

Introduction to Theatre Unit

By: Ellen Williams

Unit Objective: Students will demonstrate their understanding of the Theatre world and the roles within the theatre world by creating a presentation of their own designs for the play *12 Angry Men*.

Learning Level/Prior Experience: Beginner/None

National Standards:

TH:Cr1.1.HSI

- a. Apply basic research to construct ideas about the visual composition of a drama/theatre work.
- b. Explore the impact of technology on design choices in a drama/theatre work

TH:Cr2.1.HSI

- c. Investigate the collaborative nature of the actor, director, playwright, and designers and explore their interdependent roles in a drama/theatre work.

TH:Re7.1.HSII

- a. Demonstrate an understanding of multiple interpretations of artistic criteria and how each might be used to influence future artistic choices of a drama/theatre work.

TH:Re9.1.HSI

- a. Examine a drama/ theatre work using supporting evidence and criteria, while considering art forms, history, culture, and other disciplines.
- b. Consider the aesthetics of the production elements in a drama/theatre work.
- c. Formulate a deeper understanding and appreciation of a drama/ theatre work by considering its specific purpose or intended audience.

UbD Elements

Big Idea:

Essential Questions: How can we collaborate creatively? Is it possible? What is time management? How important is research in designing a show? How much room to you have to be creative when working with a prescribed script? What skills are crucial in creative collaboration? How can we collaborate effectively?

Key Knowledge and Skills:

Students will know – dramaturgy, director, concept, costume design, set design, stage directions
Student will be able to – collaborate, present, create designs, create concepts

Authentic Performance Skills: Publicity Posters, script reading, presentation

Intro the Theatre Lesson 1

What you already know about theatre.

Objective: Students will become familiar with drama/theatre and its purpose by participating in group “idea boards” and discussion following class activity.

Materials Needed: Poster board for groups (6 groups of 5-6)

Anticipatory Set/Hook (15-20 min): Really, I am the hook as being their “new” teacher, standing in front of the class instead of Mr. Shelley. Play the stupid name game to make sure you are familiar with everyone’s name.

Activity 1 (10-15 min):

Divide the class into groups of 5-6. Every group will get a poster board and markers. Ask the question “what is theatre?” They will get a few min to write words, draw pictures, etc. of what they think drama/theatre is.

Have each group come to the front of the room and “present” what they wrote on their poster to describe what theatre is.

Activity 2 (10-15 min):

Based on their posters facilitate a discussion about the many different aspects and roles in theatre. Explain that acting or performing is only a portion of the types of jobs in the theatre field and that we will be exploring many of these throughout the course of the term. As they give responses, write them up on the board. Ask the students what the different roles in the theatre are.

- actor
- director
- playwright
- designer
- producer
- stage manager
- house manager
- publicist
- dramaturg

Activity 3 (10-15 min):

Have all the students stand up and get in a straight line facing towards the teacher. Then instruct them that without using noise, words, or mouthing anything, they must re-arrange themselves in order based on their birth month. They must use their hands or bodies to communicate and get in line beginning with January babies all the way to those born in December. Show them where January should start and December should end. Instruct them that if there are multiple people born in one month, they need to get in order of the actual day. Tell them that they only have 2 minutes to do this.

When the time is up, have the students each say their birthday and check to see how accurate they were. Have them go back to their seats and ask the students what their experience was with this activity.

What was difficult?

How did you communicate?

Did you see something that someone else was doing that you thought was effective?

How could you improve your time if you were to do this again?

How does this activity relate to theatre or acting?

Talk about how communication is the most important thing with theatre. Without multiple people performing with one another or for one another theatre would not exist. Theatre is a different way of communicating with the world and becoming better people. It is for ourselves as well as for others.

Intro the Theatre Lesson 2

A Script

Lesson Objective: Students will show an understanding of how to read a play and gather information from it by reading aloud, discussing, and preparing to read their own play.

Materials Needed: Scripts of *12 Angry Men* for each student

Hook/Anticipatory Set (5 min): Have scripts on each desk for when they enter the classroom.

