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ARISTOTLE'S ELEMENTS

By LEA MARSHALL

Aristotle was a huge fan of the theatre. He philosophically believed in it and argued with other great thinkers at the time about the necessity and good results of theatrical pursuits. This makes him a great topic for a drama classroom unit.

Aristotle identified six elements that needed to be in a play for it to be worthy: plot, thought, character, diction, spectacle, and sound. This unit by Lea Marshall focuses on and offers exercises for each of Aristotle's elements - from using fairy tales to examine plot, to re-imagining movie trailers to explore music.

1 - Three Philosophers Walk Into a Classroom

To introduce students to Aristotle and his connection to theatre.

2 - It's Element(ary), My Dear

To introduce students to Aristotle's six elements.

3 - The Plot's the Thing

To introduce the Aristotelian element of plot.

4 - Plotting Along

To continue applying the Aristotelian element of plot.

5 - Thinking About Thoughts

To introduce the Aristotelian element of Thought.

6 - Got Thoughts?

To continue applying the Aristotelian element of Thought.

7 - Character Matters

To introduce the Aristotelian element of Character.

8 - Speak the Speech

To introduce the Aristotelian element of Diction.

9 - I Got the Music

To introduce the Aristotelian element of Music.

10 - Spectacular, Spectacular

To introduce the Aristotelian element of Spectacle.

11 - Final Project

To have students apply what they have learned.

12 - Bonus Lesson: The Three Vs of Storytelling

This can be a standalone lesson, or an add-on to the unit. It introduces the concept of the 3 V's: VIEWERS are looking for a VICARIOUS, VULNERABLE, and/or VISCERAL experience.

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.

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.

Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding - Grade 7

TH:Cn11.1.7.a - Incorporate music, dance, art, and/or media to strengthen the meaning and conflict in a drama/theatre work with a particular cultural, global, or historic context.

Organize and develop artistic ideas and work - Grade 8

TH:Cr2.1.8.b - Share leadership and responsibilities to develop collaborative goals when preparing or devising drama/theatre work.

Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work - Grade 6

TH:Re9.1.6.c - Identify a specific audience or purpose for a drama/theatre work.

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.

Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding - Grade 7

TH:Cn11.2.7.a - Research and discuss how a playwright might have intended a drama/theatre work to be produced.

Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work - Grade HS Proficient

TH:Re9.1.HSI.c - Formulate a deeper understanding and appreciation of a drama/ theatre work by considering its specific purpose or intended audience.

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.

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.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.3 - Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

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.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.3 - Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

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)

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.

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.

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

7.TH:Cn11.1.a - Incorporate music, dance, art, and/or media arts to strengthen the meaning and conflict in a drama/theatre work with a particular cultural, global, or historic context.

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

8.TH:Cr2.b - Share leadership and responsibilities to develop collaborative goals when preparing or devising drama/theatre work.

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

6.TH:Re9.b - Identify a specific audience or purpose for a drama/theatre work.

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

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

7.TH:Cn11.2 Relate artistic ideas and works with

societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.

7.TH.Cn11.2.a - Research and discuss how a playwright might have intended a drama/theatre work to be produced.

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

Prof.TH.Re9.b - Formulate a deeper understanding and appreciation of a drama/ theatre work by considering its specific purpose or intended audience.

Florida Sunshine State Standards

Critical Thinking & Reflection

TH.912.C.1.3 - Justify a response to a theatrical experience through oral or written analysis, using correct theatre terminology.

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

TH.912.C.1.7 - Justify personal perceptions of a director's vision and/or playwright's intent.

TH.912.C.1.8 - Apply the components of aesthetics and criticism to a theatrical performance or design.

Historical & Global Connections

TH.912.H.3.2 - Compare the applications of various art forms used in theatre production.

Organizational Structure

TH.912.O.1.1 - Research and analyze a dramatic text by breaking it down into its basic, structural elements to support development of a directorial concept, characterization, and design.

TH.912.O.2.6 - Deconstruct a play, using an established theory, to understand its dramatic structure.

Skills, Techniques & Processes

TH.912.S.1.3 - Develop criteria that may be applied to the selection and performance of theatrical work.

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.

Georgia Performance Standards - 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.

TA6.CR.2 - Develop scripts through theatrical techniques., a. Identify the elements of a story., b. Identify the theme and structure of a play., c. Articulate creative ideas in oral and written forms., d. Use the dramatic writing process to generate a script., e. Demonstrate the conventions of dialogue and stage directions.

Grade 6 - Responding

TA6.RE.1 - Engage actively and appropriately as an audience member., a. Identify the role of the audience in different environments., b. Analyze the relationship between

an audience and a performer., c. Create guidelines for behaviors appropriate to a theatre experience., d. Model appropriate audience behaviors.

