Time frame (day(s) to complete)
Scene Creation	Stage a short scene showcasing different areas of responsibility that are integral to a theatrical production (e.g., actor, director, set designer, lighting designer, sound designer, costume	1 Week

	designer.).	
Directing	Direct a short scene in collaboration that demonstrates a directorial vision and choices.	1 Week
Researching The Collaborative Process	Research various theatre personnel and their responsibilities and the skills and training that go into the position and how they work collaboratively to make a theatre production.	1-2 Days
Symbolism in Theatre	Identify and discuss symbols and symbolism in a selected design.	1-2 Days
Critical Viewing Experience	View and Evaluate productions with regard to the design and production elements.	1-2 Days
Teacher Notes:		
Additional Resources Click links below to access additional resources used to design this unit:		

Unit Overview

Content Area: Theatre History and Influence

Unit Title: Unit 2 - History of the Arts and Culture

Grade Level: 6-8

Unit Summary: Students will study selected theatrical material as well as identify and categorize historical/cultural heritages and theatrical conventions.

Interdisciplinary Connections:

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.

NJSLSA.SL2. Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

NJSLSA.R7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

NJSLSA.R10. Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently with scaffolding as needed.

NJSLSA.W4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

21st Century Themes and Skills:

9.2.8.B.4 Evaluate how traditional and nontraditional careers have evolved regionally, nationally, and globally.

CRP2. Apply appropriate academic and technical skills.

CRP4. Communicate clearly and effectively and with reason.

CRP7. Employ valid and reliable research strategies.

CRP11. Use technology to enhance productivity.

CRP12. Work productively in teams while using cultural global competence.

Learning Targets

Standards (Content and Technology):

CPI#:	Statement:
NJSLS 1.1.8.C.1	Analyze the structural components of plays and performances from a variety of Western and non-Western theatrical traditions and from different historical eras.
NJSLS 1.2.8.A.1	Map historical innovations in dance, music, theatre, and visual art that were caused by the creation of new technologies.
NJSLS 1.2.8.A.2	Differentiate past and contemporary works of dance, music, theatre, and visual art that represent important ideas, issues, and events that are chronicled in the histories of diverse cultures.
NJSLS 1.2.8.A.3	Analyze the social, historical, and political impact of artists on culture and the impact of culture on the arts.
NJSLS 1.4.8.A.1	Generate observational and emotional responses to diverse culturally and historically specific works of dance, music, theatre, and visual art.
NJSLS 1.4.8.A.3	Distinguish among artistic styles, trends, and movements in dance, music, theatre, and visual art within diverse cultures and historical eras.
NJSLS 1.4.8.A.4	Compare and contrast changes in the accepted meanings of known artworks over time, given shifts in societal norms, beliefs, or values.
NJSLS 1.4.8.B.3	Compare and contrast examples of archetypal subject matter in works of art from diverse cultural contexts and historical eras by writing critical essays.
Technology Standard 8.1.5.A.1	Select and use the appropriate digital tools and resources to accomplish a variety of tasks including solving problems.

Unit Essential Question(s):

- How does theatre influence life and life influence theatre over time?

Unit Enduring Understandings:

- Actors can draw on personal experiences, culture, literature, and history to create drama and

- In what ways do we see the origins of theatre still present in more modern drama?
- How does theatre influence
 - Society?
- How does society influence theatre?
- How do past and contemporary works differ in the ideas and events they represent?

improvisations, and assume roles within dramatizations.

- Directors ensure that historical and cultural components, theatrical traditions and conventions, and technical aspects of production are consistent with the intent of the playwright.
- Cultural references and relationships are embedded within scripted scenes and influence and inspire character development

Unit Learning Targets/Objectives:

Students will...

- Articulate the cultural, historical and social context of their original work, and a clear statement of theme.
- Identify major movements and periods in history, recognizing that theatre reflects the society and culture of its time.
- Describe and discuss a written text or live performance in terms of its social, historical and cultural context
- Identify and articulate the cultural and historical components of the work and how these components create a particular world of behaviors.
- Compare and contrast changes in the accepted meanings of known artworks over time, given shifts in societal norms, beliefs, or values. Create and perform in stylistically nuanced scene work from known plays, aligned to the cultural norms and theatrical conventions appropriate to the era of the play.
- Categorize historical innovations in Western and non-Western theatre history up to and including the early 20th century that stemmed from the creation of new technologies.
- Distinguish ways that theatre has reflected and impacted the society and culture of its time in Western and non-Western theatrical traditions.
- Apply characteristics of various Western and non-Western theatrical traditions to scene work that emulates theatre of various and diverse eras and cultures up to and including the 21st Century.

