



# SCRIPT ANALYSIS: THE ACTOR'S PERSPECTIVE

By KAREN LOFTUS

How does an actor analyze a script? Students start with character analysis (how do we learn about a character in a script? what are the facts/inferences about a character?) and then explore the ideas of “objective,” “obstacle,” “stakes,” and “tactics.”

The unit culminates with students applying learned script analysis techniques on an assigned scene. Please refer to the Pacing Guide for more details and ways to supplement with other DTA materials.

## 1 - Getting to Know a Character

Students learn the 5 ways we learn about a character in a script.

## 2 - Characters in a Scene

This session uses a two-character scene to find facts and inferences about a character.

## 3 - The Stanislavski Method

This session introduces the Stanislavski method of acting and four elements: objective, obstacle, stakes, and tactics.

## 4 - Applying Analysis to Performance

This session reviews what students have learned about script analysis, and applies it to an open scene exercise.

## 5 - Unit Project

Students are given an assigned scene to analyze, focus on one character, and complete the script analysis assignment.

# 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.

### 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.

### 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.

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

TH:Pr4.1.HSII.b - Identify essential text information, research from various sources, and the director's concept that influence character choices 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.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.

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.9-10.1 - 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.9-10.3 - 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.9-10.1 - 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.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.

### Writing

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.9 - Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

### 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.

## 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.

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

Acc.TH:Pr4.b - Identify essential text information, research from various sources, and the director's concept that influence character choices in a drama/theatre work.

## Florida Sunshine State Standards

### 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.

## 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.

## Skills, Techniques & Processes

TH.912.S.1.8 - Use research to extract clues in dramatic texts to create performances or technical elements, choosing those that are most interesting and that best convey dramatic intent.

TH.912.S.2.3 - Demonstrate an understanding of a dramatic work by developing a character analysis for one or more of its major characters and show how the analysis clarifies the character's physical and emotional dimensions.

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.

## 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.

## 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 - 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.B - imagine and clearly describe characters, their relationships, and their surroundings.

## 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.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 - Foundations: Inquiry and Understanding

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

terminology.

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

## HS 117.316 LII - Foundations: Inquiry and Understanding

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

## HS 117.317 LIII - Creative Expression: performance

C.2.C - analyze 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

12 - analyze script for clues to create antecedent action

14 - identify and use operative words in a script

15 - analyze script for a character's transitions

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

4 - recognize dramatic structure of a play

## 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

focus concentration on one task at a time

listen effectively

recognize the purposes of and participate in warmup activities

share ideas confidently with others

## Junior Goal I Objectives

extend the ability to explore meaning through abstract concepts

strengthen powers of concentration

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

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

## Senior Goal I Objectives

develop a sense of inquiry and commitment to learning  
extend the ability to concentrate

## Senior Goal II Objectives

explore various approaches to analyzing a script for purposes of study and/or presentation

## Orientation Drama 10

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

make effective decisions or choices

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

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

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

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

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 - 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

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

### 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

### 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

Select and combine dramatic elements and principles to intentionally create a particular mood, effect, and meaning

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

Collaborate through reciprocal relationships during creative processes

Demonstrate respect for themselves, others, and the audience

### GRADE 10 - DRAMA - Explore and Create

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

Explore and create dramatic works to express ideas and emotions

Improvise and take creative risks to express meaning

### GRADE 10 - DRAMA - Reason and reflect

Describe, analyze, and respond using drama-specific language

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

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

### 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 dramatic works for an intended audience

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

Intentionally select and combine dramatic elements and conventions

### GRADE 12 - DRAMA - Reason and reflect

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

### GRADE 12 - DRAMA - Connect and expand

Demonstrate respect for self, others, and audience

## Ontario, Canada

### Grades 9 & 10 - Foundations - Responsible Practices

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)

**Grades 9 & 10 - Reflecting, Responding and Analyzing -  
Connections Beyond the Classroom**

B.3.1 - identify and describe skills, attitudes, and strategies they used in collaborative drama activities (e.g., brainstorming, active listening, and cooperative problem-solving skills; strategies for sharing responsibility through collaborative team roles)