Grade 6 - Connecting

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 - Creating

TA7.CR.2 - Develop scripts through theatrical techniques., a. Create ideas for stories., b. Analyze the theme and structure of a play., c. Use the dramatic writing process to generate a script., d. Utilize dramatic conventions in the scriptwriting process (e.g. stage directions, dialogue, scenes).

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

TAHSAD.CR.1 - Organize, design, and refine theatrical work., a. Examine various theories of dramatic structure., b. Engage in and apply meaningful cultural, literary, and historical research to create acting choices or directorial concepts.

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

TAHSFT.RE.1 - Engage actively and appropriately as an audience member., a. Articulate why the relationship between the audience and performers is critical to the success of the production and demonstrate appropriate audience behavior., b. State and support aesthetic judgments through experience in diverse styles and genres of theatre.

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).

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).

North Carolina Essential Standards

Beginning High School Standards - Communication

B.C.1.3 - Understand how to read and write scripts that communicate conflict, plot, and character.

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

B.C.2.2 - Interpret various selections of dramatic literature through formal and informal presentations.

Beginning High School Standards - Analysis

B.A.1.1 - Interpret the plot structure and the thematic, technical, and dramaturgical elements within scenes from

plays.

B.A.1.2 - Analyze informal or formal theatre productions in terms of the emotions or thoughts they evoke, characters, settings, and events.

Beginning High School Standards - Aesthetics

B.AE.1.2 - Explain how the major technical elements, such as sound, lights, set, and costumes, are used to enhance formal or informal productions.

Beginning High School Standards - Culture

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

Intermediate High School Standards - Analysis

I.A.1.1 - Analyze the plot structure and the thematic, technical, and dramaturgical elements within plays.

Proficient High School Standards - Analysis

P.A.1.1 - Analyze full-length plays in terms of plot structure, pacing, given circumstances, and character development.

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 - Foundations: Inquiry and Understanding

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

C.1.F - identify the structure and form in examples of dramatic literature.

MS 117.211 LI - Critical evaluation and response

C.5.A - identify and apply audience etiquette at all performances.

C.5.C - identify production elements of theatre, film, television, and other media.

MS 117.212 LII - Foundations: Inquiry and Understanding

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

MS 117.212 LII - Creative Expression: production

B.3.B - create theatrical elements such as scenery, properties, lighting, sound, costume, makeup, and publicity appropriate to specific performances.

MS 117.212 LII - Critical evaluation and response

B.5.A - understand and demonstrate appropriate audience etiquette at various types of performances.

B.5.B - evaluate the effectiveness of selected film and television performances.

B.5.C - demonstrate knowledge of production elements in theatre, film, television, and other media.

MS 117.213 LIII - Foundations: Inquiry and Understanding

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

B.1.F - explore and evaluate the structure and form of dramatic literature.

MS 117.213 LIII - Creative Expression: production

B.3.D - use technology in theatrical applications such as live theatre, video, and film.

HS 117.315 LI - Foundations: Inquiry and Understanding

C.1.F - demonstrate a working knowledge of the language of theatre such as stage terminology, elements of theatre, or theatrical conventions.

C.1.G - analyze and describe the interdependence of all theatrical elements.

HS 117.316 LII - Foundations: Inquiry and Understanding

C.1.D - analyze dramatic structure and genre.

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

C.1.F - relate the interdependence of all theatrical elements.

HS 117.317 LIII - Foundations: Inquiry and Understanding

C.1.D - analyze and evaluate dramatic structure and genre.

HS 117.317 LIII - Creative Expression: production

C.3.B - analyze and evaluate dramatic texts as a basis for technical discussions, considering themes, settings, times, literary styles, genres, and characters.

HS 117.317 LIII - Historical and cultural relevance

C.4.B - analyze ways in which theatre, television, and film play a role in our daily lives and influence our values and behaviors.

HS 117.318 LIV - Creative Expression: performance

C.2.E - create individually or devise collaboratively imaginative scripts and scenarios.

HS 117.318 LIV - Critical evaluation and response

C.5.F - employ technology such as portfolios, research projects, and journals to communicate and present findings in a clear and coherent manner.

