



MAXIMIZING YOUR ENSEMBLE: SHOESTRING 101

Instructor

MICHAEL CALDERONE

Materials

Video modules, Handouts, Transcripts, MP3 Files, PDF of Powerpoint Slides, Completion Certificate

Course length

8 modules

2 hours, 53 minutes of video

4 credit hours

Course Description

This seven-part series is designed to transform that gaggle of actors cluttering your backstage from cumbersome extras into nothing less than the very center of your production.

Instructor Michael Calderone leads this course, through games and exercises geared to maximize your ensemble for your next production. These lessons are based on the ensemble technique that he's been using for the last 30 years, called the shoestring method.

The ensemble has a responsibility to work as one, and no role is more important than another. Without each actor playing their part, the other actors cannot tell the story to the best of their abilities. So join Michael in learning more about this exciting, practical and dramatic method.

About the Instructor

Michael Calderone is a drama instructor at Hopkins School, New Haven, CT, and previously taught at Hampton Roads Academy, Newport News, VA; The Chapin School, New York, NY; the Ensemble Theater Community School, Eagles Mere, PA; and Shoestring Plus, New Brunswick, NJ.

With a Masters of Arts Degree in Educational Theater from New York University and a Bachelors of Theater Arts Degree from Rutgers University, he believes the most meaningful part of his education came from Prof. Joseph P. Hart and his company, The Shoestring Players.

Course Curriculum

Lesson 1: Introduction *24:03*

Lesson 1 introduces the course and the three As: actor, audience, and area.

Lesson 2: Scenic Elements *20:52*

This lesson explores ways in which your ensemble can literally become part of the scenery rather than merely cluttering the background; using them as literal representations of physical scenery.

Lesson 3: Crowd Scenes *16:25*

This lesson focused on crowd scenes and environments, and discusses a wide range of applications in a variety of productions.

Lesson 4A: Environments *29:05*

Lesson 4A contains two exercises that focus on balancing the space - lateral space, meaning middle space only, and a three-dimensional space of air, floor, middle and lateral spaces.

Lesson 4B: Living Scenery *17:19*

Lesson 4B focuses on turning your ensemble into a living backdrop.

Lesson 5: Abstraction *17:45*

Lesson 05 completes the acronym LACE with the letter A by backtracking and creating visual abstractions.

Lesson 6: Percussion *25:49*

This lesson covers the importance, responsibilities, and possibilities of a percussionist on stage.

Lesson 7: Bonus Games *22:25*

This final lesson includes bonus games and exercises to strengthen your ever-growing ensemble.

Standards Connections

National Core Arts Standards

Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work - Grade 6

TH:Cr1.1.6.a - Identify possible solutions to staging challenges in a drama/theatre work.

Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation - Grade 6

TH:Pr4.1.6.b - Experiment with various physical choices to communicate character in a drama/theatre work.

Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work - Grade 7

TH:Cr1.1.7.a - Investigate multiple perspectives and solutions to staging challenges in a drama/theatre work.

Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation - Grade 7

TH:Pr4.1.7.a - Consider various staging choices to enhance the story in a drama/theatre work.

Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work - Grade 8

TH:Cr1.1.8.a - Imagine and explore multiple perspectives and solutions to staging problems in a drama/ theatre work.

Organize and develop artistic ideas and work - Grade 6

TH:Cr2.1.6.b - Contribute ideas and accept and incorporate the ideas of others in preparing or devising drama/theatre work.

Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation - Grade 6

TH:Pr5.1.6.a - Recognize how acting exercises and techniques can be applied to a drama/theatre work.

Organize and develop artistic ideas and work - Grade 7

TH:Cr2.1.7.b - Demonstrate mutual respect for self and others and their roles in preparing or devising drama/theatre work.

Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation - Grade 7

TH:Pr5.1.7.a - Participate in a variety of acting exercises and techniques that can be applied in a rehearsal or drama/theatre performance.

Organize and develop artistic ideas and work - Grade HS Accomplished

TH:Cr2.1.HSII.b - Cooperate as a creative team to make interpretive choices for a drama/theatre work.

