



[Click Here to Access this Unit](#)

ANTI-REALISM

By WENDY-MARIE MARTIN

This unit gives students an overview of the anti-realism movement of the late 19th century and early 20th century and introduces them to some key theorists, playwrights, and theatre makers involved in this movement. Students will be introduced to the “isms” of symbolism, Dadaism, surrealism, expressionism, and absurdism along with various manifestos and theories as we track the characteristics of each “ism.”

In a culminating project, students will design an “ISMS” Theme Park, which they will share with the class at the end of the unit. Their project will feature each of the five “isms” in the form of rides, themed concessions areas, entertainment options, and in-park characters.

1 - Historical and Cultural Contexts

This lesson looks at the historical and cultural context of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

2 - Symbolism

This lesson focuses on symbolism by investigating The Manifesto of Symbolism by Jean Moreas to help inspire students to write their own short manifestos.

3 - Dadaism

This lesson introduces the characteristics of Dadaism, through Ubu Roi, Dadaism manifestos, Voltaire, and Dada art. Students will learn how to write a Dada poem of their own.

4 - Surrealism

This lesson looks at Breton's Manifesto of Surrealism, Atraud's Theatre of Cruelty, and the game of Exquisite Corpse. Students will create their own short surrealist play.

5 - Expressionism

This lesson investigates expressionist theatre and compare to the other movements discussed thus far. Using O'Neill's The Hairy Ape, students will conduct deep analysis on a scene.

6 - Absurdism

This lesson enters the last and final -ism for the unit, with a focus on five iconic absurdist playwrights: Beckett, Ionesco, Genet, Pinter, and Albee.

7 - Culminating Project

This project combines creativity with analytical thought as students connect ideas and concepts with their imagination in order to create a theme park that embodies all five of the “isms” we've covered: symbolism, Dadaism, surrealism, expressionism, and absurdism.

Standards Connections

National Core Arts Standards

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

TH:Pr4.1.6.a - Identify the essential events in a story or script that make up the dramatic structure in a drama/theatre work.

Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work - High School Proficient

TH:Cr1.1.HSI.c - Use script analysis to generate ideas about a character that is believable and authentic in a drama/theatre work.

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 6

TH:Cn11.1.6.a - Identify universal themes or common social issues and express them through 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.

Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding - Grade 6

TH:Cn11.2.6.b - Investigate the time period and place of a drama/theatre work to better understand performance and design choices.

Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work - Grade 7

TH:Re9.1.7.b - Consider the aesthetics of the production elements in a drama/theatre work.

TH:Re9.1.7.c - Identify how the intended purpose of a drama/theatre work appeals to a specific audience.

Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work - Grade HS Proficient

TH:Re9.1.HSI.b - Consider the aesthetics of the production elements in 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.

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

Grade HS Advanced

TH:Cn11.2.HSIII.b - Present and support an opinion about the social, cultural, and historical understandings of a drama/theatre work, based on critical research.

California VAPA Standards (2019)

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

6.TH:Pr4.a - Identify the essential events in a story or script that make up the dramatic structure in a drama/theatre work.

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

Prof.TH:Cr1.b - Use script analysis to generate ideas about a character that is believable and authentic in a drama/theatre work.

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.

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

6.TH:Cn11.1.a - Identify universal themes or common social issues and express them through 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.

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

6.TH:Cn11.2.b - Investigate the time period and place of a drama/theatre work to better understand performance and design choices.

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

7.TH:Re9.b - Identify how the intended purpose of a drama/theatre work appeals to a specific audience.

7.TH:Re9.c - Analyze and evaluate the aesthetics of the technical theatre elements in a drama/theatre work.

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

Prof.TH:Re9.c - Analyze and evaluate the aesthetics and effect of the technical theatre elements in a drama/theatre work.

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.

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

Adv.TH:Cn11.2.b - Present and support an opinion about the social, cultural, and historical understandings of a drama/theatre work, based on critical research.

Colorado Academic Standards - Drama and Theatre Arts

Sixth Grade

DT.6.2.1.a - Students Can: Identify the essential events in a story or script that make up the dramatic structure in a drama/theatre work.