Evidence of Learning

Formative Assessments:

- Create PowerPoint presentations on actors who greatly impacted theatre.
- Evaluate written reflections on theatre principles, including reports and journal responses, using a student-created rubric.
- Evaluate informal in-class performances and video evidence of student performances using observation, discussions, drawings, video, and simple student-created rubrics.
- Additional Assessments may include:
 - Analyzing primary source documents on the history of theatre and the cultures of origin.
 - Conduct short research projects on the cultural origins of theatre to support analysis, reflection, and research
 - Use technology to create a presentation on the impact of theatre on specific groups of people and historical events.

Summative/Benchmark Assessment(s):

Maintain a theatre portfolio over time (paper or digital) with journal reflections, research ideas, notation, videos, photographs, clippings about theatre from magazines and newspapers, theatre resources and performance "notes."

Resources/Materials (copy hyperlinks for digital resources):

1. [Video: What is Theatre?](#)
2. A Cultural History of Theatre by Jack Watson and Grant McKernie
3. History of the Theatre by Oscar Gross Brockett and Franklin J Hildy

Modifications:

- Special Education Students
 - Create a visual identifying the elements of theatre.
 - Create a picture dictionary of theatre terminology.
- At-Risk Students
 - Incorporate student choice in activities.
 - Use a graphic organizer to categorize elements of

- Provide alternative response choices to questions on the elements of theatre.
- English Language Learners
- Create a world wall with key theatre terms/vocabulary.
- theater.
- Repeat directions as needed.
- Gifted and Talented Students
- Create and lead the class in a theatre games, activities, or process drama techniques.

Lesson Plans

Lesson Name/Topic	Lesson Objective(s)	Time frame (day(s) to complete)
Western and Non-western Theatre	Contrast and compare one major Western and one non-Western type of theater, recognizing similarities in intended purpose and performance style), such as an ancient Greek arena and Vietnamese water puppets.	2-3 days
Greek and Roman Theatre	Use online and video resources to research and guide the creation of a project that examines Greek, Roman or early non-Western theatre.	2-3 days
Theatre Creation	The student will plan and improvise plays based on personal experience and heritage, imagination, literature, and history for informal and formal theater.	2-3 days
Performance	Create and perform a theatre piece using masks from a chosen historical era or tradition (e.g., Greek, Commedia Dell'Arte).	1 Week
	Collaborate to write a short play based on a historical or current event.	1 Week

Teacher Notes:

Additional Resources

Click links below to access additional resources used to design this unit:

Unit Overview

Content Area: Performance

Unit Title: Unit 3 Performance

Grade Level: 6-8

Unit Summary: Students will plan a dramatization, take part in its production, and discuss the results. Students will study characterization to expand the definition of characters.

Interdisciplinary Connections:

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.

NJSLSA.SL2. Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

21st Century Themes and Skills:

CRP2. Apply appropriate academic and technical skills.

CRP4. Communicate clearly and effectively and with reason.

CRP6. Demonstrate creativity and innovation.

CRP12. Work productively in teams while using cultural global competence.

Learning Targets

Standards (Content and Technology):

CPI#:	Statement:
NJSLS 1.1.8.C.2	Determine the effectiveness of various methods of vocal, physical, relaxation, and acting techniques used in actor training.
NJSLS 1.1.8.C.3	Differentiate among vocal rate, pitch, and volume, and explain how they affect articulation, meaning, and character.
NJSLS 1.3.8.C.1	Create a method for defining and articulating character objectives, intentions, and subtext, and apply the method to the portrayal of characters in live performances or recorded venues.
NJSLS 1.3.8.C.2	Create and apply a process for developing believable, multidimensional characters in scripted and improvised performances by combining methods of relaxation, physical and vocal skills, acting techniques, and active listening skills.
NJSLS 1.4.8.B.2	Differentiate among basic formal structures and technical proficiency of artists in works of dance, music, theatre, and visual art.
Technology Standard 8.1.5.A.1	Select and use the appropriate digital tools and resources to accomplish a variety of tasks including solving problems.

