**Unit: Stage Terminology**

*By Caitlin Cotten*

**Time:** 80 minute lesson

**Experience level:** Beginner

**Unit Objective:** Students will be able to demonstrate their ability to identify stage directions, parts of the stage and stage types by completing a stage terminology test.

**National Core Arts Theatre 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.

**Lesson Outline:**

**Lesson1: Introduction to Stage Directions**

**Lesson Objective:** Students will be introduced to stage directions through participating in the stage directions drawing game.

**Lesson 2: Types of Stages**

**Lesson Objective:** Students will demonstrate their understanding of the different stage types by turning in stage diagrams.

**Lesson 3: Parts of a Stage environment**

**Lesson Objective:** Students will demonstrate their understanding of the parts of a stage by completing an auditorium tour sheet.

**Lesson 4: Review of Stage Environment**

**Lesson Objective:** Students will demonstrate their understanding of stage environment elements by participating in a review of the stage environment.

**Lesson 5: Review of Stage Directions, Types and Parts of the Stage Environment**

**Lesson Objective:** Students will review stage directions, types and stage environment by participating in a series of review activities.

**Lesson 6: Test Day**

**Lesson Objective:** Students will demonstrate their ability to identify stage directions, stage types and parts of the stage environment by completing a stage terminology test.

**Lesson1: Introduction to Stage Directions**

**Lesson Objective:** Students will be introduced to stage directions through participating in the stage directions drawing game.

**Materials**

* Markers
* White board
* White board markers
* Masking tape

***Step 1: Warm Up—Wah***

Have students stand in a circle. Someone is named the sensei of the group. They say “bow to your sensei” and everyone bows while saying “wah.” Then the sensei puts his hands together and puts them over his head and then says “wah” as his arms come down, pointing to and making eye contact with another person. That person says “wah” as they put her arms (with palms together) above her head. The two people on either side of her say “wah” as they ‘chop’ either side of her, bringing their arms with palms together in by her side. Then the middle person says “wah” as she brings her hands down, pointing to and making eye contact with another person in the circle.

The point is to try and go as fast as possible, maintaining a rhythm. A person can get out of the game by not being fast enough to say wah after someone passes it to them, or if you forget to side swipe someone or you don’t say wah.

Play in two circles if the class is large. Each circle plays to the top two or three and then have a championship game. The top two win.

Ask: Why would we play a game like this in a drama class?

***Step 2: Stage Directions***

Draw a diagram of the stage on the board. Tell the students to get a piece of paper out and draw the same thing. Ask them if they know how stage directions work? Where is the left part of the stage, where is the right?

Tell them that it depends on where you’re sitting, but right now we’re concerned with “stage” when you say “stage” you mean the point of view of the actor. “House” is the point of view of the audience.

Now, in groups see if you can’t place these directions in the correct place: **CS, US, DS, CR, CL, UR, UL, DR, DL. House Right House Left**Where do you think down stage is and where do you think up stage is? HINT: **Stages used to be raked. The back of the stage was higher than the front of the stage.**

***Step 3: Check answers***

Have students help you fill out the stage on the board by handing a dry erase marker to a volunteering student. Have the class check their diagram with the one on the board.

***Step 4: Drawing Game***

Have students get up and get a marker. Call out different directions and have them place a different symbol are mark on each place.

Have students come up to the whiteboard and put the symbols in the correct place. Check to make sure they’re in the right space.

***Step 5: “If you are . . .” stage directions game***

Use masking tape to make a 9 square grid on the classroom floor. Have the students sit in their seats. Tell them that you’re going to call out something and a stage direction. If that something applies to them, then they get up and stand in that stage direction’s box. Every time something applies to them, tell them they should move to the stage direction.

Ex: Everyone who is wearing shoes with laces, go to Down Left.

***Step 6: Closure:***

Have students put their names and period on the paper and hand them in. They’ll get a grade for completion and are expected to keep them as notes afterwards.

Tell your neighbor the difference between stage and house.

**Lesson 2: Types of Stages**

**Lesson Objective:** Students will demonstrate their understanding of the different stage types by turning in stage diagrams.

**Materials**

* A big round piece of string or rope, enough for everyone to hang on to.

***Step1: Warm Up—Zip, Zap, Zop***

Have students stand in a circle. One student begins and says “zip” as she slaps her hands, points to a person and makes eye contact with that person. The second person does the same thing but say zap and the third person says zop. Then the whole sequence starts again.

If you say the wrong word at the wrong time or don’t receive the zip/zap/zop, then you’re out. Play until there are two people left.

Ask: Why would we play this game in a drama class?

***Step 2: Review of Stage directions***

Have students help you fill out a basic stage diagram (including house directions) on the board. **Stage directions are from whose perspective? How about the House directions?**

***Step 3: Different stage shapes***

Write on the board: **Arena Theatre/Theatre in the Round; Thrust Stage/3/4 Stage; End Stage, Proscenium Stage**

**Have audience signs you can put around the students**

Have students Stand in a circle and each hold on to the piece of string in a circle.

