

# **Madison Public Schools**

## **Introduction to Theatre Curriculum**

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# Course Overview

## Description

Introduction to Theater introduces students to the history of the theatre and various significant plays. Areas of technical production such as make up, lighting, costuming, and set design are studied. Class requirements also include limited performance work and a final project demonstrating skills and knowledge applied in this course. The elective semester class is offered to students of all academic levels across grades nine through twelve. Virtually all activities are performance-based. With the exception of role-playing and improvisation activities, all activities require preparation and rehearsal time. Peer critique follows each performance; instructor critique is both oral and written. The course is segmented into three areas: inner resources & improvisation, movement & oral interpretation, and scene work.

## Goals

This course aims to:

- Create drama/theatre through artistic collaboration
- Relate drama/theatre to its social context
- Assist students in forming aesthetic judgments
- Enhance perception, interpretation, and performance
- Assist students in understanding influences of theatre, film, television, and technology
- Encourage students to reflect and evaluate personal work and the work of others
- Build students' self-confidence and self-awareness

## Materials

**Core:** A classroom library of hundreds of scripts and several basic acting texts serve as primary sources for students in Introduction to Theater

**Supplemental:** YouTube, teacher created resources, PBS "Great Performances", various other online resources and videos

## Resources

[Suggested activities and resources page](#)

## Benchmark Assessments

Benchmark assessments are given quarterly and focus on the main ideas and anchor standards of the course. The semester will culminate in a final project/presentation. All assignments culminate in student performance followed by both instructor and peer critique. Peer critique is grounded in the principles taught in preparation for the assignment. In this way, peer critique measures performance against principles taught and reinforces the lessons of the particular unit. Students receive oral critique from classmates and oral and written critique from instructor. In addition to performance, some assignments require outlines, sketches, and lesser written plans and are thus evaluated as part of the total grade for the assignment.

## Modifications and Adaptations for Special Needs Learners

(Gifted and Talented Students, English Language Learners, Students with Special Needs, At-Risk Students, and Students with 504 Plans)

## Scope and Sequence (Pacing Guide)

Unit Number	Topic of Study	Duration (Weeks Taught)
1	Welcome to Theatre	5
2	Elements of Theatre	4
3	Performance in Theatre	9

Unit 1 Overview	
<b>Unit Title:</b> Welcome to Theatre	
<b>Unit Summary:</b>  In this unit, students will be introduced to basic theatre vocabulary, stage locations, movements, and terminology and process of evaluation. Further, students will learn how performers approach warm-ups in a performance setting as well as how they access the thoughts, feelings, and actions of a character. Students will learn the structures and varieties of drama, theatre history, and performance techniques.	
<b>Suggested Pacing:</b> 5 weeks (12 lessons)	
Learning Targets	
<b>Unit Essential Questions:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why is it important to understand the major basic theatre vocabulary?</li> <li>• How do performers effectively approach warm-ups in a performance setting?</li> <li>• Why is it important that performers be able to effectively access emotional and sensory recall and how do they approach that ability?</li> <li>• What are the basic stage locations and movements?</li> <li>• How do performers access the thoughts, feelings and actions of a character?</li> <li>• Why is it important for students to understand the terminology and process of evaluation?</li> </ul>	
<b>Unit Enduring Understandings:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is important to understand the major basic theatre vocabulary in order to communicate effectively with your peers and director.</li> <li>• Performers effectively approach warm-ups by creating a positive atmosphere in which they feel safe to express and discover their own thoughts and emotions.</li> <li>• Performers access the thoughts, feelings and actions of a character by text analysis, rehearsal and additional practices.</li> <li>• Understanding the representative theatre artists is essential to understand how theatre has grown in American society.</li> </ul>	
Evidence of Learning	
<b>Formative Assessments:</b> A variety of formative assessments will be used throughout the lesson, such as checks for understanding of theatre and stage terminology, progress during rehearsal periods and informal assessments of stage performance and rehearsal etiquette.	
<b>Summative Assessments:</b> Written quiz on theatre terminology; class presentations	
<b>Alternative Assessments:</b> Students may draw a rendering of the stage and theatre space and label all the elements covered in the unit.	