Seventh Grade

DT.7.3.4.b - Students Can: Examine the aesthetics of the production elements in a drama/theatre work.

DT.7.3.4.c - Students Can: Identify how the intended purpose of a drama/theatre work appeals to a specific audience.

Eighth Grade

DT.8.2.3.a - Students Can: Identify universal themes or common social issues and express them through a drama/theatre work.

High School - Fundamental Pathway

DT.H1.1.1.c - Students Can: Generate ideas about a character that are believable and authentic using script analysis.

DT.H1.1.2.a - Students Can: 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.

DT.H1.2.3.a - Students Can: Apply creative processes to tell stories in a scripted drama/theatre work to connect with audience, community, and ensemble.

DT.H1.3.3.a - Students Can: Implement fundamental theatre research methods to better understand the social and cultural background of a drama/theatre work.

DT.H1.3.4.b - Students Can: Evaluate the aesthetics of the production elements in a drama/theatre work.

High School - Advanced Pathway

DT.H2.1.1.a - Students Can: Investigate historical and cultural conventions and their impact on the visual composition of a drama/theatre work.

DT.H2.2.3.a - Students Can: Execute creative processes to tell stories in a scripted drama/theatre work, to connect with audience, community, and ensemble.

High School - Professional Pathway

DT.H3.3.3.a - Students Can: Present and support an opinion about the social, cultural, and historical understandings of a drama/theatre work, based on critical research.

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.

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.2 - Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

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.

Reading: Informational Text

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.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.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.2 - Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

Florida Sunshine State Standards

Critical Thinking & Reflection

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

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.1.4 - Interpret a text through different social, cultural, and historical lenses to consider how perspective and context shape a work and its characters.

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.2.4 - Research the intent of, and critical reaction to, artists in history who created groundbreaking, innovative, or controversial works.

Skills, Techniques & Processes

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

Georgia Performance Standards - Theatre Arts

Grade 6 - Connecting

TA6.CN.1 - Explore how theatre connects to life experience, careers, and other content., a. Identify similarities between theatre and other art forms., b. Draw conclusions about the relationships between theatre and life., c. Define tasks associated with a theatre production (e.g. director, stage manager, designer, technician, playwright, actor).

TA6.CN.2 - Examine the role of theatre in a societal, cultural, and historical context., a. Describe the origins of theatre., b. Identify and analyze ways in which theatre influences and reflects the culture of a society., c. Utilize a

multi-disciplinary approach to research, create, and support artistic choices., d. Examine the relevance of cultural and historical context.

Grade 7 - Connecting

TA7.CN.2 - Examine the role of theatre in a societal, cultural, and historical context., a. Examine theatre development throughout history., b. Identify and analyze cultural influences on theatre., c. Utilize multi-disciplinary research skills to obtain cultural and historical information to justify artistic choices (e.g. costuming, make-up, setting of a time period in relation to the play)., d. Draw conclusions about the influence of theatre on society.

Grade 8 - Connecting

TA8.CN.1 - Explore how theatre connects to life experience, careers, and other content., a. Investigate and prove common themes and structure among theatre and other disciplines., b. Defend how theatre reflects life., c. Incorporate multi-disciplinary aspects into theatre performance., d. Identify and analyze professions associated with different forms of production (e.g. director, stage manager, designer, technician, playwright, actor).

TA8.CN.2 - Examine the role of theatre in a societal, cultural, and historical context., a. Compare and contrast how theatre evolves through time., b. Examine how culture is defined through theatre and other media., c. Apply advanced research skills to obtain appropriate cultural and historical information to rationalize artistic choices (e.g. costuming, make-up, setting of a time period in relation to the play)., d. Discuss theatre's role in reflecting the culture of a society.

Grades 9-12 - ADVANCED DRAMA LEVELS I-IV -Connecting

TAHSAD.CN.2 - Examine the role of theatre in a societal, cultural, and historical context., a. Explore the impact of theatre on the quality of life in various societies.

