

PLUMSTED TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT

Aligned to Common Core State Standards/New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards as Applicable

Course Title: American Musical Theater

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Content Area: Fine and Performing Arts

Grade Level(s): 9-12

Course Description: This full-semester course will introduce students to the basic elements of formal theater with a focus on the study of acting and the role of music in theater. Role-playing, spontaneous improvisation, and basic beginner techniques will be studied, fostering individual creativity and self-confidence. Students also will learn about basic staging, properties, set design, and the importance of these elements in the production of a performance. Scenes and plays will be analyzed for character development, stage directions, lyrical content, and set design. Stage and screen performances of the past and present will be studied in congruence with students' own work. Students will be guided towards a public presentation of their work at the end of the semester.

Date Created: May 2014

Date Approved by Plumsted Township Board of Education: August 2014

Pacing Guide

Unit 1 Introduction to Broadway Music	2 Weeks
Unit 2 Elements of Acting	3 Weeks
Unit 3 Literary Elements Found in Musicals	3 Weeks
Unit 4 Structures of Music and Drama	4 Weeks
Unit 5 Creating a Musical	4 Weeks

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Unit 1

Introduction to Broadway Music

Unit Summary: Using the PBS series as a guide, students will explore the origins of the American Musical. Composers such as George Gershwin’s who composed his legendary score for Porgy and Bess; the thrill of Oklahoma!’s opening night; comedienne Fanny Brice’s heart-grabbing performance of “My Man.” From the titillating yet artful spectacle of The Ziegfeld Follies to Ethel Merman’s brassy rendition of “I’ve Got Rhythm,” and from Julie Taymor’s visionary staging of The Lion King to a behind-the-scenes look at Wicked’s opening night, the series enlightens, educates, and offers unique insight into this truly American art form.

Interdisciplinary Connections/Content Area Integrations: Social Studies

NJCCCS	
1. 1.1C Grade 12 CPI 01	-Analyze examples of theatre’s influence on history and history’s influence on theatre in Western and non-Western theatre traditions.
2. 1.2A Grade 12 CPI 01	-Determine how dance, music, theatre, and visual art have influenced world cultures throughout history.
3. 1.2A Grade 12 CPI 02	-Justify the impact of innovations in the arts (e.g., the availability of music online) on societal norms and habits of mind in various historical eras.
4. 1.3C Grade 12 CPI 02	-Create and evaluate performances by citing evidence of specific physical choices, sustained vocal technique, and clearly motivated actions.
5. 1.4A Grade 12 CPI 01	-Use contextual clues to differentiate between unique and common properties and to discern the cultural implications of works of dance, music, theatre, and visual art.
6. 1.4A Grade 12 CPI 02	-Speculate on the artist’s intent, using discipline-specific arts terminology and citing embedded clues to substantiate the hypothesis.
7. 1.4A Grade 12 CPI 03	-Develop informed personal responses to an assortment of artworks across the four arts disciplines (dance, music, theatre, and visual art), using historical significance, craftsmanship, cultural context, and originality as criteria for assigning value to the works.
8. 1.4A Grade 12 CPI	-Evaluate how exposure to various cultures influences individual, emotional, intellectual, and kinesthetic responses to artwork.

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04	
9. 1.4B Grade 12 CPI 01	-Formulate criteria for arts evaluation using the principles of positive critique and observation of the elements of art and principles of design, and use the criteria to evaluate works of dance, music, theatre, visual, and multimedia artwork from diverse cultural contexts and historical eras.
10. 1.4B Grade 12 CPI 02	-Evaluate how an artist’s technical proficiency may affect the creation or presentation of a work of art, as well as how the context in which a work is performed or shown may impact perceptions of its significance/meaning.
11. 1.4B Grade 12 CPI 03	-Determine the role of art and art-making in a global society by analyzing the influence of technology on the visual, performing, and multimedia arts for consumers, creators, and performers around the world.

Essential Questions:

1. What is Irving Berlin’s song “My New York” trying to express? What’s the point of view about the city and, by extension, America?
2. What made New York City a likely place for the emergence of new American art forms like the Broadway musical?
3. In what ways were Berlin’s songs expressions of continuity in American culture? In what ways did they signify change in American culture?
4. During a major historical event, like the Depression, we often turn to historians to try and understand the period. What do we learn when we turn to poets, songwriters, comedians, or filmmakers? What do they have to tell us? What do you think inspires these artists? Why might their perspectives be important?
5. Why do you think some producers, directors, writers, and performers used musicals in the 1930s as vehicles for criticizing the government? Do you think it is as common today? Why/why not? What different political climates exist today for art and free expression?