Organize and develop artistic ideas and work - Grade HS Advanced

TH:Cr2.1.HSIII.b - Collaborate as a creative team to discover artistic solutions and make interpretive choices in a devised or scripted drama/theatre work.

Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation - Grade HS Advanced

TH:Pr5.1.HSIII.a - Use and justify a collection of acting exercises from reliable resources to prepare a believable and sustainable performance.

Refine new work through play, drama processes and theatre experiences using critical analysis and experimentation - Grade HS Proficient

TH:Cr3.1.HSI.b - Explore physical, vocal and physiological choices to develop a performance that is believable, authentic, and relevant to a drama/theatre work.

Common Core

Speaking and Listening

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.2 - Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

Language

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.L.1 - Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

Reading: Literature

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1 - Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

Language

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.1 - Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

California VAPA Standards (2019)

6.TH:Cr1 Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work

6.TH:Cr1.a - Identify possible solutions to staging challenges in a drama/theatre work.

6.TH:Pr4 Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation.

6.TH:Pr4.b - Experiment with various physical choices to communicate character in a drama/theatre work.

7.TH:Cr1 Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work

7.TH:Cr1.a - Investigate multiple perspectives and solutions to staging challenges in a drama/theatre work.

7.TH:Pr4 Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation.

7.TH:Pr4.a - Consider various staging choices to enhance the story in a drama/theatre work.

8.TH:Cr1 Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work

8.TH:Cr1.a - Imagine and explore multiple perspectives and solutions to staging problems in a drama/ theatre work.

6.TH:Cr2 Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.

6.TH:Cr2.b - Contribute ideas and accept and incorporate the ideas of others in preparing or devising drama/theatre work.

6.TH:Pr5 Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation.

6.TH:Pr5.a - Recognize how acting exercises and techniques can be applied to a drama/theatre work.

7.TH:Cr2 Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.

7.TH:Cr2.b - Demonstrate mutual respect for self and others and their roles in preparing or devising drama/theatre work.

7.TH:Pr5 Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation.

7.TH:Pr5.a - Participate in a variety of acting exercises and techniques that can be applied in a rehearsal or drama/theatre performance.

Acc.TH:Cr2 Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.

Acc.TH:Cr2.b - Cooperate as a creative team to make

interpretive choices for a drama/theatre work.

Adv.TH:Cr2 Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.

Adv.TH:Cr2.b - Collaborate as a creative team to discover artistic solutions and make interpretive choices in a devised or scripted drama/theatre work.

Adv.TH:Pr5 Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation.

Adv.TH:Pr5.a - Use and justify a collection of acting exercises from reliable resources to prepare a believable and sustainable performance.

Prof.TH:Cr3 Refine and complete artistic work.

Prof.TH:Cr3.b - Explore physical, vocal and physiological choices to develop a performance that is believable, authentic, and relevant to a drama/theatre work.

Florida Sunshine State Standards

Critical Thinking & Reflection

TH.912.C.1.2 - Create, refine, and sustain complex and believable characters for performance through the integration and application of artistic choices based on research, rehearsal, feedback, and refinement.

TH.912.C.1.5 - Make and defend conscious choices in the creation of a character that will fulfill anticipated audience response.

Organizational Structure

TH.912.O.2.7 - Brainstorm a variety of ways to deviate from western rules and conventions in theatre to influence audience and performer experiences.

TH.912.O.2.8 - Create a scene or improvisation to manipulate and challenge the conventions of the performer/audience relationship.

Skills, Techniques & Processes

TH.912.S.1.6 - Respond appropriately to directorial choices for improvised and scripted scenes.

TH.912.S.1.7 - Interpret dramatic texts, organize and conduct rehearsals, and justify directorial choices for formal and informal productions.

TH.912.S.2.6 - Transfer acting and technical skills and techniques from one piece of dramatic text to another.

TH.912.S.2.8 - Strengthen acting skills by engaging in theatre games and improvisations.

TH.912.S.3.2 - Exercise artistic discipline and collaboration to achieve ensemble in rehearsal and performance.

TH.912.S.3.3 - Develop acting skills and techniques in the rehearsal process.

