

# Introduction to Theater and Performance

Content Area: **Visual and Performing Arts**  
Course(s): **Generic Course**  
Time Period: **Generic Time Period**  
Length: **6 Weeks**  
Status: **Published**

## Unit Overview

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Students will learn the basics about the stage and the essentials needed to produce a play or musical.

Students will be introduced to the history and creative process of theater.

Students will participate in and improve their skills of performance before an audience.

Students will learn and refine their ability to critique a play or an individual performance.

## Transfer

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Students will be able to speak and present themselves in public with confidence.

Student will understand themselves more clearly and will be able to be more persuasive.

Students will be able to "sell" themselves in future interviews with schools and employers.

Students will have a better understanding and appreciation of theater as an art form.

Students will, by using opportunities in class, to begin to be able to express their own creativity using theater

Students will be able to assess and critique theater productions and individual performances.

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For more information, read the following article by Grant Wiggins.

[http://www.authenticeducation.org/ae\\_bigideas/article.lasso?artid=60](http://www.authenticeducation.org/ae_bigideas/article.lasso?artid=60)

## Meaning

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## **Understandings**

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Theater is one of the oldest of the arts.

Theater communicates a message, often times more specifically than other arts.

Theater is an art form that is personally involving for both the performer and the audience members.

Theater in performance exists for only a limited time and never again can be presented in exactly the same manner.

Theater is unique in that it directly imitates human experience by allowing spectators to identify with characters who are represented as real.

Theater encompasses many art forms.

Theater interprets life.

Theater is in a constant state of change

## **Essential Questions**

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Students will keep considering...

What are the parts and areas of a stage and a theater?

How can the study of theater arts benefit our lives?

How did theater develop?

How does theater reflect and influence society?

What makes a good story?

How do actors effectively communicate with an audience?

How do actors "become" a character?

How does trust affect creativity?

How do we use body language and facial expressions to communicate to an audience?

How do actors use their voices to express themselves to a variety of audiences?

How does an audience communicate with an actor?

How can we accurately critique a play or performance, even if we do not like it?

How is creating art different from observing art?

## **Application of Knowledge and Skill**

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### **Students will know...**

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Students will know...

All the areas of a stage and a theater.

The basics of stage direction

The basic history and evolution of theater

The difference between good acting and bad acting.

Creativity is an essential part of creating and performing a role.

Acting is a combination of creative thought and action.

The importance of improvisation in theater.

Creativity can be developed.

How a play or a musical is produced.

Actors use their bodies, voice and facial expressions to communicate emotions and conditions when acting.

Positive critiquing is more beneficial than negative critiquing.

## **Students will be skilled at...**

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Students will be skilled at...

Creating and performing the role of a believable character.

Working with others to create a theatrical scene.

Performing a monologue in front of an audience.

Positive critiquing fellow student performances.

Speaking in public

## **Academic Vocabulary**

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**ad lib** - create lines or action spontaneously

**apron** - part of the stage projecting past the front curtain line toward the audience.

**backstage** - area of the stage the audience cannot see.

**batten** - piece of wood or metal pipe from which lights, scenery and curtains are hung.

**blackout** - all the stage lights go out all at the same time.

**blocking** - planned movement on the stage.

**business** - a small bit of action. ex. bouncing a ball, making a sandwich

**call board** - place where announcements and notices for the cast and crew are posted.

**center-stage** - C - the middle portion of the stage.

**cheat, cheat out** - aiming your body out toward the audience when talking to another character.

**comedy** - a play that treats situations or characters in a humorous way.; a play with a happy ending.

**counter cross, counter** - move to adjust the stage picture after or in reaction to, another actor's movement.

**cross** - X - movement from one stage area to another.

**cue** - the last word or action of an actor that is the signal for the next line, action of a different actor or light or

sound effect.

**dialogue** - spoken words or lines in a play or skit between two or more actors.

**downstage, down - DS** - portion of a stage that is closest to the audience

**emotional recall** - remembering a feeling or emotion from your own life to apply to a performance.

**entrance** - coming on to the stage

**exit** - leaving the stage

**flat** - luan or canvass covered wooden frame used for scenery.

**full back** - actor facing away from the audience. Use only rarely for special purposes.

**full front** - actor facing the audience directly. Used for important actions and lines.

**the grand curtain, grand** - The main curtain separating the audience from the stage.

**greenroom** - waiting area backstage for actors (almost never painted green)

**house** - place where the audience sits. The front.

**improvisation** - make up dialogue and action as you go, guided by a theme, topic or idea. Acting without rehearsal.

**left - stage left - SL** - the actor's left when facing the audience.

**motivation** - the reason for a character's behavior.

**open, open up** - turn toward the audience.

**pacing** - tempo or speed which a scene is played. Very important in comedy.

**pantomime** - acting without talking or sound effects.

**picking up cues** - actors reacting quickly a cue is given. Not leaving long pauses between dialogue.

**places** - the order for actors to go to their positions at the beginning of a scene.

**playwright** - person who plans and writes plays.

**proscenium, proscenium arch** - the permanent framed opening through which the audience sees the play.

**raked stage** - stage that is tilted towards the audience.

**right, stage right - SR** - the actors right when facing the audience.

**scene** - performance with a beginning, a middle and an end. a section of a play that occurs at one place, at one time.

