



# CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT WITH AN INDIGENOUS PERSPECTIVE

By ALLISON GREEN

Students will develop characters based on the character traits of the Seven Grandfather Teachings. The unit begins with a focus on the traits (Love, Wisdom, Respect, Bravery, Honesty, Humility, and Truth) and the story of elders passing on teachings to the youth. Students will use tableau, viewpoints, and movement and explore how to develop a character with a clear backstory and identity. The unit uses open, neutral scenes as a partnered task that students can use to apply their learning followed by reflection and class discussion.

## 1 - Seven Grandfather Teachings

This day introduces the Seven Grandfather Teachings. Students engage with the story, create a storyboard, and discuss as a class.

## 2 - Character Traits - Seven Grandfather Teachings

These lessons move from the story into activity. Students will try interpreting, actively modelling, and practicing stepping into the character traits of Love, Wisdom, Respect, Bravery, Honesty, Humility, and Truth.

## 3 - Symbolism and Animal Representation Using Viewpoints

Now that students have spent time understanding the literal meaning of the character traits discussed as the seven Grandfather teachings, this lesson moves into a more metaphorical representation of animals and how they relate to the teachings. The technique of Viewpoints is introduced to play and interpret this knowledge.

## 4 - Open, Neutral Scenes

A final step can be used as an evaluation of student understanding of the character traits presented in the Seven Grandfather Teachings by approaching an Open, Neutral Scene. Students are paired and given one of the open, neutral scenes included in this unit. Neutral scenes can have dictated conflict or character traits added to them by the teacher for students, but in the most "open" sense, allow students to develop the story and create strong focused characters.

# Standards Connections

## National Core Arts Standards

### Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work - Grade 6

TH:Cr1.1.6.c - Explore a scripted or improvised character by imagining the given circumstances in a drama/theatre work.

### Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art - Grade 7

TH:Cn10.1.7.a - Incorporate multiple perspectives and diverse community ideas in a drama/theatre work.

### Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work - Grade 7

TH:Cr1.1.7.c - Envision and describe a scripted or improvised character's inner thoughts and objectives in a drama/theatre work.

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

TH:Cn10.1.HS1.a - Investigate how cultural perspectives, community ideas and personal beliefs impact a drama/theatre work.

### Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work - High School Proficient

TH:Cr1.1.HS1.c - Use script analysis to generate ideas about a character that is believable and authentic in a drama/theatre work.

### Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work - High School Accomplished

TH:Cr1.1.HS11.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.HS111.a - Use historical and cultural context to structure and justify personal responses to a drama/theatre work.

### Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work - Grade 6

TH:Re8.1.6.b - Identify cultural perspectives that may influence the evaluation of a drama/theatre work.

### Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work - Grade 7

TH:Re8.1.7.b - Describe how cultural perspectives can influence the evaluation of drama/theatre work.

### Organize and develop artistic ideas and work - Grade HS Accomplished

TH:Cr2.1.HS111.a - Refine a dramatic concept to demonstrate a critical understanding of historical and cultural influences of original ideas applied to a drama/theatre work.

### Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work - Grade HS Advanced

TH:Re8.1.HS1111.b - Use new understandings of cultures and contexts to shape personal responses to drama/theatre work.

## Common Core

### 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.

### 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.

## California VAPA Standards (2019)

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

6.TH:Cr1.b - Explore a scripted or improvised character by imagining the given circumstances in a drama/theatre work.

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

7.TH:Cr1.b - Envision and describe a scripted or improvised character's inner thoughts and objectives in a drama/theatre work.

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

7.TH:Cn10 - Incorporate multiple perspectives and diverse community ideas 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.

### 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.

### 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:Re8 Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.

6.TH:Re8.b - Identify cultural contexts that may influence the evaluation of a drama/theatre work.

### 7.TH:Re8 Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.

7.TH:Re8.b - Describe how cultural contexts can influence the evaluation of drama/theatre work.

### 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.

### Adv.TH:Re8 Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.

Adv.TH:Re8.b - Use new understandings of cultures and contexts to shape personal responses to drama/theatre work.

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

## 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.

### 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 - 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.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.

## North Carolina Essential Standards

### 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 - Foundations: Inquiry and Understanding

C.1.E - analyze characters by describing attributes such as physical, intellectual, emotional, and social dimensions

through reading scripts of published plays.

### HS 117.315 LI - Historical and cultural relevance

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

### HS 117.316 LII - Creative Expression: production

C.3.B - read and analyze cultural, social, and political aspects of a script to determine technical elements.

### HS 117.317 LIII - Creative Expression: performance

C.2.C - analyze characters from various genres and styles, describing physical, intellectual, emotional, and social dimensions.

### HS 117.318 LIV - Creative Expression: performance

C.2.C - analyze and interpret characters from various genres and styles, describing physical, intellectual, emotional, and social dimensions.

## Alberta, Canada

### Acting Drama 20

1 - analyze a script for explicit character clues

### Junior Orientation

listen effectively

recognize that there is an historical and cultural aspect of drama/theatre

share ideas confidently with others

### Junior Goal I Objectives

develop a sense of responsibility and commitment

### Theatre Studies Level II - Intermediate (Theatre History)

4 - recognize that drama exists in every culture

### Senior Goal I Objectives

demonstrate respect for others-their rights, ideas, abilities and differences

sharpen observations of people, situations and the environment

### Orientation Drama 10

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

display consideration and respect for self and others

listen to self and others

positively support the work of others

share ideas confidently

## British Columbia (2018)

### GRADE 6 - ARTS - Exploring and creating

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

### GRADE 7 - ARTS - Exploring and creating

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

### GRADE 10 - DRAMA - Connect and expand

Explore First Peoples perspectives and knowledge, other ways of knowing, and local cultural knowledge to gain understanding through dramatic works

### GRADE 11 - DRAMA - Connect and expand

Explore First Peoples perspectives and knowledge, other ways of knowing, and local cultural knowledge to gain understanding through dramatic works

### GRADE 12 - DRAMA - Connect and expand

Analyze the role of story and narrative in expressing First

Peoples perspectives, values, and beliefs, including protocols related to ownership of First Peoples oral texts

## **Ontario, Canada**

### **Grade 6 - Exploring Forms and Cultural Contexts**

B3.1 - demonstrate an understanding of some drama and theatre themes and traditions from a variety of times, communities, and places

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

B.2.2 - explain how dramatic exploration helps develop awareness of different roles and identities people have in society (e.g., explain what they learned through role playing characters from different socio-economic groups)

### **Grade 11 - Reflecting, Responding and Analyzing - Drama and Society**

B.2.4 - explain how different types of theatre mirror cultural diversity and local or regional concerns in Canadian and global societies from the past and present