Ask them to move certain ways in order to configure into different stage shapes and put the audience around them. Name each stage shape they’ve made and ask them where the audience is.

***Step 4: Notes on the Stage Shapes***

Have them go back to their seats, hand out paper. Have them fold it into 4 parts. Label the squares 1, 2, 3, 4.

On the board, draw a thrust stage. Label stage and audience. Have the students do the same. Write what it is on the square. Do the same for each stage type.

***Step 5: Review***

Call out a stage type or where the audience sits and have students in groups come up with the answers.

***Step 6: Stage Directions Review***

Do the “If you are. . . “ stage directions activity, only this time have a student give the commands.

***Step 7: Closure***

Have students tell you the four types of stage.

**Lesson 3: Parts of a Stage environment**

**Lesson Objective:** Students will demonstrate their understanding of the parts of a stage by completing an auditorium tour sheet.

**Materials:**

* Auditorium labels and descriptions

***Step 1: Warm-up—Wah***

Review Wah with the students and play a round.

***Step 2: Review Stage Types***

Draw different stage type diagrams on the board with where the audience sits, have the students name the stages for you.

***Step 3: Stage areas—auditorium tour***

Take students to the auditorium. Tell them they will be going on a tour. Have the eight stage parts listed below labeled in the auditorium with a brief description. Have the students bring a piece of paper and pencil to the auditorium. Have them number their paper 1-8. Take them to each place in the auditorium, tell them about it and then have them write down what you say/what is written on the label. Let them explore each area, as it is appropriate.

**Stage: Wings**

**Apron**

**Legs**

**Grand drape**

**Proscenium**

**Orchestra pit**

**Light rail**

**House:**

**Light booth**

***Step 5: Review the Stage Parts***

Split students into groups and ask students what something is by either giving the definition and then asking them to either point out and name the thing or to give the function/what it is.

Ask: Why do you think this part of the stage exists? How do you think it is used in a performance setting?

***Step 7: Closure***

Remind the students of when the test will be.

**Lesson 4: Review of Stage Environment**

**Lesson Objective:** Students will demonstrate their understanding of stage environment elements by participating in a review of the stage environment.

**Materials:**

* Label the Auditorium matching sheet (turn it in)

***Step 1: Warm-Up—Sound and Movement Telephone***

Have students stand in a circle. This activity is like traditional telephone but instead of saying a sentence to your neighbor, you do a sound and movement. Then the person next to you has to try and copy you exactly. This goes from person to person until the last person left is the originator of the movement. Have them repeat the original movement in order to see how it’s changed.

Ask: Why do you think we’d do an activity like this in a drama class?

***Step 2: Label the Auditorium Activity***

Split the class into 8 groups. Each group gets a label for a part of the stage environment. Their job is to go into the auditorium and label that part of the stage. After they’ve labeled the part, they need to sit in the auditorium with their group.

Check with the class to see if they’ve labeled the correct thing.

Now pass out the definitions/uses for each part of the stage. They need to now match the definition with the labeled part.

Check with the group and see if it’s correct.

Ask each group to say why that part is useful in a show setting, or how it might be used during a performance.

***Step 3: Label the Auditorium Matching Sheet***

Each student finds their own seat in the auditorium, not next to anyone. Complete the Auditorium matching sheet.

Find someone near you and compare answers. Change what you think might be wrong.

***Step 4: Correct the matching sheets***

Correct the sheets and have the students turn them in.

***Step 5 \*If there’s time, practice stage directions on the actual stage***

***Step 6: Closure***

Quiz them as a group on parts of the auditorium.

**Lesson 5: Review of Stage Directions, Types and Parts of the Stage Environment**

**Lesson Objective:** Students will review stage directions, types and stage environment by participating in a series of review activities.

**Materials:**

* **Stage Types worksheet**

***Step 1: Warm Up—Exaggerated sound and movement circle***

It’s like sound and movement telephone, except you try to make the sound/movement just a tiny bit more exaggerated than the person in front of you.

***Step 2: Review Stage Types***

* In their groups, have the students brain storm as many of the names of the different stage types (arena stage, proscenium stage, thrust stage, end stage) as they can come up with.
* Ask for the names of the four types, write them on the board.
* Next, see if they can come up with where the audience sits on each of these stage types.
* Draw the stage Types on the board and where the audience goes.

***Step 3: Stage Types Worksheet***

* Give them the stage types worksheet. Tell them they’re going to try doing this all by themselves first.
* Give them a chance to talk to their groups
* Go over the sheet as a class
* Tell them to keep this until walkaway day to use it to study and then they’ll turn it in with their walkaway

***Step 4: Review Stage Directions***

* Draw the stage directions diagram on the board. And write the directions on the board next to it. **Whose perspective are stage directions from?**
* Tell the students to get out a piece of paper and try to fill out the diagram by themselves.
* As a group, compare answers.
* As a class, fill in the diagram on the board.

***Step 5: Review of it all Relay***

* Split the class into 3 team (right, center and left)
* Each team has a different color of marker. A team member will line up behind the first tape line on the floor in front of the desks. You will ask a question and they’ll run to the board and whoever gets the correct answer first, wins a point for their team.