<b>Objectives</b> (Students will be able to...)	<b>Key Concepts</b> (Students will know...)	<b>Suggested Assessments</b>	<b>Standards (NJSLs)</b>
Use basic terms of theatre	The Structure of Drama, including narrative essentials (Exposition, Plot, Characters, Theme).  Comprehensive theatre vocabulary found in the <a href="#">suggested resources</a>	Quiz on theatre terms	1.3.12.C.1 Create plays that include well-structured plots and subplots, clear thematic intent, original characters, and technical theatrical elements appropriate to a variety of theatrical genres.
Create a plot diagram	The arrangement of the incidents that take place in a play or story	Students will divide into separate groups and select a movie that everyone knows. Students will create a plot diagram to show what happens in the movie. The students will create a visual project and present this to the class.	1.3.12.C.1 Create plays that include well-structured plots and subplots, clear thematic intent, original characters, and technical theatrical elements appropriate to a variety of theatrical genres.  CRP6. Demonstrate creativity and innovation.
Explain the various styles of dramas	The unique characteristics of representational, presentational, romanticism, realism, naturalism, symbolism, expressionism, and constructivism.	Each student will be assigned a style of drama. After research, each student will present to the class. If the class is large, students may work in pairs or small groups.	1.4.12.A.1 Use contextual clues to differentiate between unique and common properties and to discern the cultural implications of works of dance, music, theatre, and visual art.  9.3.12.AR-PRF.5 Explain key issues affecting the creation of characters, acting skills and roles.
Describe the roles of theatre, film, television, and electronic media in American society.	The lives, works and influences of representative theatre artists from various cultures and historical time periods (e.g., Shakespeare, Moliere, Ibsen, Julie Traymor, Stephen Schwarz, Stephen Sondheim)	Students will view clips on line of a variety of representative theatre artists and write a short paragraph about which resonated the most with them and why.	1.1.12.C.1 Analyze examples of theatre's influence on history and history's influence on theatre in Western and non-Western theatre traditions.  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.  9.1.12.A.3 Analyze the relationship between various careers and personal earning goals.  9.3.12.AR.3 Analyze the lifestyle implications and physical demands required in the arts, audio/visual technology and communications workplace.
Utilize the basic functions of the sound and light board	How to turn the house and stage lights on and off  How to turn the sound board on and off  How to connect a microphone(s)	Teacher will observe students performing these functions autonomously	1.1.12.C.3 Apply the basic physical and chemical properties (e.g., light, electricity, color, paint, scenic construction, costumes, makeup, and audio components) inherent in technical theatre to safely implement theatre design.
Utilize warm-up techniques for preparation of body, voice and mind	How to warm-up for future projects  List of theatre warm ups found in the <a href="#">Suggested Activities</a>	Participation Rubric	1.4.12.B.2 Evaluate how an artist's technical proficiency may affect the creation or presentation of a work of art, as well as how the context in which a work is performed or shown may impact perceptions of its significance/meaning.

			<p>CRP4. Communicate clearly and effectively and with reason.</p> <p>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.</p>
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Unit 2 Overview			
<b>Unit Title:</b> Elements of Theatre			
<p><b>Unit Summary:</b></p> <p>Students will learn how theatre can reveal universal concepts through text analysis, discussions, and emotional recall. They will analyze cultural experiences of dramatic works using personal criteria to critique. This unit will facilitate understanding context by analyzing the role of theatre, film, television, and electronic media in the past and the present. Students will articulate, justify, and apply personal criteria for critiquing dramatic texts and performances as well as research the cultural and historical background of a specific play.</p>			
<b>Suggested Pacing:</b> 4 weeks (10 lessons)			
Learning Targets			
<p><b>Unit Essential Questions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How are similar themes treated in drama and various cultures from historical periods?</li> <li>• How can theatre reveal universal concepts?</li> <li>• Why are the lives, works and influence of representative theatre artists crucial to understanding theatre as a whole?</li> <li>• Why is it important to analyze cultural experiences of dramatic works?</li> <li>• How do we build personal criteria for critiquing dramatic texts and performances?</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Unit Enduring Understandings:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dramatic works have universal themes that people can relate to across time and culture</li> <li>• Theatre can reveal universal concepts through text analysis, discussions and emotional recall.</li> <li>• The lives, works and influence of theatre artists are crucial to understand theatre as a whole in order to understand the climates of the society and culture from which they came from.</li> <li>• It is important to analyze cultural experiences in order to fully understand the human condition.</li> <li>• Building personal criteria for critiquing dramatic texts and performances comes from text analysis and class discussions over what is expected within the theatrical environment.</li> </ul>			
Evidence of Learning			
<p><b>Formative Assessments:</b> A variety of formative assessments will be used throughout the lesson, such as checks for understanding, progress during rehearsal periods and informal assessments of stage performance and rehearsal etiquette.</p>			
<p><b>Summative Assessments:</b> Text analysis of assigned or chosen play</p>			
<p><b>Alternative Assessments:</b> Students may write a critique of a stage production or give a class presentation.</p>			

