Course 2, Unit 2: Screenplays, Teleplays, and Advanced Genres

Content Area: **Performing Arts**
Course(s): **English Language Arts, Performing Arts**
Time Period: **Generic Time Period**
Length: **25 Days**
Status: **Published**

Unit Overview

For 25 class meetings, the class will take on a workshop format as students develop their extended dramatic pieces. All students will work on one of the following projects:

- a stage play in an advanced or specialized genre (romantic comedy, farce, satire, tragedy, theater of the absurd, theatrical realism)
- a full-length screenplay
- a series of television episodes

Mini-lessons will be planned in some cases, though other mini-lessons will come about as students' needs become apparent and as they request assistance. Additionally, students will seek out exemplars for their chosen endeavors and advise each other.

Standards

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.3.a	Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and point of view and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.
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.W.8.3.e	Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on the narrated experiences or events.
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.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. Which genre or style will best suit the kind of story I wish to write for the stage or screen?

2. How will I choose, create, and develop setting, characters, and events as I craft my play or screenplay?

3. How will I use advanced literary devices such as symbolism, irony, and metaphors in order to enhance the effect of my play or screenplay?

4. What exemplars can I seek out for inspiration, and how can I work with my peers to exchange ideas and evaluate developments in our work?

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.
- Choose a genre or style for their play or screenplay, commit to it, and manipulate it.
- Develop themes along with a plot as they construct a play or screenplay.
- 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.
- Use academic vocabulary as they discuss and assess their own work and that of others.
- Use advanced literary devices such as irony, symbolism, foils, and metaphors in order to enhance the effect of their plays and screenplays.
- Use basic dramatic elements such as setting, characters, and events to tell a story.
- Use conflicts to drive the momentum of the plot.

Assessments

Formative:

Self-assessment by checklists of elements, devices, and concepts

Peer assessment using similar checklists and engaging in discussion

Periodic consultation with the teacher

Summative:

Student self-assessments based on a rubric for composition and content

Peer assessments based on a rubric for composition and content

Evaluation by teacher based on a rubric for composition and content

Daily observation of students' participation and products during the active participation segment of each mini-lesson.

Students' questions, comments, suggestions to teacher

Comments, corrections, and records from peer conferences between students

Suggested Activities

Introduction: Scope, Genre, Structure, and Elements

The following teaching points specifically address the genres associated with this unit:

- Review of Freytag's Pyramid and the three-act structure
- Specialized genre: romantic comedy
- Specialized genre: farce
- Specialized genre: satire
- Specialized genre: tragedy
- Specialized genre: theater of the absurd
- Seeking out exemplars
- Peer reviews: your role
- Peer reviews: what you should seek from your partner
- Review: stage conventions vs. screen conventions
- Review: big screen vs. small screen

- Episodes: each a story within a larger story

NOTE: As students' needs become apparent, and as they make requests, additional mini-lessons will be added.

Typical Daily Activities

- Mini-lesson (teaching point, modeling, active engagement, sharing)
- Daily writing
- Conferences (between peers and with the teacher) and sharing

Critical Phases of Student Activity

- Developing concepts
- Seeking out exemplars
- Drafting
- Revising
- Editing
- Conferences

Activities to Differentiate Instruction

Students will select their own topics and develop their own concepts, based on individual interests, enthusiasm, and strengths.

Assessment at the end of this unit will accommodate various genres, topics, and degrees of completion of student projects.

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.

Composition relies heavily on inspiration drawn from exemplars available in text and in performance. Students will use various media in order to find and access these.

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

Plays in three media are being created in this unit: stage plays, television episodes, and screenplays. This will connect on an essential level with media studies topics taken up in social studies classes. Additionally, the literary nature of this work has a correlation to ELA classes.

Resources

Course exemplars (carried over from unit 1):

Mr. Blandings Builds His Dream House (1948), dir. H.C. Potter

Script of *Mr. Blandings Builds His Dream House:* (http://www.imsdb.com/scripts/Mr-Blandings-Builds-His-Dream-House.html)

Script for iCarly, "iWanna Gold Medal" (http://www.simplyscripts.com/scripts/iCarly--iWannaGoldMedal.pdf)

Additional resources:

Internet Movie Database (www.imdb.com)

Internet Broadway Database (www.ibdb.com)