Alberta, Canada

Improvisation Drama 10

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

3 - maintain concentration during exercises

32 - sustain a character throughout a scene or exercise

8 - tell a story spontaneously

9 - use appropriate stage directions

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

1 - recognize theatre has evolved as a traditional art form

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

4 - recognize dramatic structure of a play

Technical Theatre/Design 10-20-30 - Management - Sound

1 - demonstrate understanding of the purpose of stage sound

Junior Orientation

focus concentration on one task at a time

listen effectively

meet deadlines and follow through on individual and group commitments

recognize the purposes of and participate in warmup activities

share ideas confidently with others

support positivity the work of others

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

Improvisation/Acting Level I - Beginning

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

5 - create and tell a story spontaneously

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

Improvisation/Acting Level II - Intermediate

21 - sustain a character throughout an exercise or scene

Junior Goal I Objectives

develop self-confidence

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

strengthen powers of concentration

Theatre Studies Level II - Intermediate (Theatre History)

4 - recognize that drama exists in every culture

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

Theatre Studies Level III - Advanced (The script)

10 - demonstrate understanding of the concept of dramatic convention

11 - demonstrate understanding of plot structure

7 - define the elements of script, dialogue, directions, characters and settings

Senior Goal I Objectives

demonstrate a sense of responsibility and commitment, individually and to the group

extend the ability to concentrate

increase self-confidence

increase self-discipline

Orientation Drama 10

concentrate on the task at hand

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

recognize that values are expressed through the arts

share ideas confidently

work cooperatively and productively

British Columbia (2018)

GRADE 6 - ARTS - Exploring and creating

Create artistic works collaboratively and as an individual using ideas inspired by imagination, inquiry, experimentation, and purposeful play

GRADE 6 - ARTS - Reasoning and reflecting

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

GRADE 6 - ARTS - Communicating and documenting

Demonstrate increasingly sophisticated application and/or engagement of curricular content

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

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 7 - ARTS - Communicating and documenting

Describe, interpret and respond to works of art

Express, feelings, ideas, and experiences through the arts

GRADE 8 - ARTS - Exploring and creating

Create artistic works collaboratively and as an individual using ideas inspired by imagination, inquiry, experimentation, and purposeful play

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

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

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

Receive, offer, and apply constructive feedback

GRADE 9 - DRAMA - Connecting and expanding

Collaborate through reciprocal relationships during creative processes

Demonstrate respect for themselves, others, and the audience

Reflect on creative processes to make connections to personal learning and experiences

GRADE 10 - DRAMA - Explore and Create

Improvise and take creative risks to express meaning

GRADE 10 - DRAMA - Reason and reflect

Apply feedback to develop and refine ideas

Describe, analyze, and respond using drama-specific language

Reflect on dramatic works and make connections with personal experiences

GRADE 10 - DRAMA - Connect and expand

Demonstrate respect for self, others, and the audience

GRADE 11 - DRAMA - Explore and Create

Improvise and take creative risks using imagination, exploration, and inquiry

GRADE 11 - DRAMA - Reason and reflect

Demonstrate awareness of self, others, and audience

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

Receive and apply constructive feedback to develop and refine ideas

GRADE 11 - DRAMA - Connect and expand

Demonstrate awareness of self, others, and audience

GRADE 12 - DRAMA - Explore and Create

Improvise and take creative risks using imagination, exploration, and inquiry

GRADE 12 - DRAMA - Reason and reflect

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

GRADE 12 - DRAMA - Connect and expand

Demonstrate respect for self, others, and audience

Ontario, Canada

Grade 6 - Reflecting, Responding and Analyzing

B2.1 - express personal responses and preferences and make connections to themes and issues presented in their own and others' drama works

B2.2 - identify a favourite scene and give reasons for their preference, using correct drama terminology to describe how the elements of drama contribute to its effectiveness

Grade 6 - Creating and Presenting

B1.4 - communicate feelings, thoughts, and ideas to a specific audience, using audio, visual, and/or technological aids to strengthen the impact on the viewer

Grade 7 - Reflecting, Responding and Analyzing

B2.1 - construct personal interpretations of drama works, connecting drama issues and themes to their own and others' ideas, feelings, and experiences

B2.2 - analyse and describe, using drama terminology, how drama elements are used to communicate meaning in a variety of drama works and shared drama experiences

Grade 7 - Creating and Presenting

B1.2 - demonstrate an understanding of the elements of drama by selecting and combining several elements and conventions to create dramatic effects

B1.4 - communicate feelings, thoughts, and abstract ideas through drama works, using audio, visual, and/or technological aids to heighten the dramatic experience

Grade 8 - Creating and Presenting

B1.4 - communicate feelings, thoughts, and abstract ideas through drama works, using audio, visual, and/or technological aids for specific purposes and audiences

Grades 9 & 10 - Foundations - Responsible Practices

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 - Creating and Presenting - Presentation Techniques & Technologies

A.3.3 - use a variety of technological tools (e.g., light, sound, set design, props, models) to enhance the impact of drama works

Grade 11 - Reflecting, Responding and Analyzing - The Critical Analysis Process

B.1.2 - analyse drama works to determine how they communicate ideas about issues, culture, and society

(2020)

Theatre Arts I: Introduction to Theatre

TI.2 - The student will apply a creative process for theatre.

Theatre Arts I: Introduction to Theatre

TI.3 - The student will analyze, interpret, and evaluate theatre.

Theatre Arts I: Introduction to Theatre

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

Virginia Standards Of Learning