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

TAHSFT.CN.1 - Explore how theatre connects to life experiences, careers, and other content., a. Examine how theatre reflects real life., b. Analyze how theatre employs aspects of other art forms and disciplines to effectively communicate with a live audience., c. Demonstrate awareness of the discipline, knowledge, skills, and education required for careers in theatre., d. Explore various careers in the theatre arts (e.g. performance, design, production, administrative, education, promotion).

TAHSFT.CN.2 - Examine the role of theatre in a societal, cultural, and historical context., a. Identify and analyze plays and dramas from a variety of historical periods and cultures., b. Explore the works of milestone playwrights and plays, and the relevance of historical theatre., c. Recognize historical events that have influenced the role of theatre and how theatrical events have impacted cultural development., d. Interpret cultural and historical research for use in a production.

Grades 9-12 - TECHNICAL THEATRE LEVELS I-IV - Connecting

TAHSTT.CN.1 - Connect technical elements of theatre., a. Explore and understand the collaborations between designers and directors to develop design elements., b. Investigate the history of theatre architecture, stage technology, and other technical elements., c. Understand technical theatre career options and various industry unions (e.g. International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees, Actor's Equity, United Scenic Artists, Stage Directors and Choreographers Society, League of Resident Theatres)., d. Explore connections with other disciplines associated with technical theatre (e.g. scientific principles behind technical theatrical practices,

physics of electricity and sound, basic structural engineering, load ratings, working load limits)., e. Connect design themes with historical and social relevance using dramaturgical research and an understanding of historical and cultural artistic movements (e.g. expressionism, realism, Kabuki, Sanskrit Drama).

Grades 9-12 - THEATRE HISTORY AND LITERATURE I AND II - Creating

TAHSTL.CR.1 - Develop original theatre literature., a. Compare and summarize theatre literature from various historical periods, cultures, and styles., b. Examine and outline the steps and conventions involved in the creation of a theatre text., c. Develop original texts using theatre techniques (e.g. improvisation, adapting non-theatre literature, playwriting exercises).

Grades 9-12 - THEATRE HISTORY AND LITERATURE I AND II - Connecting

TAHSTL.CN.1 - Connect theatre literature to its dramaturgical contexts and other disciplines., a. Trace the development of theatre from earliest forms to contemporary forms., b. Identify and summarize contributions made to the development of theatre literature by different cultures and traditions., c. Research and explain how cultural and historical factors have influenced playwrights and theatre literature., d. Identify the elements, influences, and contributions of other art forms and content areas to theatre literature.

North Carolina Essential Standards 2024

Beginning High School Connect

B.CN.1.1 - Describe how the emergence of theatre as an art form has influenced society prior to 1400.

B.CN.2.2 - Identify the innovative tools and technology used in theatre.

Intermediate High School Respond

I.RE.2.2 - Generate objective critique of theatrical works using given criteria.

Accomplished High School Connect

AC.CN.1.1 - Analyze the development of theatre from the 1800s through the 1900s, identifying connections to history, society, and culture.

Advanced High School Connect

AD.CN.1.1 - Analyze the impact of theatre throughout the world from the 1900s to the present on trends, styles, and artists, and their future implications.

Advanced High School Respond

AD.RE.1.2 - Evaluate the impact of theatrical works on intended audiences.

North Carolina Essential Standards 2010

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.

Intermediate High School Standards - Analysis

I.A.1.2 - Evaluate the works of theatre artists for strengths, weaknesses, and suggestions for improvement.

Proficient High School Standards - Culture

P.CU.1.1 - Understand the role of theatre arts in United States history as a means of interpreting past eras within an

historical context.

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

MS 117.211 LI - Historical and cultural relevance

C.4.A - demonstrate the role of theatre as a reflection of history, society, and culture through participation in dramatic activities.

MS 117.212 LII - Historical and cultural relevance

B.4.A - demonstrate knowledge of theatre as a reflection of life in particular times, places, and cultures.

MS 117.213 LIII - Foundations: Inquiry and Understanding

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

MS 117.213 LIII - Historical and cultural relevance

B.4.A - demonstrate theatre as a reflection of life in particular times, places, and cultures through performance.

