



ELIZABETHAN THEATRE

By KAREN LOFTUS

How do you introduce students to Shakespeare? This unit introduces the bard through life in Elizabethan England, the playwrights, players and playhouses. It also explores how to approach unfamiliar words and context clues in Shakespeare's text.

As with any theatre history unit, you have to decide what's most important to introduce to the students. For this unit, we'll focus on three things in the three different categories. Please refer to the Pacing Guide for more details and ways to supplement with other DTA materials.

1 - Playwrights & Players

This session introduces students to the Elizabethan Era, and its' key playwrights and players.

2 - Strange Language

Students learn how to use context clues to approach the unfamiliar words they will find in Shakespeare's language.

3 - Context Clues

Students review context clues and apply it to the Prologue from Romeo and Juliet.

4 - Playhouses

Students are introduced to three of the most important playhouses in the Elizabethan Era, as well as the areas of the Globe Theatre.

5 - Crime Scene Clues

Students apply their knowledge of context clues to find meaning in the Tomb Scene from Romeo and Juliet.

6 - Expanding the Unit

Three suggestions for adding on to this unit are included, as well as a unit reflection for your students.

Standards Connections

National Core Arts Standards

Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation - Grade HS Proficient

TH:Pr4.1.HSI.a - Examine how character relationships assist in telling the story of a drama/theatre work.

TH:Pr4.1.HSI.b - Shape character choices using given circumstances in a drama/theatre work.

Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation - Grade HS Accomplished

TH:Pr4.1.HSII.a - Discover how unique choices shape believable and sustainable drama/ theatre work.

Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work - High School Advanced

TH:Cr1.1.HSIII.c - Integrate cultural and historical contexts with personal experiences to create a character that is believable and authentic, 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.

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 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.

Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation - Grade 8

TH:Pr5.1.8.a - Use a variety of acting techniques to increase skills 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.a - Develop and synthesize original ideas in a drama/theatre work utilizing critical analysis, historical and cultural context, research, and western or non-western theatre traditions.

Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work - Grade 6

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

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

TH:Cn11.2.7.b - Examine artifacts from a time period and geographic location to better understand performance and design choices in a drama/theatre work.

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

TH:Cr3.1.HSIII.b - Synthesize ideas from research, script analysis, and context to create a performance that is believable, authentic, and relevant in a drama/theatre work.

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.3 - Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.

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

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.L.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.

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.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.L.5 - Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.L.6 - Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when encountering an unknown term important to comprehension or expression.

Reading: Literature

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.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.4 - Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone).

Reading: Informational Text

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.4 - Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language of a court opinion differs from that of a newspaper).

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.9-10.5 - Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

History/Social Studies

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.3 - Analyze in detail a series of events described in a text; determine whether earlier events caused later ones or simply preceded them.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.4 - Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/social science.

California VAPA Standards (2019)

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

Prof.TH:Pr4.a - Examine how character relationships assist in telling the story of a drama/theatre work.

Prof.TH:Pr4.b - Shape character choices using given circumstances in a drama/theatre work.

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

Acc.TH:Pr4.a - Discover how unique choices shape believable and sustainable drama/ theatre work.

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

Adv.TH:Cr1.b - Integrate cultural and historical contexts with personal experiences to create a character that is believable and authentic, 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.

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: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.

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

8.TH:Pr5.a - Use a variety of acting techniques to increase skills 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.a - Develop and synthesize original ideas in a drama/theatre work utilizing critical analysis, historical and cultural context, research, and western or non-western theatre traditions.

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

7.TH:Cn11.2.b - Examine artifacts from a time period and geographic location to better understand performance and design choices in a drama/theatre work.

Adv.TH:Cr3 Refine and complete artistic work.

Adv.TH:Cr3.b - Synthesize ideas from research, script analysis, and context to create a performance that is believable, authentic, and relevant in 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.1.4 - Research and define the physical/visual elements necessary to create theatrical reality for a specific historical and/or geographical play.

Innovation, Technology & the Future

TH.912.F.1.1 - Synthesize research, analysis, and imagination to create believable characters and settings.

TH.912.F.3.3 - Exhibit independence, discipline, and commitment to the theatre process when working on assigned projects and productions.

Skills, Techniques & Processes

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

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

North Carolina Essential Standards

Beginning High School Standards - Communication

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

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.

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.2.2 - Interpret scenes through formal and informal presentations.

Intermediate High School Standards - Analysis

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

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 - Communication

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

Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for Theatre Arts

MS 117.211 LI - Creative Expression: performance

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

MS 117.211 LI - Critical evaluation and response

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

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.B - define characters by what they do, what they say, and what others say about them.

MS 117.212 LII - Critical evaluation and response

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

MS 117.213 LIII - Creative Expression: performance

B.2.C - create characters, dialogue, and actions that reflect dramatic structure in improvised and scripted scenes, individually and collaboratively.

MS 117.213 LIII - Historical and cultural relevance

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

MS 117.213 LIII - Critical evaluation and response

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

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.