<b>Objectives</b> (Students will be able to...)	<b>Key Concepts</b> (Students will know...)	<b>Suggested Assessments</b>	<b>Standards (NJSLs)</b>
Research the cultural and historical background of a specific play	Identify, compare and contrast the lives, works and influences of representative theatre artists from various cultures and historical time periods	<p>The class will choose a play to read aloud (a Neil Simon piece would work well). Parts will be selected for students to read. Students will participate in a final discussion over the play.</p> <p>Students will be divided into separate groups to read another play (suggestion: Arthur Miller and/or Tennessee Williams). Students will log information as they read the play in order to relate back to it later through text analysis. Students will also actively discuss the themes and dynamics of the characters</p>	<p>1.1.12.C.1 Analyze examples of theatre's influence on history and history's influence on theatre in Western and non-Western theatre traditions.</p> <p>9.3.12.AR-PRF.5 Explain key issues affecting the creation of characters, acting skills and roles.</p>
Identify the elements and history of musical theatre	<p>The history and cultural impact of American musical theatre</p> <p>The key composers of the 20th and 21st centuries</p> <p>The impact of musical theatre of popular culture</p>	Utilize one or more of the digital resources found on the <a href="#">Suggested Activities</a> page for students to watch and learn about the history and evolution of musical theatre. Students can each be assigned a show to research and present to the class. Students may sing a song from the show to demonstrate composer style.	<p>1.2.12.A.1 Determine how dance, music, theatre, and visual art have influenced world cultures throughout history.</p> <p>1.4.12.A.1 Use contextual clues to differentiate between unique and common properties and to discern the cultural implications of works of dance, music, theatre, and visual art.</p> <p>9.2.12.C.4 Analyze how economic conditions and societal changes influence employment trends and future education.</p> <p>9.3.12.AR-PRF.5 Explain key issues affecting the creation of characters, acting skills and roles.</p>
Create a floor plan	Basic set design properties and elements	Students will draw a floor plan diagram of a room in their home. At home, students will measure each wall, door, window, and piece of furniture. In class, students will transfer their rough floor plan and measurements to a scale drawing on graph paper. Once the basic floor plan is complete, students will then revise the scale drawing to simulate a box set design, by choosing one wall to remove.	<p>1.3.12.C.1 Create plays that include well-structured plots and subplots, clear thematic intent, original characters, and technical theatrical elements appropriate to a variety of theatrical genres.</p> <p>CRP6. Demonstrate creativity and innovation.</p> <p>NJSLSA.SL5. Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.</p>
Create a gobo design	Basic lighting design properties and elements	Students will create a gobo design by first drawing their design on a piece of paper. Next, students will transfer the design onto heavy-duty aluminum foil. If time allows, the teacher can demonstrate the use of each students' finished gobo in a lighting instrument.	<p>1.1.12.C.3 Apply the basic physical and chemical properties (e.g., light, electricity, color, paint, scenic construction, costumes, makeup, and audio components) inherent in technical theatre to safely implement theatre design.</p> <p>CRP6. Demonstrate creativity and innovation.</p>