Activity 1 (45 min):

Instruction- Inform the class that we are going to be reading a play together. Ask if anyone has ever read a play before. Explain that it is important to have experience reading plays which is why we are going to be doing it in class. Before we start reading I need to explain some things to you.

When you get the script you will see there are some words in italics, these words are called stage directions, they are not meant to be read by the actor but for extra information for the director and actors in preparing this performance. As we read through I will be reading all the italic notes.

There are 15 speaking parts in this play and everyone will have a chance to read. While you are reading a part it is CRUCIAL that you are paying attention so when it is your turn to read you are ready. Everyone needs to be paying attention to the play because you will need to turn in an outline of the plot structure (Review on the board). It is important that we can recognize this in plays as well so we can be better informed about the story as well as have the skill to translate that information into writing plays of our own in the future. We may or may not get through the entire play today. If anyone is falling asleep or not focused you will need to stand up and walk around the room with your script. Everyone needs to be reading the play, not just listening, etc.

Activity 2 (45-55 min): Pass out the scripts and assign parts. Explain that we will change who reads what parts as the play goes along. As we read along take moments to pause and ask questions to make sure they are engaged? Why do you think that character did that? Does that information change your thoughts on the story?

Discussion – How was that experience? What did you learn about plays? Were you able to pick out the plot structure? Do you think this play is important? What kind of message did you get from it? Did you learn anything from it? What do you think the playwright was passionate about? What was he trying to tell his audience? Did you notice that it seemed like a lot of talking? That is because plays are meant to be performed and acted on a stage and a lot of the story comes from the way the actors are physically telling the story, which we can't see just reading it.

Intro the Theatre Lesson 3

A Script Cont.

Lesson Objective: Students will be able to do research for *12 Angry Men* by creating a fact worksheet.

Materials Needed: scripts of *12 Angry Men* for each student, table and 12 chairs, computers for each student

Hook: As students enter have a table at the front of the class with 12 chairs around it, set up like the scene in *12 Angry Men*.

Activity 1 (30-45 min): Assign the parts to those who are willing to read and have them sit at the table as if they were actually performing. Tell them that they don't have to worry about acting or doing anything special, they can just sit in the 12 chairs and read like they did, just in front of the class.

- Finish Reading the Play

Activity 2 (10-15 min): What did you guys like about the play? What surprised you? What did you not like? How is a play different than a book, how is reading it different than reading a book? How is it similar? Were you able to follow the story? Was it entertaining? What were some things it made you think about? How was it different having them seated at the front of the room?

Activity 3 (30-45 min) Explain that they are going to fill the role of a Dramaturg and do some research on the play *Twelve Angry Men*. They need to prepare a "worksheet" with the information that they found, including their sources.

Let's think of things you can research. Ideas of things to research – Playwright – life, work, etc., how the play came about, when it was written, what was happening when it was written in history, what a juries experience would be like on a murder case, etc.

This list of information found needs to be emailed to me at ellen.williams@byu.edu. Your name should be the subject and you should attach what you have found. Needs to be one page long, not including sources. (Write these requirements on the board).

Intro the Theatre Lesson 4

Designing a Show

Lesson Objective: Students will demonstrate understanding of the different jobs in producing theatre by collaborating with their small group and starting their presentation.

Materials Needed: Theatre Jobs PowerPoint, assignment sheet

Hook (10 min): Have the following titles on the board – Time Period/Location, When Written, Playwrights Inspiration, Playwrights extra ideas, Court System, Reasonable Doubt. Instruct the class that everyone needs to come up to the board and write one thing that they discovered in their research of these topics. They can write multiple things if they want.

Discussion (5-7 min): Go through each column and ask questions, discussing how the research was effective where we might have holes and need to do some altering.

Tell me what it was like to do the research? Did it change the way you viewed the play? How? Do you think this information is important?

Transition (1 min): How would the information you found change how you directed this play? Designed this play? Acted in this play? Received this play as an audience member?

Activity 1 (30-40 min): Instruction- Present the PowerPoint with details on each position, director, costumer, set designer, and lighting/sound designer. Make sure they are paying attention so that they can have an educated guess as to what it is they want to do for their assignment. They need to be taking notes on the assignment particularly.