B.4.B - explore theatre heritage such as historical and cultural influences as it is preserved in dramatic text, traditions, and conventions.

HS 117.316 LII - Historical and cultural relevance

C.4.A - analyze historical and cultural influences on theatre.

C.4.C - analyze and evaluate the impact of live theatre, film, television, and electronic media in contemporary society.

C.4.D - research the influences of world drama and theatre and identify key figures, works, and trends in dramatic literature.

C.4.E - research the influences of the multicultural heritage of drama and theatre in the United States and identify key figures, works, and trends in dramatic literature.

HS 117.317 LIII - Historical and cultural relevance

C.4.A - evaluate historical and cultural influences on theatre.

HS 117.318 LIV - Historical and cultural relevance

C.4.A - evaluate historical and cultural influences on theatre.

C.4.D - research the influences of world drama and theatre and identify key figures, works, and trends in dramatic literature.

C.4.E - research the influences of the multicultural heritage of drama and theatre in the United States and identify key figures, works, and trends in dramatic literature.

Alberta, Canada

Theatre Studies Drama 10 (Greek, Medieval or Elizabethan, and Canadian)

- 1 - recognize theatre has evolved as a traditional art form
- 2 - recognize innovations in the theatre

Theatre Studies Drama 30 (Early or Middle or Late drama)

- 4 - recognize dramatic structure of a play
- 5 - recognize elements of tragedy and comedy
- 6 - recognize realism and selected other significant theatre styles

Junior Orientation

recognize that there is an historical and cultural aspect of

drama/theatre

- share ideas confidently with others
- support positivity the work of others

Junior Goal I Objectives

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

Theatre Studies Level II - Intermediate (Theatre History)

4 - recognize that drama exists in every culture

5 - recognize that "theatre is a mirror of society".

6 - show awareness of selected periods and playwrights

Senior Goal I Objectives

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 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

Senior Goal II Objectives

participate in the theatrical style of realism as a basis for further exploration of theatrical styles

Orientation Drama 10

demonstrate effective use and management of time

demonstrate self-discipline, self-direction and a sense of responsibility

listen to self and others

positively support the work of others

share ideas confidently

work cooperatively and productively

work with abstract concepts

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

GRADE 7 - ARTS - Exploring and creating

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

GRADE 8 - ARTS - Exploring and creating

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

GRADE 9 - DRAMA - Exploring and creating

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

GRADE 10 - DRAMA - Reason and reflect

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

GRADE 11 - DRAMA - Connect and expand

Explore the impacts of dramatic works on culture and society

GRADE 12 - DRAMA - Reason and reflect

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

Ontario, Canada

Grade 8 - Exploring Forms and Cultural Contexts

B3.2 - identify and describe a wide variety of ways in which drama and theatre make or have made contributions to social, cultural, and economic life in a variety of times and places

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)

C.2.2 - describe how drama is used for various purposes in a range of social contexts (e.g., to express or celebrate group or community sentiments or values in street theatre or parades; to mark important historical or religious anniversaries of a country or culture; to raise awareness of social, environmental, and political issues; to explore personal relationships or social arrangements)

Grades 9 & 10 - Foundations - Concepts and Terminology

C.1.1 - identify the drama forms, elements, conventions, and techniques used in their own and others' drama works, and explain how the various components are used, or can be used, to achieve specific effects, with a focus on ensemble drama works (e.g., how a comic drama form can be used to convey a serious message, how setting and time period can be used to sharpen the focus on a moral dilemma, how characters can be used to vary the mood within a drama)

Grade 12 - Reflecting, Responding and Analyzing - The Critical Analysis Process

B.1.2 - analyse a variety of contemporary and historical drama works to explain and evaluate how they communicate themes and dramatize issues

Virginia Standards Of Learning (2020)

Theatre Arts II: Dramatic Literature And Theatre History

TII.6 - The student will explore historical and cultural aspects of theatrical works.

Theatre Arts II: Dramatic Literature And Theatre History

TII.5 - The student will apply communication and collaboration skills for theatre experiences.