Georgia Performance Standards 2017 - Theatre Arts

Grade 6 - Creating

TA6.CR.1 - Organize, design, and refine theatrical work., a. Identify artistic choices, utilize theatre vocabulary, and demonstrate non-verbal communication skills in the rehearsal process., b. Interpret a character's motivation by understanding the relationship between their background and their behavior., c. Identify the variety of relationships between characters., d. Identify, define, and classify character traits., e. Recognize and demonstrate the roles, responsibilities, and skills associated with collaborative performance., f. Use resources to identify and create technical elements of theatre.

Grade 6 - Performing

TA6.PR.1 - Act by communicating and sustaining roles in formal and informal environments., a. Demonstrate effective verbal and non-verbal communication skills (e.g. rate, pitch, volume, inflection, posture, facial expression, physical movement)., b. Execute character creation in a performance., c. Demonstrate a variety of types of theatre performances.

Grade 7 - Creating

TA7.CR.1 - Organize, design, and refine theatrical work., a. Identify and rehearse effective communication skills., b. Compare and contrast character types and relationships by analyzing character motivations, objectives, and goals., c. Compare the physical, emotional, vocal, and social dimensions of a character., d. Investigate the role and responsibility of the cast and crew., e. Identify and model ensemble skills in the rehearsal process., f. Utilize staging and blocking choices to enhance the performance., g. Compare, contrast, and design elements of technical theatre., h. Utilize theatre vocabulary throughout the rehearsal process.

Grade 7 - Performing

TA7.PR.1 - Act by communicating and sustaining roles in formal and informal environments., a. Execute effective verbal and non-verbal communication skills in performance (e.g. rate, pitch, volume, inflection, posture, facial expression, physical movement)., b. Participate in a variety of acting exercises and techniques that can be applied in a rehearsal or theatre performance., c. Engage in various performance styles.

Grade 8 - Creating

TA8.CR.1 - Organize, design, and refine theatrical work., a. Differentiate the physical, emotional, vocal, and social dimensions of a variety of characters., b. Compare the relationships and interactions between characters by analyzing character motivation (objectives, obstacles, strategy, action, stakes, outcome)., c. Incorporate dramatic elements through improvisation., d. Connect theatre vocabulary to the application of theatre performance., e. Identify and demonstrate both ensemble and leadership skills in the rehearsal process., f. Evaluate the effectiveness of artistic and technical elements used in a theatre production., g. Design and create scenery, props, costumes, lighting, and sound., h. Assume different roles and responsibilities in the rehearsal process.

Grade 8 - Performing

TA8.PR.1 - Act by communicating and sustaining roles in formal and informal environments., a. Demonstrate the physical, emotional, vocal, and social dimensions of a character in different types of theatre performances (e.g. rate, pitch, volume, inflection, posture, facial expression, motivation, physical movement)., b. Demonstrate appropriate ensemble skills throughout a performance., c. Use appropriate listening and response skills during performances.

Grades 9-12 - ACTING LEVELS I-IV - Performing

TAHSA.PR.1 - Act and direct by communicating and sustaining roles within a variety of situations and environments., a. Examine and implement the voice, body, observation, and imagination as tools of the actor in presentations of formal and informal theatre., b. Research and assess the development of acting skills for character creation and performance including historical movements, personal experience, and cultural influences., c. Act by developing, communicating, and sustaining roles within a variety of situations and environments., d. Identify and examine the responsibilities and tasks of an actor in relationship with

directors, designers, and technical crew., e. Use the skills and tools of a director to conduct rehearsals for performance.

Grades 9-12 - FUNDAMENTALS OF THEATRE LEVELS I-IV - Creating

TAHSFT.CR.1 - Organize, design, and refine theatrical work., a. Recognize and/or employ realistic and conventional speech patterns within dialogue or dramatic verse., b. Incorporate dramatic elements through improvisation., c. Recognize and interpret artistic choices in performance.

