



ANCIENT GREEK THEATRE

By LINDSAY PRICE

In studying Ancient Greece, we're looking at the foundations of theatre as we know it today. Without the Ancient Greek Era, we do not get actors, theatres, plays, and the definitions of tragedy and comedy.

The issue with studying theatre history, or anything historical is that it can become an exercise in memorizing dates and reciting facts. When the truth of the matter is no one in the 21st century benefits from learning by rote. This is especially true when studying history in the framework of a drama classroom. We need exercises that bring history to life, instead of having students plot dates on a timeline.

To that end, this unit does not focus on dates and data. The essential question for the unit is how can we connect the past to the present and this question is explored through the theatricalization of information. Students will access all four 21st century skills, critical thinking, creative thinking, collaboration and communication as they explore this amazing world.

Reflections, exit slips, and rubrics are included throughout the unit as well as a mid assignment evaluation for the culminating project.

1 - The Ancient Greek People

The Ancient Greek Theatre is the birth of the modern theatre. We can look at the production of theatre in that time and see similarities to how we present theatre today. But where do we start? And how do we make theatre history more than the collection of data?

2 - Storytelling in Ancient Greece

Greek Theatre is the ancestor of the Modern Theatre. It is the birth of the actor stepping away from a chorus of unison speakers. The building of theatres. We can look at the production of theatre in that time and see similarities to how we present theatre today. But where do we start? And how do we make theatre history more than just the collection of data?

In this lesson plan, students will explore the connection between the way they tell stories in the 21st century and the way that the Ancient Greeks told stories. Students will also explore Ancient Greek vases and Homer's The Iliad.

3 - The Festival of Dionysus

In this lesson, students trace the journey from ancient storytelling to modern day theatre thousands of years later. One of the main reason theatre evolved like it did was because of performance opportunities during City Dionysus festivals in tribute to Dionysus. The performance framework moved from one person telling a story to a group, to a choral group performing, to one person stepping out in front of the chorus as an actor and so on. It's interesting for students to see that the more you perform a form, the more that form evolves.

4 - Does the "Where" Affect Performance?

The Greek Theatre is the ancestor of the modern theatre. It is the birth of the actor stepping away from a chorus of unison speakers, as well as the catalyst that triggered the practice of building theatres. We can look at the production of theatre in that time and see similarities to how we present theatre today. But where do we start? And how do we make theatre history more than the collection of data?

In this lesson plan, students will explore the connection between the past and present by asking the question, "Does the "where" affect performance?" Students will compare and contrast the modern stage with the Ancient Greek Amphitheatre.

5 - Tragedy, Satyr, and Comedy

The Greek Theatre is the birth of the modern theatre. It is the

birth of the actor stepping away from a chorus of unison speakers, as well as the catalyst that triggered the building of theatres. We can look at the production of theatre in that time and see similarities to how we present theatre today. But where do we start? And how do we make theatre history more than the collection of data?

In this lesson plan, students will explore the connection between "what" of Ancient Greek Theatre: tragedy, satyr, and comedy.

6 - Ancient Greek Theatre: Presentation Project

This is the project section of the Ancient Greek Theatre unit. Divide students into groups, then give them an information sheet on their subject. Their job is to present the information in a theatrical manner to the class, create an activity that the class can do as a whole, and write a reflection/exit slip for the class to complete.

Within this unit students are given three to four class periods to work on their presentations. Instruct each group to divide up tasks evenly within their group, so that they can meet the deadline. You can certainly give them more time, or establish that students must spend time working on the project outside of class. Depending on the size of your class, it may take one or two classes to complete the presentations.

7 - Presentation & Reflection

In this lesson, students present their topics, lead the class through an activity, and provide a reflection. They also self-evaluate the process.

8 - What Else Can You Do with Ancient Greek Theatre?

Ten ideas for further class work and activities for Ancient Greek Theatre.

