Course 1, Unit 1: Scope, Genre, Structure, and Elements

Content Area: **Performing Arts**
Course(s): **English Language Arts, Performing Arts**
Time Period: **Generic Time Period**
Length: **4 Days**
Status: **Published**

Unit Overview

Unit 1 will provide an introduction and outline for the course, including the three main broad genres (drama/tragedy, comedy, and historical/biographical) and the dramatic elements crucial for all genres. Students will first review plot structure, with which they are already familiar in connection with literary studies. Students will next view the course exemplar, *12 Angry Men* (1957). This drama clearly exemplifies all plot elements as well as stock characters, layered and parallel conflicts, and advanced literary elements such as symbolism and irony. The play accomplishes this with a remarkably simple and accessible script. Also, the Aristotelean unities of time, place, and action--though they are not conventions that most modern plays uphold--make the play much easier to follow and the course's main concepts much easier to illustrate. After viewing the exemplar, students will discuss the very attributes from this play that they will learn to include in their original pieces.

Standards

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.8.5.a	Interpret figures of speech (e.g., verbal irony, puns) in context.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.8.6	Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.
LA.8.CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.2	Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.
LA.8.CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.3	Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.
VPA.1.1.8.C.1	Analyze the structural components of plays and performances from a variety of Western and non-Western theatrical traditions and from different historical eras.
VPA.1.3.8.C.1	Create a method for defining and articulating character objectives, intentions, and subtext, and apply the method to the portrayal of characters in live performances or recorded venues.
VPA.1.4.8.A.5	Interpret symbolism and metaphors embedded in works of dance, music, theatre, and visual art.
VPA.1.4.8.B.2	Differentiate among basic formal structures and technical proficiency of artists in works of dance, music, theatre, and visual art.

Essential Questions

1. What are the essential differences between drama, comedy, and historical/biographical plays?

2. What structure and which elements should any unified story have?

3. How can advanced literary devices such as symbolism, irony, and metaphor add depth and meaning to a play?

4. How do setting, characters, and events interrelate in a play?

5. What terms apply to all of the techniques, skills, and elements I will employ as a playwright?

Application of Knowledge: Students will know that...

- Advanced literary devices such as symbolism, irony, and metaphor add depth and meaning to a play.
- Characters have motivations and attributes that are revealed through dialogue and action.
- Conventions, techniques, and elements have names that effective playwrights know and use.
- Integral, unified plots have specific components and elements.
- Plays, as works of literature, contain themes that develop with the plot.

Application of Skills: Students will be able to...

- Analyze and discuss themes as they develop with a plot.
- Distinguish between genres of plays (drama, comedy, and history).
- Explain the need for conflicts to drive the plot.
- Identify and analyze character motivations and attributes revealed through dialogue and action.
- Identify components in a plot sequence.
- Identify, analyze, and discuss the conventions, elements, and techniques employed in writing a play.
- Recognize advanced literary devices such as symbolism, irony, and metaphor in a play.

Assessments

Literary Note Sheets

As students watch the course exemplar, *12 Angry Men*, they will list and explain various literary elements: genre, setting, primary and secondary conflicts, major concepts, themes, and literary devices. They will also map out the plot components and list conflicts.

Class Discussion

Students' questions and contributions will provide critical information as to understanding of the concepts covered in this introductory unit.

Future Units' Work

The skits, scenes, acts, plays, and performances of later units will indicate the depth to which students internalize and apply concepts from this unit.

Suggested Activities

Introduction: Scope, Genre, Structure, and Elements

Day 1—Introductions, course outline, plot pyramid, anatomy of a written play, Freytag's pyramid

Day 2—Exemplar: viewing of *12 Angry Men* (1957)

Day 3—Exemplar: viewing of *12 Angry Men* (1957)

Day 4—Literary Note Sheets: discussion of the plot pyramid, stock characters, and other attributes of the play.

Activities to Differentiate Instruction

This introductory unit will review literary concepts learned in ELA classes over the past several years. Given the brevity of this unit and its basic concepts, little differentiation is necessary. All the same, various activities enable a broad appeal to a variety of learners.

The overview of the course lists basic genres and the written formats of plays with visual samples and reinforcement through extended class discussion.

Viewing of the course exemplar on video ensures that students of all abilities see the unit concepts at work.

The Literary Note Sheet enables the teacher to verify that students on a basic academic level have a working familiarity with all concepts.

Students on higher academic levels will exhibit greater depths of analysis and synthesis during class discussion.

In compliance with 504 plans and IEP's, teachers will review applicable documents, consult appropriate personnel connected with special-needs students' cases, work closely with inclusion teachers and classroom aides, and communicate with parents in an effort to see to the specific needs of all students.

Integrated/Cross-Disciplinary Instruction

The course exemplar, *12 Angry Men*, takes up topics involving the American legal system, racial preudice, classism, and sexism--all related to our social studies curriculum. Additionally, the character interactions illustrate many social phenomena discussed in the guidance curriculum.

Resources

Course exemplar:

*12 Angry Me*n (1957), dir. Sidney Lumet (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mzjpJ1J-oQo)

Text guide (http://insightpublications.com.au/pdf_preview/TG-Twelve-Angry-Men-10-pages.pdf)

Additional resources:

Course overview handout

Literary Note Sheet

Freytag's Pyramid (http://www.ohio.edu/people/hartleyg/ref/fiction/freytag.html)

Aristotle's *Poetics* (http://www.iep.utm.edu/aris-poe/)