Grades 9-12 - FUNDAMENTALS OF THEATRE LEVELS I-IV - Performing

TAHSFT.PR.1 - Act by communicating and sustaining roles in formal and informal environments., a. Observe and demonstrate aspects of verbal and non-verbal techniques in common human activity for performance (e.g. voice, breathing, posture, facial expression, physical movement)., b. Construct and interpret artistic choices in performance including the objectives, decisions, and actions of characters., c. Explore various acting methods and techniques (e.g. Stanislavski, Uta Hagen, sense memory, emotional recall) for the purpose of character development., d. Perform acting choices for an audience based on critiques.

North Carolina Essential Standards

Beginning High School Standards - Communication

B.C.1.1 - Use non-verbal expression to illustrate how human emotion affects the body and is conveyed through the body.

B.C.1.2 - Apply vocal elements of volume, pitch, rate, tone, articulation, and vocal expression.

B.C.2.1 - Use improvisation and acting skills, such as observation, concentration, and characterization in a variety of theatre exercises.

Beginning High School Standards - Culture

B.CU.2.2 - Use acting conventions, such as stage presence, subtext, style, and ensemble work, to perform formal or informal works.

Intermediate High School Standards - Communication

I.C.1.1 - Use non-verbal expression to illustrate how human motivations are prompted by physical and emotional needs.

I.C.1.2 - Apply vocal elements of volume, pitch, rate, tone, articulation, and vocal expression appropriately to theatrical texts, such as monologues and scenes.

I.C.2.1 - Use improvisation and acting skills, such as observation, concentration, and characterization, to demonstrate given situations.

Proficient High School Standards - Communication

P.C.1.2 - Apply vocal elements of volume, pitch, rate, tone, articulation, and vocal expression to develop characters.

Advanced High School Standards - Communication

A.C.1.1 - Use non-verbal expression and physical self-awareness to communicate movement elements and characterization, including differentiation between multiple characters.

A.C.2.2 - Interpret scripts through formal and informal presentations.

Tennessee Theatre Curriculum Standards

GRADES 6-8

2.0 Character Acting - Students will develop basic acting

skills by portraying characters in improvised and scripted scenes.

GRADES 9-12

2.0 Character Acting - Students will act by developing, communicating, and sustaining characters in improvisations and in informal or formal productions.

Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for Theatre Arts

MS 117.211 LI - Foundations: Inquiry and Understanding

C.1.C - respond to sounds, music, images, and the written word, incorporating movement.

C.1.E - identify theatrical vocabulary and terminology, including basic anatomy of theatre spaces.

MS 117.211 LI - Creative Expression: performance

C.2.A - demonstrate safe use of the voice and body.

C.2.E - express emotions and ideas using interpretive movements and dialogue.

C.2.F - create environments, characters, and actions.

MS 117.212 LII - Foundations: Inquiry and Understanding

B.1.E - demonstrate knowledge of theatrical vocabulary and terminology.

MS 117.212 LII - Creative Expression: performance

B.2.A - demonstrate safe use of the voice and body.

B.2.C - select movements and dialogue to portray a character appropriately.

MS 117.213 LIII - Foundations: Inquiry and Understanding

B.1.B - explore preparation and warm-up techniques.

B.1.C - create expressive movement and mime to define space and characters.

B.1.E - apply knowledge of theatrical vocabulary and terminology.

MS 117.213 LIII - Creative Expression: performance

B.2.A - demonstrate safe use of the voice and body.

HS 117.315 LI - Foundations: Inquiry and Understanding

C.1.B - develop and practice theatre preparation and warm-up techniques.

HS 117.315 LI - Creative Expression: performance

C.2.E - employ physical techniques consistently to express thoughts, feelings, and actions non-verbally.

HS 117.316 LII - Foundations: Inquiry and Understanding

C.1.B - develop and practice stage movement techniques consistently to express thoughts, feelings, and actions non-verbally.

C.1.E - identify examples of theatrical conventions in theatre, film, television, and electronic media.

HS 117.316 LII - Creative Expression: performance

C.2.A - model safe, appropriate techniques to allow for physical, vocal, and emotional expression.

C.2.E - develop physical techniques consistently to express thoughts, feelings, and actions non-verbally.

HS 117.317 LIII - Foundations: Inquiry and

Understanding

C.1.A - apply theatre preparation and warm-up techniques effectively.