Standards Connections

National Core Arts Standards

Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art - Grade HS Proficient

TH:Cn10.1.HSI.a - Investigate how cultural perspectives, community ideas and personal beliefs impact a drama/theatre work.

Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work - High School Accomplished

TH:Cr1.1.HSII.a - Investigate historical and cultural conventions and their impact on the visual composition of a drama/theatre work.

Perceive and analyze artistic work - Grade HS Advanced

TH:Re7.1.HSIII.a - Use historical and cultural context to structure and justify personal responses to a drama/theatre work.

Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding - Grade HS Proficient

TH:Cn11.1.HSI.a - Explore how cultural, global, and historic belief systems affect creative choices in a drama/theatre work.

Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work - Grade HS Proficient

TH:Re8.1.HSI.b - Identify and compare cultural perspectives and contexts that may influence the evaluation of a drama/theatre work.

Organize and develop artistic ideas and work - Grade HS Proficient

TH:Cr2.1.HSI.a - Explore the function of history and culture in the development of a dramatic concept through a critical analysis of original ideas in a drama/theatre work.

Organize and develop artistic ideas and work - Grade HS Accomplished

TH:Cr2.1.HSII.a - Refine a dramatic concept to demonstrate a critical understanding of historical and cultural influences of original ideas applied to a drama/theatre work.

Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding - Grade HS Proficient

TH:Cn11.2.HSI.a - Research how other theatre artists apply creative processes to tell stories in a devised or scripted drama/theatre work, using theatre research methods.

TH:Cn11.2.HSI.b - Use basic theatre research methods to better understand the social and cultural background of a drama/theatre work.

Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work - Grade HS Accomplished

TH:Pr6.1.HSII.a - Present a drama/theatre work using creative processes that shape the production for a specific audience.

Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work - Grade HS Advanced

TH:Re9.1.HSIII.a - Research and synthesize cultural and historical information related to a drama/theatre work to support or evaluate artistic choices.

Common Core

Speaking and Listening

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.1 - 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.

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

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.4 - Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.6 - Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

Language

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

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.L.4 - Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases by using context clues, analyzing meaningful word parts, and consulting general and specialized reference materials, as appropriate.

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.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.2 - Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

Writing

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.1 - Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

California VAPA Standards (2019)

Prof.TH:Cn10 Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.

Prof.TH:Cn10 - Investigate how cultural contexts, community ideas, and personal beliefs impact a drama/theatre work.

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

Acc.TH:Cr1.a - Investigate historical and cultural conventions and their impact on the visual composition of a drama/theatre work.

Adv.TH:Re7 Perceive and analyze artistic work.

Adv.TH:Re7 - Use historical and cultural context to structure and justify personal responses to a drama/theatre work.

Prof.TH:Cn11.1 Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.

Prof.TH:Cn11.1.a - Explore how cultural, global, and historic belief systems affect creative choices in a drama/theatre work.

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

Prof.TH:Cr2.a - Explore the function of history and culture in the development of a dramatic concept through a critical analysis of original ideas in drama/theatre works from western or non-western theatre traditions.

Prof.TH:Re8 Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.

Prof.TH.Re8.b - Identify and compare cultural contexts and contexts that may influence the evaluation of a drama/theatre work.

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

Acc.TH:Cr2.a - Refine a dramatic concept to demonstrate a critical understanding of historical and cultural influences of original ideas applied to a drama/theatre in western or non-western theatre traditions.

Prof.TH:Cn11.2 Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.

Prof.TH:Cn11.2.a - Research how other theatre artists apply creative processes to tell stories in a devised or scripted drama/theatre work, using research methods.

Prof.TH:Cn11.2.b - Use basic research methods to better understand the social and cultural background of a drama/theatre work.

Acc.TH:Pr6 Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.

Acc.TH:Pr6 - Present a drama/theatre work using creative processes that shape the production for a specific audience.

Adv.TH:Re9 Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work.