Unit 3 Overview			
<b>Unit Title:</b> Performance in Theatre			
<b>Unit Summary:</b>  In this unit, students will work on individual monologues and engage in small group scene study. Students will also learn how to work collaboratively to effectively rehearse a production for performance. In the final project for this unit, students will perform a play using an original or published script.			
<b>Suggested Pacing:</b> 9 weeks (20 lessons)			
Learning Targets			
<b>Unit Essential Questions:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do playwrights construct cohesive and entertaining scripts for an audience?</li> <li>• Why are character development and plot important elements when writing a script?</li> <li>• How does monologue study help develop a character and inform artistic choices?</li> <li>• How can students work collaboratively to effectively rehearse a production for performance?</li> </ul>			
<b>Unit Enduring Understandings:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Playwrights draw from personal experience and use theatrical conventions to create relevant dramatic works.</li> <li>• The plot drives the action of the story and characters must go through a change throughout the story to make it interesting for an audience.</li> <li>• Collaboration, communication and commitment lead to a successful production.</li> <li>• Every person has an important role to play in a production.</li> </ul>			
Evidence of Learning			
<b>Formative Assessments:</b> A variety of formative assessments will be used throughout the lesson, such as checks for understanding and class participation.			
<b>Summative Assessments:</b> Performances of monologues, scenes and final class performance of a play.			
<b>Alternative Assessments:</b> If a student does not want a speaking role in the play, they may perform a backstage function such as lighting/sound designer.			

Objectives (Students will be able to...)	Key Concepts (Students will know...)	Suggested Assessments	Standards (NJSL)
Analyze and perform a monologue	Students will select an appropriate monologue for themselves from the classroom library. They will use knowledge gained in units 1 and 2 to analyze the character and create a backstory.	Each student will rehearse to prepare for a performance in front of the classroom audience. Students will also critique the performances of their peers.	1.1.12.C.2 Formulate a process of script analysis to identify how the physical, emotional, and social dimensions of a character are communicated through the application of acting techniques.  1.3.12.C.2 Create and evaluate performances by citing evidence of specific physical choices, sustained vocal technique, and clearly motivated actions.

			9.3.12.AR-PRF.5 Explain key issues affecting the creation of characters, acting skills and roles.
Analyze, collaborate and perform a 2 person scene (duet)	Students will work collaboratively with a partner to select a scene from a play. Each group will create blocking and a rehearsal schedule.	Students will perform their scenes in front of the classroom audience. Students will also critique the performances of their peers.	<p>1.1.12.C.2 Formulate a process of script analysis to identify how the physical, emotional, and social dimensions of a character are communicated through the application of acting techniques.</p> <p>1.3.12.C.2 Create and evaluate performances by citing evidence of specific physical choices, sustained vocal technique, and clearly motivated actions.</p> <p>1.4.12.B.1 Formulate criteria for arts evaluation using the principles of positive critique and observation of the elements of art and principles of design, and use the criteria to evaluate works of dance, music, theatre, visual, and multimedia artwork from diverse cultural contexts and historical eras.</p> <p>CRP4. Communicate clearly and effectively and with reason.</p>
Write an original scene utilizing character development and plot elements	Students will be introduced to the format for playwriting. Working in small groups the students will brainstorm relevant topics, create a list of characters and develop a plot/storyline.	Each group will write a script with dialogue and appropriate stage directions.	<p>1.3.12.C.1 Create plays that include well-structured plots and subplots, clear thematic intent, original characters, and technical theatrical elements appropriate to a variety of theatrical genres.</p> <p>CRP6. Demonstrate creativity and innovation.</p> <p>9.3.12.ED.2 Demonstrate effective oral, written and multimedia communication in multiple formats and contexts.</p> <p>9.3.12.AR-PRF.5 Explain key issues affecting the creation of characters, acting skills and roles.</p>
Perform a play, complete with costumes and technical elements.	<p>Class will collaboratively select a play for production with teacher guidance.</p> <p>Students will be cast as characters in each scene. Through the rehearsal process, students will work on character development using internal and external resources.</p> <p>Students will design and create scenery, props and costumes.</p> <p>Students will design lighting and sound cues and elements</p>	Final performance of play for an invited audience	<p>1.1.12.C.3 Apply the basic physical and chemical properties (e.g., light, electricity, color, paint, scenic construction, costumes, makeup, and audio components) inherent in technical theatre to safely implement theatre design.</p> <p>1.4.12.A.2 Speculate on the artist's intent, using <a href="#">discipline-specific arts terminology</a> and citing embedded clues to substantiate the hypothesis.</p> <p>CRP6. Demonstrate creativity and innovation.</p> <p>9.3.12.AR-PRF.5 Explain key issues affecting the creation of characters, acting skills and roles.</p> <p>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.</p>