**sensory recall** - remembering how an object or an action felt, looked, sounded, smelled or tasted.

**stage directions** - script instructions for movement, business, lighting, sound etc. Usually in parenthesis or in

italics.

**stage fright** - fear of performing.

**strike** - take something or everything off a stage.

**teasers** - short curtains hung above the stage that hide (mask) the lights and the battens

**thespian** - another word of an actor. From the ancient Greek Thespis, the first actor who spoke outside of the chorus.

**thrust stage** - part of a stage that extends well past the proscenium arch, beyond the apron.

**tormentors - legs** - narrow curtains on either side of the stage that hide or mask the wings (backstage area).

**tragedy** - a play in which the protagonist fails to achieve their goal. A play with a sad or tragic ending.

**traveler** - mid-stage curtain that can be pulled across the stage.

**troup** - a group of actors, especially a group that travels from place to place.

**upstage, up - US** - portion of the stage that is farthest from the audience, away from the audience.

**vocal variety** - changes in rate, pitch, volume and intensity that help a listener stay interested in a vocal performance.

**wings** - backstage area on either side of the stage.

## **Learning Goal 1**

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Students will demonstrate an understanding of the elements and principles that govern the creation of works of art in dance, music, **theater** and visual arts. They will understand the role, development and influence of the arts throughout history and across cultures.

VPA.1.1.8	All students will demonstrate an understanding of the elements and principles that govern the creation of works of art in dance, music, theatre, and visual art.
VPA.1.2.8	All students will understand the role, development, and influence of the arts throughout history and across cultures.

## **Target 1**

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Students will analyze the structural components of a variety of theater plays and scenes from a variety of Western and non-Western traditions and from different historical eras.

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.
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## Target 2

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Students will be able to determine the effectiveness of various methods of vocal, physical, relaxation and acting techniques used in actor training.

VPA.1.1.8.C.2

Determine the effectiveness of various methods of vocal, physical, relaxation, and acting techniques used in actor training.

## Target 3

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Students will observe and understand that varying vocal rate, pitch, and volume will affect articulation, meaning, mood and character.

VPA.1.1.8.C.3

Differentiate among vocal rate, pitch, and volume, and explain how they affect articulation, meaning, and character.

## Target 4

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Students will observe the defined areas of responsibility (eg. actor, director, producer, set building, lighting, costume, stagehand, etc.) and necessary job skills of the front and back-of-house members of a theater company.

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.

## Target 5

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Students will understand that innovations in dance, music, **theater** and visual art that were caused by the creation of new technologies.

VPA.1.2.8.A.1

Map historical innovations in dance, music, theatre, and visual art that were caused by the creation of new technologies.

## Target 6

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Students will be able to differentiate past and contemporary works of dance, music, **theater**, and visual arts that represent important ideas, issues, and events that are chronicled in the histories of diverse cultures.

VPA.1.2.8.A.2

Differentiate past and contemporary works of dance, music, theatre, and visual art that represent important ideas, issues, and events that are chronicled in the histories of diverse cultures.

## Target 7

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Students will analyze the social, historical, and political impact of artists on culture and the impact of culture on the arts.

VPA.1.2.8.A.3

Analyze the social, historical, and political impact of artists on culture and the impact of culture on the arts.

## Learning Goal 2

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All students will synthesize those skills, media, methods, and technologies appropriate to creating, performing, and/or presenting works of art in dance, music, **theater**, and visual art.

VPA.1.3.8

All students will synthesize those skills, media, methods, and technologies appropriate to creating, performing, and/or presenting works of art in dance, music, theatre, and visual art.

## Target 1

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Students will 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.1.3.8.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.

## Target 2

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Students will create and apply a process for developing believable, multidimensional characters in scripted and improvised performances by combining methods of relaxation, physical and vocal skills, acting techniques, and active listening skills.

VPA.1.3.8.C.2

Create and apply a process for developing believable, multidimensional characters in scripted and improvised performances by combining methods of relaxation, physical and vocal skills, acting techniques, and active listening skills.

## Learning Goal 3

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All students will demonstrate and apply an understanding of arts, philosophy, judgement, and analysis to works of art in dance, music, **theater**, and visual art. Their aesthetic response (Strand A) and critique methodology (Strand B) will reflect this understanding.

VPA.1.4.8

All students will demonstrate and apply an understanding of arts philosophies, judgment, and analysis to works of art in dance, music, theatre, and visual art.

