Course 2, Unit 3: Scenes in Performance

Content Area: **Performing Arts**
Course(s): **English Language Arts, Performing Arts**
Time Period: **Marking Period 2**
Length: **12 Days**
Status: **Published**

Unit Overview

Similar to the corresponding unit in Course 1, this unit is the culmination of the Course 2. Many, though not all, students will have chosen to write some sort of screenplay as their project for Unit 2. For the purposes of seeing their work take on a new dimension of life and deriving insight for the purpose of rewriting or continuing to write, students will select scenes from their projects, and they will perform them. In all cases, performances will be recorded on video, but the values will vary with the nature of individual student projects. Students shooting scenes for screenplays or teleplays will emphasize cinematic elements as they produce their scenes. Students writing stage plays, on the other hand, will be emphasizing not so much the footage as the literary and dramatic elements that characterize the specialized genres they have selected.

As in the performance unit of Course 1, production of these sequences may include very basic costumes, props, and scenery. The objective here is not so much a polished finished product as it is an understanding of the process of taking a printed text and putting it into production on the stage or screen. The best playwrights and screenwriters use this understanding to inform their composition.

Standards

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.3.b	Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, and reflection, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.
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.3	Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.
VPA.1.1.8.C.4	Define the areas of responsibility (e.g., actor, director, producer, scenic, lighting, costume, stagehand, etc.) and necessary job skills of the front and back-of-house members of a theatre company.
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.B.1	Evaluate the effectiveness of a work of art by differentiating between the artist's technical proficiency and the work's content or form.
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. How should the process of staging or shooting a scene inform my writing of it?

2. How does my work in other capacities (actor, director, crew, camera technician, editor) inform my writing of my play or screenplay?

3. How might I evaluate the technical structure, the content, the form, and the performance of not only my own work but that of others?

4. What do I expect from people as they stage or shoot my work?

5. How does the process of staging or shooting my scene affect my assessment of the overall play or screenplay I am writing?

Application of Knowledge: Students will know that...

- Characters have motivations and attributes that are revealed through dialogue and action.
- Conventions, techniques, and elements have names that effective playwrights know and use.
- Evaluation of a play's techniques, content, form, and performance on a formative basis will yield a more artistic and effective final product.
- Integral, unified plots have specific components and elements.
- People carry out various functions on stage and behind the scenes in order to bring a script to performance.
- Production of dramatic scenes is a process that reveals opportunities and limitations as a playwright or screenwriter continues to write or revise.
- The vital work of a playwright is subject to interpretation by performers, directors, crew, and the audience.

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

- Apply cinematic techniques such as close-up, pan, wide-angle, cutaways, and the like to the shooting of scenes from screenplays.
- Bring about an interrelation of characters, setting, events, and circumstances as they compose a play.
- Compose a play that reflects the effect it will have on the audience, while making the most of prospective actors, directors, and crew.
- Draw insights for continued writing and revision based on what they learn in the process of staging/shooting their scenes.
- Identify and analyze character motivations and attributes revealed through dialogue and action.
- Recognize advanced literary devices such as symbolism, irony, and metaphor in a play.
- Refer by name to dramatic elements, literary devices, theatrical techniques, and technical capacities carried out in the creation and performance of a play.
- Serve in various functions in the staging/shooting of their own scenes and those of others.

Assessments

Formative

Self-assessment by checklists of elements of concept, composition, and performance

Peer assessment using similar checklists and engaging in discussion

Periodic consultation with the teacher

Evaluative discussions during rehearsals

Summative

Student self-assessments based on a rubric for concept, composition, and performance

Peer assessments based on a rubric for concept, composition, and performance

Evaluation by teacher based on a rubric for concept, composition, and performance

Suggested Activities

In addition to brief presentations and activities related to the topics below, students will receive extended time during each class meeting for the purpose of composing and consulting.

Day 1—Class Conference: goal setting and topics for further instruction

Days 2-4—Extensions of earlier mini-lessons on topics requested by students on the Class Conference day; continued composition and revision of plays

NOTE: These mini-lessons are hard to prescribe in advance. They will come about as students express their needs and self-generated objectives.

Days 5-7—Rehearsal, technical preparations for shooting

Days 8-10—Performance, shooting of scenes

Days 11-12—Video assessment, peer and teacher evaluation; self-assessments and goals that extend beyond this course

Activities to Differentiate Instruction

Mini-lessons arise based on needs as the teacher assesses them and as students state them.

Students of higher levels of ability and insight have the opportunity to include more elements and to deepen or expand the application of their skills.

Nonverbal elements of performing engage speech-impaired and LEP students. Additionally, the rough performance of select passages provides an added dimension of consideration as playwrights make adjustments to their composition.

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

Staging and shooting of scenes will be a highly diversified effort from student to student. All students will participate in multiple capacities (playwright/screenwriter, director, actor, evaluator), and some students will take on additional dimensions of work as they manage production and assist with recording, editing, and posting video footage. Some correlations to various disciplines:

- stage/set management (leadership learning)
- set design (visual art)
- musical scoring and performance (music)
- video editing and production (technology)

Resources

Youtube.com (private class account, video editing tools)

iMovie editing software

YouTube online editing platform

Peer and self-evaluation rubric and commentary sheet (scenes in performance)

Peer, self-, and teacher evaluation summative rubric (scenes in performance)