***Step 7: Closure***

Remind them of the test, encourage them to study the two sheets they made/filled out today and the matching sheet you just handed back.

**Lesson 6: Test Day**

**Lesson Objective:** Students will demonstrate their ability to identify stage directions, stage types and parts of the stage environment by completing a stage terminology test.

**Materials:**

* The test

***Step 1: Warm Up—“If you are . . .” stage directions game***

***Step 2: Last minute questions/review***

Maybe quiz them just a bit on the stage environment and ask if they have any questions.

***Step 3: The Test***

Hand out the test and have them put their names on the test very first thing. Read the instructions. This is an individual test. When they’re done, put it into the appropriate box and sit quietly at their desks.

***Step 4: Group’s Favorite Game***

If there’s time after everyone’s finished. Have them come to the circle and play one of the group’s favorite activities/games they’ve learned thus far.

Audience Labels for Lesson 2

Audience

Audience

Audience

Audience

Stage Labels/Descriptions for Lesson 3 and use the same except cut the label and description from each other for Lesson 4 team activity.

Wings

The side areas of back stage.

Apron

The part of the stage in front of the proscenium, often curved.

Legs

Curtains on the sides of the stage. They are moveable and are meant to hide the wings

Grand Drape

The front curtain.

Proscenium Arch

The “picture frame” of a proscenium stage. The grand drape hangs behind it.

Orchestra Pit

Concealed under the apron with a moveable floor. The place where the orchestra and conductor play during a musical.

Light Rail

Can be above the stage and in front of the stage and there may be several in both areas. The pole where lights hang from, that can move up and down by a pulley system

Light Booth

Place where the light board and sound equipment are kept. Also where the lightboard operator and stage manager sit during a show

Label the Auditorium Matching Sheet for Lesson 4

**Label the Auditorium**

**Name: Period**

**Match the part of the auditorium/stage with the correct definition or use.**

1. The part of the stage in front of the proscenium, often curved.
2. The front curtain
3. The side areas of backstage
4. Concealed under the apron with a moveable floor. The place where the orchestra and conductor play during a musical
5. The “picture frame” of a proscenium stage. The grand drape hangs behind it.
6. The pole where lights hang from, that can move up and down by a pulley system. Can be above the stage and in front of the stage and there may be several in both areas.
7. Curtains on the sides of the stage. They are moveable and are meant to hide the wings.
8. Place where the light board and sound equipment are kept. Also where the light board operator and stage manager sit during a show.
9. **Legs**
10. **Light booth**
11. **Grand Drape**
12. **Wings**
13. **Light Rail**
14. **Orchestra Pit**
15. **Proscenium Arch**
16. **Apron**

Stage types sheet from Lesson 5

**Stage Types**

Name: Period:

1. **2.**

**3. 4.**

Sample Test for Stage Directions/Types and Environment. Draw a stage directions diagram on another sheet to make a third page. Use the letters from #11 to label it. Answers are bolded.

**Stage Terminology Test**

**Name: Period:**

1. Stage directions are from whose perspective?
   1. **The actor**
   2. The lightboard operator
   3. The legs
   4. The house
2. The side areas of backstage are called
   1. the light booth
   2. the orchestra pit
   3. **the wings**
   4. the light rail
3. The proscenium arch is
   1. The area under the stage where the orchestra and conductor play during a musical.
   2. **The picture frame of a stage.**
   3. The curtains on the side of the stage, meant to cover the wings.
   4. The place where the light board operator and the stage manager sit during a production.
4. The part of the stage in front of the proscenium arch is called:
   1. The grad drape
   2. The proscenium arch
   3. The wings
   4. **The apron**
5. This is the kind of stage we have at Willowcreek, it has a “picture frame” around it. It is called
   1. an arena stage
   2. a thrust stage
   3. **a proscenium stage**
   4. a three-quarter stage
6. Where does the audience sit in an arena stage?
   1. **All around the stage**
   2. Just at the end
   3. There is no audience in an arena theater.
   4. On three sides.
7. The grand drape is
   1. The pole that light fixtures hang from above the stage.
   2. **The front curtain**
   3. The part of the stage in front of the proscenium, usually curved.
   4. The side areas of backstage.
8. House directions (house right and house left) are from whose perspective?
   1. The director’s
   2. **The audience**
   3. The stage manager’s
   4. The playwright’s
9. The place where the light board is kept and the light board operator and stage manager sit during a production is called:
   1. The grand drape
   2. The wings
   3. **The light booth**
   4. The apron
10. The orchestra pit is
    1. **Concealed under the stage and is where the orchestra and conductor sit during a musical.**
    2. The place where the light board and the operator and the stage manager sit during a performance.
    3. The “picture frame” of the stage
    4. The front curtain
11. **Label the stage diagram with the stage directions**
    1. Center Stage
    2. Center Right
    3. Center Left
    4. Up Center
    5. Up Right
    6. Up Left
    7. Down Right
    8. Down Left
    9. Down Center