VPA.1.4.8.B

Critique Methodologies



## Target 1

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Students will be able to generate observational and emotional responses to diverse culturally and historically specific works of dance, music, **theater**, and visual art.

VPA.1.4.8.A.1

Generate observational and emotional responses to diverse culturally and historically specific works of dance, music, theatre, and visual art.

## Target 2

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Student will be able to identify works of dance, music, **theater**, and visual art that are used for utilitarian and non-utilitarian purposes.

VPA.1.4.8.A.2

Identify works of dance, music, theatre, and visual art that are used for utilitarian and non-utilitarian purposes.

## Target 3

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Students will be able to distinguish among artistic styles, trends and movements in dance, music, **theater**, and visual art within cultures and historical eras.

VPA.1.4.8.A.3

Distinguish among artistic styles, trends, and movements in dance, music, theatre, and visual art within diverse cultures and historical eras.

## Target 4

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Students will 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.1

Evaluate the effectiveness of a work of art by differentiating between the artist's technical proficiency and the work's content or form.

## Summative Assessment

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The summative assessments will include; a **quiz**, a **written critique** and a **performance**.

## 21st Century Life and Careers

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CRP.K-12.CRP2

Apply appropriate academic and technical skills.

CRP.K-12.CRP2.1

Career-ready individuals readily access and use the knowledge and skills acquired through experience and education to be more productive. They make connections between abstract concepts with real-world applications, and they make correct insights about when it is appropriate to apply the use of an academic skill in a workplace situation.

CRP.K-12.CRP4	Communicate clearly and effectively and with reason.
CRP.K-12.CRP4.1	Career-ready individuals communicate thoughts, ideas, and action plans with clarity, whether using written, verbal, and/or visual methods. They communicate in the workplace with clarity and purpose to make maximum use of their own and others' time. They are excellent writers; they master conventions, word choice, and organization, and use effective tone and presentation skills to articulate ideas. They are skilled at interacting with others; they are active listeners and speak clearly and with purpose. Career-ready individuals think about the audience for their communication and prepare accordingly to ensure the desired outcome.
CRP.K-12.CRP6	Demonstrate creativity and innovation.
CRP.K-12.CRP6.1	Career-ready individuals regularly think of ideas that solve problems in new and different ways, and they contribute those ideas in a useful and productive manner to improve their organization. They can consider unconventional ideas and suggestions as solutions to issues, tasks or problems, and they discern which ideas and suggestions will add greatest value. They seek new methods, practices, and ideas from a variety of sources and seek to apply those ideas to their own workplace. They take action on their ideas and understand how to bring innovation to an organization.
CRP.K-12.CRP12	Work productively in teams while using cultural global competence.
CRP.K-12.CRP12.1	Career-ready individuals positively contribute to every team, whether formal or informal. They apply an awareness of cultural difference to avoid barriers to productive and positive interaction. They find ways to increase the engagement and contribution of all team members. They plan and facilitate effective team meetings.

## **Formative Assessment and Performance Opportunities**

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- peer critique of performance
- self critique of performance
- class discussion
- quizzes
- informal performance
- teacher observation and monitoring
- cooperative behavior

## **Accommodations/Modifications**

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Supports, Accommodations, and Modifications will be provided as stated in IEPs, and 504 Plans as they apply to academic activities, social interactions and performances.

- study guides and vocabulary lists will be given
- recording monologues or scenes if needed
- Use of audio amplification device will be used if needed
- Use special lighting or acoustics
- assignments can be modified
- assessments response may be verbal if needed
- Take more time to complete a task or an assessment

## Unit Resources

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- Introduction to Theater and Performance study guides
- critique sheets

## Interdisciplinary Connections

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LA.RL.8.3	Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.
LA.RL.8.4	Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.
LA.RL.8.6	Analyze how differences in the points of view of the characters and the audience or reader (e.g., created through the use of dramatic irony) create such effects as suspense or humor.
LA.RL.8.7	Evaluate the choices made by the directors or actors by analyzing the extent to which a filmed or live production of a story or drama stays faithful to or departs from the text or script.
LA.SL.8.1	Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 8 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
LA.L.8.3	Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.
TECH.8.1.8	Educational Technology: All students will use digital tools to access, manage, evaluate, and synthesize information in order to solve problems individually and collaborate and to create and communicate knowledge.
TECH.8.1.8.A.CS1	Understand and use technology systems.
TECH.8.1.8.D	Digital Citizenship: Students understand human, cultural, and societal issues related to technology and practice legal and ethical behavior.
TECH.8.1.8.D.1	Understand and model appropriate online behaviors related to cyber safety, cyber bullying, cyber security, and cyber ethics including appropriate use of social media.
TECH.8.1.8.D.CS1	Advocate and practice safe, legal, and responsible use of information and technology.
TECH.8.1.8.E	Research and Information Fluency: Students apply digital tools to gather, evaluate, and use information.