Instructional Outcomes:

What will the students learn?

1. Students will begin to understand that New York’s infusion of various cultures informed the art form that became the American Musical.
2. Students will begin to learn what composers and producers influenced the art form.
3. Understand how Showboat became the turning point in American Musicals, from Vaudeville variety shows to the format we know today.

Formative Assessments:

1. Daily participation
2. Biographical article of Broadway actor
3. Journal entries
4. Individual goal setting

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Summative Assessments:

1. Song composition
2. Slang lyricist song composition
3. Formal critique

Suggested Learning Activities:

1. Watch the PBS series
2. Complete the activities:
 - My New York
 - Performer biographies
 - Slang lyricist composition
 - Brother Can You Spare a Dime
 - Daily news conversion to a musical

Curriculum Development Resources:

BROADWAY: THE AMERICAN MUSICAL ONLINE

www.pbs.org/broadway

A Connecticut Yankee, (original cast recording). Decca Broadway, 2001.

American Theatre Wing

www.americantheatrewing.org

The Guide to Musical Theatre

www.nodanw.com

Internet Broadway Database

www.ibdb.com

The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts

www.nypl.org/research/lpa/lpa.htm

The Rodgers and Hammerstein Organization

www.rnh.com

Tams-Witmark Music Library

www.tams-witmark.com

Theatre Development Fund

www.tdf.org

Unit 2

Elements of Acting

Unit Summary: To improvise is to perform a scene or to portray a character without rehearsing or using a script. Improvisation emphasizes spontaneity, creativity, and imagination. It helps actors gain confidence and learn timing, a key aspect of executing lines and actions.

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The two basic approaches to improvised storytelling are the character-centered approach and the situation-centered approach. The character-centered approach focuses on a character or a group of characters that faces various situations. In the situation-centered approach, the focus is on the situation itself.

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NJCCCS	
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2. 1.2A Grade 12 CPI 01	-Determine how dance, music, theatre, and visual art have influenced world cultures throughout history.
3. 1.2A Grade 12 CPI 02	-Justify the impact of innovations in the arts (e.g., the availability of music online) on societal norms and habits of mind in various historical eras.
4. 1.3C Grade 12 CPI 02	-Create and evaluate performances by citing evidence of specific physical choices, sustained vocal technique, and clearly motivated actions.
5. 1.4A Grade 12 CPI 01	-Use contextual clues to differentiate between unique and common properties and to discern the cultural implications of works of dance, music, theatre, and visual art.
6. 1.4A Grade 12 CPI 02	-Speculate on the artist’s intent, using discipline-specific arts terminology and citing embedded clues to substantiate the hypothesis.
7. 1.4A Grade 12 CPI 03	-Develop informed personal responses to an assortment of artworks across the four arts disciplines (dance, music, theatre, and visual art), using historical significance, craftsmanship, cultural context, and originality as criteria for assigning value to the works.
8. 1.4A Grade 12 CPI 04	-Evaluate how exposure to various cultures influences individual, emotional, intellectual, and kinesthetic responses to artwork.
9. 1.4B Grade 12 CPI 01	-Formulate criteria for arts evaluation using the principles of positive critique and observation of the elements of art and principles of design, and use the criteria to evaluate works of dance, music, theatre, visual, and multimedia artwork from diverse cultural contexts and historical eras.
10. 1.4B Grade 12 CPI	-Evaluate how an artist’s technical proficiency may affect the creation or presentation of a work of art, as well as how the context in which a work is

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02	performed or shown may impact perceptions of its significance/meaning.
11. 1.4B Grade 12 CPI 03	-Determine the role of art and art-making in a global society by analyzing the influence of technology on the visual, performing, and multimedia arts for consumers, creators, and performers around the world.

Essential Questions:

1. What elements create a full acting picture?
2. What physical elements are required to act?

Instructional Outcomes:
What will the students learn?