Adv.TH:Re9.a - Research and synthesize cultural and historical information related to a drama/theatre work to support or evaluate artistic choices.

Florida Sunshine State Standards

Critical Thinking & Reflection

TH.912.C.1.4 - Research and define the physical/visual elements necessary to create theatrical reality for a specific historical and/or geographical play.

TH.912.C.1.6 - Respond to theatrical works by identifying and interpreting influences of historical, social, or cultural contexts.

TH.912.C.2.3 - Analyze different types of stage configurations to determine the effects of each as potential production solutions.

Historical & Global Connections

TH.912.H.1.1 - Analyze how playwrights' work reflects the cultural and socio-political framework in which it was created.

TH.912.H.2.1 - Research the correlations between theatrical forms and the social, cultural, historical, and political climates from which they emerged, to form an understanding of the influences that have shaped theatre.

TH.912.H.2.2 - Research and discuss the effects of personal experience, culture, and current events that shape individual response to theatrical works.

TH.912.H.2.3 - Weigh and discuss, based on analysis of dramatic texts, the importance of cultural protocols and historical accuracy for artistic impact.

Organizational Structure

TH.912.O.2.5 - Explain how the contributions and methods of significant individuals from various cultures and historical periods have influenced the creative innovations of theatre, and apply one of their innovations to a theatrical piece in a new way.

Skills, Techniques & Processes

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

North Carolina Essential

Standards

Beginning High School Standards - Communication

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.1.1 - Use theatre arts to explore concepts in world history and relate them to significant events, ideas, and movements from a global context.

B.CU.1.2 - Exemplify history, culture, geography, economics, civics, and government from a global perspective through the creation of theatrical works.

B.CU.2.1 - Illustrate appropriate theatre etiquette as a member of an audience, as a performer, and as a technician.

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

Intermediate High School Standards - Culture

I.CU.2.1 - Understand theatre etiquette that is appropriate for a variety of theatrical spaces, styles, and genres.

Advanced High School Standards - Culture

A.CU.1.1 - Interpret theatre arts from personal, cultural, and historical contexts.

Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for Theatre Arts

HS 117.315 LI - Creative Expression: performance

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

C.2.C - employ effective voice and diction to express thoughts and feelings.

C.2.D - use physical, intellectual, emotional, and social awareness to portray believable characters and convey a story when applying acting concepts, skills, and techniques.

C.2.F - create, write, and refine original monologues, improvisations, scenes, or vignettes that reflect dramatic structure to convey meaning to the audience through live performance or media forms.

HS 117.315 LI - Historical and cultural relevance

C.4.A - portray theatre as a reflection of life in particular times, places, and cultures.

C.4.B - relate historical and cultural influences on theatre.

HS 117.315 LI - Critical evaluation and response

C.5.A - analyze and apply appropriate behavior at various types of live performances.

HS 117.316 LII - Creative Expression: performance

C.2.F - create, write, devise, and refine original monologues, improvisations, scenes, or vignettes to convey meaning to the audience through live performance or media forms.

British Columbia (2018)

GRADE 6 - ARTS - Exploring and creating

Demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of personal, social, cultural, historical, and environmental contexts in relation to the arts

Explore relationships between identity, place, culture, society, and belonging through the arts

GRADE 6 - ARTS - Reasoning and reflecting

Interpret works of art using knowledge and skills from various areas of learning

Reflect on works of art and creative processes to understand artists' intentions

Research, describe, interpret and evaluate how artists (dancers, actors, musicians, and visual artists) use processes, materials, movements, technologies, tools, techniques, and environments in the arts

GRADE 6 - ARTS - Communicating and documenting

Describe, interpret and respond to works of art and explore artists' intent

Take creative risks to express feelings, ideas, and experiences

GRADE 7 - ARTS - Exploring and creating

Demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of personal, social, cultural, historical, and environmental contexts in relation to the arts

Explore relationships between identity, place, culture, society, and belonging through the arts