C.1.B - experiment with stage movement.

HS 117.318 LIV - Creative Expression: performance

C.2.A - model safe, appropriate techniques to allow for physical, vocal, and emotional expression.

C.2.B - demonstrate creativity as it relates to self and ensemble and its effect on audience.

Alberta, Canada

Speech Drama 10

12 - create specific vocal sound effects

13 - speak spontaneously within a given context

Speech Drama 30

23 - use vocal variety in character development

Improvisation Drama 10

1 - use warmup techniques for preparation of body, voice and mind

13 - communicate meaning without words

2 - demonstrate the ability to be still

3 - maintain concentration during exercises

32 - sustain a character throughout a scene or exercise

Acting Drama 30

18 - use various vocal skills to enhance characterization

20 - physicalize character through selected and economical movement and gesture

Movement Drama 10

1 - display the ability to be still

13 - use levels (high, medium, and low)

14 - create physically shapes in space

15 - use basic locomotor movements (eg. walking, running, crawling) to explore space

16 - create and repeat patterns of movement

17 - demonstrate freezing of movement in space

18 - appreciate that physical expression can enhance language

22 - translate words, images and emotions into movement

3 - recognize the necessity for physical warmups

4 - perform a physical warmup

Junior Orientation

communicate through use of voice and body

demonstrate a willingness to take calculated and reasonable risks

demonstrate trust by becoming comfortable, physically and emotionally, with others

focus concentration on one task at a time

generate imaginative and creative solutions to problems

listen effectively

meet deadlines and follow through on individual and group commitments

move in a variety of ways

recognize the purposes of and participate in warmup activities

share ideas confidently with others

speak, move, and generate ideas spontaneously

support positivity the work of others

work cooperatively and productively with all members of the class in pairs, small groups and large groups

Movement Level I - Beginning

10 - use varying speed of movement

11 - use directions and pathways

12 - use levels

13 - control focus and energy in movement and gesture

14 - create shapes with the body

16 - demonstrate freezing of movement

17 - use movement to communicate non-verbally

19 - translate sounds, words, images, and emotions into movement

2 - demonstrate awareness of personal and shared space

3 - use physical relaxation techniques effectively

4 - recognize the need for and demonstrate warmup activities

8 - display increased freedom of movement

9 - travel through space in a variety of ways e.g., running, creeping and jumping

Movement Level II - Intermediate

21 - display clarity of movement and gesture

22 - use exaggerated movement and gesture

23 - plan, repeat and combine movement patterns

Speech Level I - Beginning

1 - speak spontaneously

6 - use volume appropriate to situation

7 - create vocal sound effects to explore voice potential

Speech Level II - Intermediate

12 - demonstrate a stage whisper

13 - use voice to communicate mood and emotion

14 - use a variety of character voices

Speech Level III - Advanced

15 - demonstrate the effect of character on oral interpretation

16 - use movement and gesture to clarify and enhance speech and character

Improvisation/Acting Level I - Beginning

1 - use warm-up techniques for preparation of body, voice and mind

2 - respond to directions without breaking concentration-side coaching

3 - demonstrate the ability to be still

4 - create experiences through imaging, visualizing and fantasizing

7 - use stage vocabulary: stage areas, body positions and crosses

8 - demonstrate appropriate rehearsal behaviours and routines

Improvisation/Acting Level II - Intermediate

20 - enter and exit in character

21 - sustain a character throughout an exercise or scene

Junior Goal I Objectives

develop self-discipline

develop the ability to initiate, organize and present a project within a given set of guidelines

develop the ability to interact effectively and constructively in a group process

- develop the willingness to make a decision, act upon it and accept the results
- explore and develop physical and vocal capabilities
- extend the ability to explore meaning through abstract concepts
- extend the ability to explore, control and express emotions
- extend the ability to think imaginatively and creatively
- strengthen powers of concentration