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

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 - Historical and cultural relevance

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

HS 117.317 LIII - Foundations: Inquiry and Understanding

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

HS 117.318 LIV - Foundations: Inquiry and Understanding

C.1.E - evaluate theatrical conventions of various cultural and historical periods.

HS 117.318 LIV - Historical and cultural relevance

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

Alberta, Canada

Improvisation Drama 10

13 - communicate meaning without words

16 - make logical choices spontaneously within the boundaries of situation and character

32 - sustain a character throughout a scene or exercise

Acting Drama 20

1 - analyze a script for explicit character clues

12 - analyze script for clues to create antecedent action

13 - create antecedent action for character

14 - identify and use operative words in a script

15 - analyze script for a character's transitions

4 - demonstrate understanding that a character's behaviour is motivated by past, present and anticipated future experiences

6 - demonstrate a character's immediate or moment-to-moment objectives within a scene

9 - demonstrate the ability to pick up cues effectively

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

1 - recognize theatre has evolved as a traditional art form

Improvisation/Acting Level III - Advanced

26 - pick up cues effectively

30 - analyze text for meaning and character development

Junior Goal II Objectives

become familiar with dramatic terminology and script format

Junior Goal III Objectives

develop awareness of various conventions of theatre

Junior Orientation

listen effectively

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

recognize the purposes of and participate in warmup activities

share ideas confidently with others

show awareness of story sequence

Junior Goal I Objectives

develop a positive self-image

develop self-confidence

develop self-discipline

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

strengthen powers of concentration

Theatre Studies Level II - Intermediate (Theatre History)

6 - show awareness of selected periods and playwrights

Theatre Studies Level III - Advanced (The script)

12 - analyze a script to identify character, setting and plot

9 - read a script aloud

Senior Goal I Objectives

develop a positive and realistic self-image

develop a sense of inquiry and commitment to learning
extend the ability to concentrate
increase self-confidence
increase self-discipline

Senior Goal II Objectives

be capable of creating and expressing a believable character from scripted and non-scripted material
explore various approaches to analyzing a script for purposes of study and/or presentation

Senior Goal III Objectives

explore various conventions and traditions of theatre

Orientation Drama 10

concentrate on the task at hand
demonstrate self-discipline, self-direction and a sense of responsibility
listen to self and others
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

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

Intentionally select and apply materials, movements, technologies, environments, tools, and techniques by combining and arranging artistic elements, processes, and principles in art making

GRADE 6 - ARTS - Reasoning and reflecting

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

Express, feelings, ideas, and experiences through the arts
Take creative risks to express feelings, ideas, and experiences

GRADE 7 - 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

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

Intentionally select and apply materials, movements, technologies, environments, tools, and techniques by combining and arranging artistic elements, processes, and principles in art making

GRADE 7 - ARTS - Reasoning and reflecting

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 7 - ARTS - Communicating and documenting

Express, feelings, ideas, and experiences through the arts
Take creative risks to express feelings, ideas, and experiences

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

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

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

GRADE 8 - ARTS - Communicating and documenting

Take creative risks to express feelings, ideas, and experiences

GRADE 9 - DRAMA - Exploring and creating

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

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

Take creative risks to experience and express thoughts, emotions, 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

Receive, offer, and apply constructive feedback

GRADE 9 - DRAMA - Connecting and expanding

Demonstrate respect for themselves, others, and the audience

GRADE 10 - DRAMA - Explore and Create

Create dramatic works with an intended audience in mind

Develop a repertoire of dramatic skills and techniques through presentation or performance

Develop performance skills in a variety of contexts
Experiment with a range of props, processes, and technologies

Explore and create dramatic works to express ideas and emotions

Explore dramatic works through presentation or performance

Improvise and take creative risks to express meaning

Intentionally select and combine drama conventions

GRADE 10 - DRAMA - Reason and reflect

Apply feedback to develop and refine ideas

Describe, analyze, and respond using drama-specific

language

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 10 - DRAMA - Connect and expand

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

Develop a repertoire of dramatic skills and techniques through presentation or performance

Develop and refine performance skills in a variety of contexts

Experiment with a range of materials, props, processes, and technologies to create and refine performances

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

Purposefully select and combine dramatic elements and conventions

GRADE 11 - DRAMA - Reason and reflect

Demonstrate awareness of self, others, and audience

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

Receive and apply constructive feedback to develop and refine ideas

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

GRADE 11 - DRAMA - Connect and expand

Demonstrate awareness of self, others, and audience

GRADE 12 - DRAMA - Explore and Create

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

Develop a repertoire of dramatic skills, vocabulary, and techniques through presentation or performance

Develop and refine performance skills in a variety of contexts

Experiment with a range of props, processes, and technologies to create and refine innovative dramatic works

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

Intentionally select and combine dramatic elements and conventions

GRADE 12 - DRAMA - Reason and reflect

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

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

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

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

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 - 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)

Ontario, Canada

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-