GRADE 7 - ARTS - Reasoning and reflecting

Interpret works of art using knowledge and skills from various areas of learning

Reflect on works of art and creative processes to understand artists' intentions

GRADE 7 - ARTS - Communicating and documenting

Describe, interpret and respond to works of art

GRADE 8 - ARTS - Exploring and creating

Demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of personal, social, cultural, historical, and environmental contexts in relation to the arts

Explore relationships between identity, place, culture, society, and belonging through arts activities and experiences

GRADE 8 - ARTS - Reasoning and reflecting

Describe, interpret and evaluate how artists (dancers, actors, musicians, and visual artists) use processes, materials, movements, technologies, tools, techniques, and environments to create and communicate ideas

Interpret works of art using knowledge and skills from various areas of learning

Reflect on works of art and creative processes to understand artists motivations and meanings

Respond to works of art using one's knowledge of the world

GRADE 8 - ARTS - Communicating and documenting

Describe, interpret and respond to works of art

GRADE 9 - DRAMA - Exploring and creating

Demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of personal, social, cultural, historical, and environmental in relation to drama

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

GRADE 10 - DRAMA - Reason and reflect

Examine the influences of social, cultural, historical, environmental, and personal context on drama

Reflect on dramatic experiences and how they relate to a specific place, time, and context

GRADE 11 - DRAMA - Reason and reflect

Describe, analyze, and respond to ways in which props, technologies, and environments are used in drama, using

discipline-specific language

Examine the influences of social, cultural, historical, environmental, and personal contexts on dramatic works

Reflect on aesthetic experiences and how they relate to a specific place, time, and context

GRADE 12 - DRAMA - Explore and Create

Develop and refine performance skills in a variety of contexts

GRADE 12 - DRAMA - Reason and reflect

Evaluate the social, cultural, historical, environmental, and personal contexts of dramatic works

Reflect on aesthetic experiences and how they relate to a specific place, time, and context

Reflect on dramatic works and make connections with personal experiences

GRADE 12 - DRAMA - Connect and expand

Examine the impacts of dramatic works on culture and society

Ontario, Canada

Grades 9 & 10 - Foundations - Responsible Practices

C.3.1 - identify and follow safe and ethical practices in drama activities (e.g., exhibit safe use of sound and lighting boards; follow procedures for the environmentally responsible use of materials and energy; prepare an individual or group seminar report on the nature and purpose of one or more of the following: copyright protection, royalties, public domain, intellectual property rights)

C.3.2 - identify and apply the skills and attitudes needed to perform various tasks and responsibilities in producing drama works (e.g., use active listening and cooperative problem-solving skills; practise punctuality; use tact in suggesting changes and improvements; demonstrate willingness to accept criticism and build consensus)

C.3.3 - demonstrate an understanding of theatre and audience etiquette, in both classroom and formal performance contexts (e.g., as a performer: show willingness to take direction and behave appropriately towards other actors; as a viewer: demonstrate respect for performers and other audience members by paying attention, not interrupting or talking, and applauding when appropriate)

Grades 9 & 10 - Foundations - Context and Influences

C.2.1 - identify ways in which dramatic expression and performance reflect communities and cultures, past and present (e.g., the prominence of socially and/or politically powerful characters in the drama of pre-industrial societies; the use of boy actors for female roles in Shakespearean theatre; the emphasis on religious themes in the drama of many cultures in different eras)

Grades 9 & 10 - Reflecting, Responding and Analyzing - Drama and Society

B.2.4 - identify ways in which dramatic exploration contributes to their understanding of diverse cultures and traditions (e.g., identify insights they gained through exploring the role of ritual in Greek theatre and/or Aboriginal ceremonies)

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 - The Creative

Process

A.1.3 - use role play and characterization to explore personal and social issues (e.g., with a partner, create or assume a role that explores an issue such as bullying; create a scenario that reveals details about a character's motivation)