Activity 2 (20-15 min):

Step 1 (Instruction) - Divide the class into groups of 4 if there are uneven numbers have a hair and makeup designer. Tell them that they are to meet together and determine what the message of their production is going to be, what they are going to focus on. What is their concept? How are they going to do their presentation, be creative.

Intro the Theatre Lesson 5: Presentation Preparation

Daily Objective: Students will demonstrate their knowledge of basic design work by researching and doing their own designs of *12 Angry Men*.

Materials Needed: Computer Access for Each Student, Copy of Assignment Sheet for each student

Hook (5 min): Have lap-tops at each desk as the students walk in along with the assignment sheet. Have the students sit with their groups.

Activity 1: Explain that they are going to be working on their presentations based on the metaphor/concept they came up with. If they need to meet up and remind everyone of that concept encourage that. See assignment sheet for details. Your presentation will look like the example one given in class. Work individually and work as a group to prepare your presentation. Monitor how far along everyone is getting on their presentation to determine if you need another day or if you can go ahead and start presentations next week.

12 Angry Men Presentation Assignment

Professionalism (5 pts.) – Students will demonstrate a professional attitude about the assignment, the presentation, and their group members. This means that they will do their job/responsibility and be willing to present with their team members.

Director (5 pts.) – Students will have at least one slide for the Director position. On this slide will be the theme chosen, a concept, and a visual representation of the show. They will provide a description of where their concept, metaphor, and visual representation come from based on the script. Director will show evidence that they assisted the other “jobs” by creating a cohesive production.

Costume Designer (5 pts.) – Students will have at least one slide for the costumer position. Students need to provide three distinct characters costumes explained with visual representation along with a description of why these costumes based on character. Should also have a general description of all the costumes as well. Needs to show evidence of choices based on director’s concept.

Set Designer (5 pts.) - Students will have a least one slide for the set designer position. Included needs to be visual representation as well as individual pictures of set pieces. Evidence needs to be given of rationale for set choices based on concept and research whether in explanation of on slide itself.

Lighting Designer (5 pts.) – Students will have a least one slide for the lighting designer position. They need to provide a general description and image of the lighting “feel” as well as 2 moments in the play where the lighting changes because of action written in the script. Needs to show evidence of choices based on director’s concept.

TOTAL

25 pts.

Intro the Theatre Lesson 6: Presentation Preparation Continued

Lesson Objective: Students will demonstrate their understanding of designing a show by working on their presentations and creating a poster for their production.

Materials Needed: Markers, Crayons, Poster-Board for each group

Hook (20-25 min): Have the class get into their groups and hand a poster to each group. Tell them that they are going to create a “publicity” poster for their particular production of *12 Angry Men*. Tell them that they have about 20 min to work on these and then they will be allowed to work on their presentation if they need to or continue to work on their posters.

Activity 1 (15-20 min): Give students time to finish their presentations and posters.

Intro the Theatre Lesson 7: Presentations

Lesson Objective: Students will demonstrate an understanding for theatre by presenting a pitch about their own production of *12 Angry Men*.

Materials Needed: Rubric for each group for grading. Projector, and computer

Hook (0 min): Have all the posters hung up around the wall and allow students to walk around the room and look at them before the bell rings.

Activity 1 (50-60 min): Remind the class of the importance of respectful audience members. What do I mean by that? Make sure that they understand the appropriate behavior for these presentations. Have each group present. Make sure that you give each group positive feedback, pointing out the things that you really enjoyed or were really unique.

Intro the Theatre Lesson 8: Presentations

Lesson Objective: Students will demonstrate an understanding for theatre by presenting a pitch about their own production of *12 Angry Men*.

Materials Needed: Rubric for each group for grading. Projector, and computer

Hook (0 min): Have all the posters hung up around the wall and allow students to walk around the room and look at them before the bell rings.

Activity 1 (50-60 min): Remind the class of the importance of respectful audience members. What do I mean by that? Make sure that they understand the appropriate behavior for these presentations. Have each group present. Make sure that you give each group positive feedback, pointing out the things that you really enjoyed or were really unique.