Senior Goal I Objectives

- apply imaginative and creative thought to problem-solving situations
- demonstrate a sense of inquiry and commitment, individually and to the group
- demonstrate a sense of responsibility and commitment, individually and to the group
- demonstrate the ability to consider decisions, act upon them and accept the results
- demonstrate the ability to contribute effectively and constructively to the group process
- demonstrate the ability to initiate, organize and present a project within a given set of guidelines
- develop a sense of inquiry and commitment to learning
- extend the ability to concentrate
- extend the ability to control and express emotions
- sharpen observations of people, situations and the environment

Senior Goal II Objectives

- be capable of creating and expressing a believable character from scripted and non-scripted material
- develop the ability to select appropriate physical and vocal expression for feelings, ideas and images
- extend the ability to give form and expression to feelings, ideas and images

Orientation Drama 10

- concentrate on the task at hand
- share ideas confidently
- work cooperatively and productively
- work with abstract concepts

British Columbia (2018)

GRADE 9 - DRAMA - Exploring and creating

Select and combine dramatic elements and principles to intentionally create a particular mood, effect, and meaning

GRADE 9 - DRAMA - Reasoning and reflecting

Describe, interpret, and evaluate how performers and playwrights use dramatic structures, elements, and techniques to create and communicate ideas

Develop and refine ideas and technical skills to improve the quality of performance pieces

GRADE 9 - DRAMA - Communicating and documenting

Compose, interpret, and expand ideas using symbolism, imagery, and elements

GRADE 9 - DRAMA - Connecting and expanding

Collaborate through reciprocal relationships during creative processes

Demonstrate respect for themselves, others, and the audience

GRADE 10 - DRAMA - Explore and Create

Explore dramatic works through presentation or performance

Intentionally select and combine drama conventions

GRADE 10 - DRAMA - Reason and reflect

Apply feedback to develop and refine ideas

GRADE 10 - DRAMA - Communicate and document

Compose, interpret, and expand ideas using symbolism and imagery

GRADE 10 - DRAMA - Connect and expand

Demonstrate personal and social responsibility associated with creating, performing, and responding to dramatic performance

Demonstrate respect for self, others, and the audience

GRADE 11 - DRAMA - Explore and Create

Create, rehearse, and refine dramatic works through collaborative and individual presentation or performance

Explore and create dramatic works to express ideas, meaning, and emotions

Purposefully select and combine dramatic elements and conventions

GRADE 11 - DRAMA - Reason and reflect

Demonstrate awareness of self, others, and audience

GRADE 11 - DRAMA - Communicate and document

Use symbolism and imagery to communicate about and respond to environmental and social issues

GRADE 11 - DRAMA - Connect and expand

Demonstrate awareness of self, others, and audience

Demonstrate personal and social responsibility associated with creating, performing, and responding to dramatic works

GRADE 12 - DRAMA - Explore and Create

Create, rehearse, and refine dramatic works through collaborative and individual presentation or performance

Explore and create dramatic works to express ideas, meaning, and emotions

Intentionally select and combine dramatic elements and conventions

GRADE 12 - DRAMA - Reason and reflect

Receive, provide, and apply constructive feedback to refine dramatic works

GRADE 12 - DRAMA - Communicate and document

Experience and express emotions through dramatic conventions

GRADE 12 - DRAMA - Connect and expand

Demonstrate respect for self, others, and audience

Ontario, Canada

Grades 9 & 10 - Foundations - Concepts and Terminology

C.1.2 - demonstrate an understanding of and use correct terminology to refer to the forms, elements, conventions, and techniques of drama, with a focus on ensemble drama works (e.g., chorus, protagonist, ingénue, supporting role, act, scene, climax, resolution, improvisation, mask, freeze-frame image)

Grades 9 & 10 - Creating and Presenting - Presentation Techniques & Technologies

A.3.2 - use a variety of voice and movement techniques to

support the creation of character or atmosphere during rehearsal (e.g., use voice and movement to suggest an airport, circus, or factory environment)

Grades 9 & 10 - Creating and Presenting - Elements and Conventions

A.2.1 - select and combine the elements of drama to achieve a variety of purposes in ensemble presentations (e.g., use the elements of character, time, and place in a drama about making a difficult choice; use the elements of time and place to clarify the focus in a drama about a historical event)