Unit Essential Question(s):

- Why is it important to create a personality and a background for a character?
- How do posture, breathing, and voice control affect a presentation?
- How do movements, gestures, and expressions help and improve and support a scene?
- How do performers use vocal techniques to communicate meaning and character?

Unit Enduring Understandings:

- Theatre artists acquire skills in creative thinking, which allows them to exercise flexibility when making decisions and creating worlds through imagination.
- The arts demand learning to reach beyond one's perceived capacities by taking a creative risk.
- Theatre artists use curiosity, questioning, observations, experiences, and problem solving to generate ideas, concepts, and feelings that shape a work of theatre.
- Theatre artists explore playfully without a preconceived plan.
- Characterization results from careful analysis of roles and incorporates appropriate vocal delivery, movement, costuming, and makeup.
- Improvising dramatizations include plot, characterization, and setting.

Unit Learning Targets/Objectives:*Students will...*

- Define "believability" by identifying common traits of believable performances.
- Differentiate between a character's actions, intentions and internal dialogue and apply these distinctions to the portrayal of a character.
- Analyze scripted scenes to determine how a character's objectives change throughout a scene and how his or her tactics and subtext change within a scene in response to the actions of other characters. Apply the analysis to the portrayal of characters in a performance.
- Maintain focus and concentration in order to sustain improvisations, scene work and performance.
- Use distinct physical, vocal and emotional choices, to build a believable, multi-dimensional character and perform a scene and/or monologue within the context of two different genres. Compare and contrast the stylistic choices in each scene.
- Make imaginative and expressive use of scenery, props, costumes, lighting and sound in improvisations, scene work and performances.
- Use the body and voice expressively in theater exercises, improvisations, scene work and performances. Use theatrical improvisation, both short and long form, as a means of exploring character development (from a physical, vocal and emotional standpoint) while also focusing on objectives and tactics.

Evidence of Learning**Formative Assessments:**

Evaluate informal in-class performances and video evidence of student performances using observation, discussions, drawings, video, and simple student-created rubrics.

Summative/Benchmark Assessment(s):

Maintain a theatre portfolio over time (paper or digital) with journal reflections, research ideas, notation, videos, photographs, clippings about theatre from magazines and newspapers, theatre resources and performance "notes."

Resources/Materials (copy hyperlinks for digital resources):**Suggested Plays**

- The Effect of Gamma Rays On Man-in-the-Moon Marigolds by Paul Zindel
- Our Town by Thornton Wilder
- A Thousand Cranes by Kathryn Schultz Miller
- Step on a Crack by Susan Zeder
- Getting Near to Baby by Y. York
- Wiley and the Hairy Man by Susan Zeder
- Still Life with Iris by Steven Dietz
- Selkie: Between Land and Sea by Laurie Brooks

Glossary of Terms**Modifications:**

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Special Education Students ➤ Choose time, place, mood or theme to focus on when performing a particular theatrical piece. ➤ Work with a peer to develop a short theatre performance. ➤ Highlight individual speaking parts to provide visual assistance during performance. ● English Language Learners ➤ Create visual of common character emotions. ➤ Display labeled image of stage components. ➤ Highlight individual speaking parts to provide visual assistance during performance. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● At-Risk Students ➤ Invite parents/guardians to view and/or participate in a theatre performance. ➤ Break dialogue into smaller pieces. ➤ Conference with teacher during the acting planning process. ● Gifted and Talented Students ➤ Compare and contrast performance techniques from two or more theatrical styles and present findings to peers. ➤ Write and performer longer theatrical works, individually and in collaboration with peers. |
|--|--|

Lesson Plans		
Lesson Name/Topic	Lesson Objective(s)	Time frame (day(s) to complete)
Embodying Character	Create appropriate physical gestures and facial expressions that align to a character.	1-2 Days and throughout
Improv	Participate in group exercises, drills, improvisations and theater games.	1-2 Days and throughout
Scene Performance	Rehearse and perform a scene in front of others.	1 Week
External Traits	Research and portray a character, using at least one appropriate costume piece, prop, gesture, need and physical shape.	1 Week
Peer Critique	Provide feedback to scenes performed by peers in the "director's voice," noting character choices, vocal projection and stage pictures.	1-2 Days and throughout
Actor Prep	Demonstrate physical and vocal warm-ups used as preparation for rehearsal and performance.	1-2 Days and throughout
Teacher Notes:		
Additional Resources Click links below to access additional resources used to design this unit:		