1. Begin to identify the differences in small physical gestures on mood, theme, and definitions.
2. Understand a motivated sequence.
3. Reinforce improvisation basic skills such as interpretation of a scene, voice development, physical movement, and the basics of timing.
4. To begin properly functioning as a team.
5. 5. To begin developing a schema for establishing a character through visualization, stage settings, actions, and props.

Formative Assessments:

1. Daily participation
2. Individual student goal setting
3. As I See it...
4. Critique

Summative Assessments:

1. Acting project
2. Formal critique

Suggested Learning Activities:

1. The Real Story Behind the 3 Little Pigs
2. Situational comedy skit
3. Character centered skit
4. Motivated sequence
5. Photographs (acting game)

Curriculum Development Resources:

1. The stage and the school

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Unit 3

Literary Elements Found in Musicals

Unit Summary: This unit invites students to use their understanding of modern experiences with digital technology to make active meaning of famous texts, by asking students to create their own modern interpretation of specific events from the drama. Students need to be able to draw their own inferences regarding the themes, mood, and meaning of Shakespearean dramas. Within that process, students will have varying methods to demonstrate their knowledge of these themes, moods, and meanings. Using digital technology will allow students to differentiate their presentation process, thus making the experience more meaningful.

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3. 1.2A Grade 12 CPI 02	-Justify the impact of innovations in the arts (e.g., the availability of music online) on societal norms and habits of mind in various historical eras.
4. 1.3C Grade 12 CPI 02	-Create and evaluate performances by citing evidence of specific physical choices, sustained vocal technique, and clearly motivated actions.
5. 1.4A Grade 12 CPI 01	-Use contextual clues to differentiate between unique and common properties and to discern the cultural implications of works of dance, music, theatre, and visual art.
6. 1.4A Grade 12 CPI 02	-Speculate on the artist’s intent, using discipline-specific arts terminology and citing embedded clues to substantiate the hypothesis.
7. 1.4A Grade 12 CPI 03	-Develop informed personal responses to an assortment of artworks across the four arts disciplines (dance, music, theatre, and visual art), using historical significance, craftsmanship, cultural context, and originality as criteria for assigning value to the works.
8. 1.4A Grade 12 CPI 04	-Evaluate how exposure to various cultures influences individual, emotional, intellectual, and kinesthetic responses to artwork.

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9. 1.4B Grade 12 CPI 01	-Formulate criteria for arts evaluation using the principles of positive critique and observation of the elements of art and principles of design, and use the criteria to evaluate works of dance, music, theatre, visual, and multimedia artwork from diverse cultural contexts and historical eras.
10. 1.4B Grade 12 CPI 02	-Evaluate how an artist’s technical proficiency may affect the creation or presentation of a work of art, as well as how the context in which a work is performed or shown may impact perceptions of its significance/meaning.
10. 1.4B Grade 12 CPI 03	-Determine the role of art and art-making in a global society by analyzing the influence of technology on the visual, performing, and multimedia arts for consumers, creators, and performers around the world.

Essential Questions:

1. Can digital technology shape our view of a particular subject?
2. Can digital technology provide insight to the themes, moods, and technical elements of a drama?
3. Can universal themes be found in the arts, culture, history, and writings throughout history?

Instructional Outcomes:

What will the students learn?

1. Students explore how varying digital technologies can demonstrate their views.
2. Students garner experience giving in-depth presentations in front of an audience.
3. Students will explore the literary elements of the character, conflict, resolution, and setting.
4. Analyze how the digital technology shapes opinion.

Formative Assessments:

1. Daily log-ins
2. Critiques
3. Character archetypes chart

Summative Assessments:

1. Digital portfolio

Suggested Learning Activities:

1. Ask the students to brainstorm which types of digital technology they use in their daily lives.
2. Prompt students by asking them about the types of technology they carry on their person, use at home, use at the grocery store, etc.
3. Ask students to generate details and explore the technologies, encourage them to make connections to the ways that humans are involved with the technology. Establish that no matter how efficient technology becomes, its use requires humans who can write, speak, read, listen, and understand.

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4. Ask students to imagine what would happen if the play were set in a modern-day world and technology was available to the characters.
5. Students can use their journals to explore the questions and then share their work with the group.
6. Students will create a technology profile for the characters they have been assigned.
7. Students will work in their groups to create the character profiles.
8. Pass out copies of the modern-day interpretation projects handout and the rubric for modern-day interpretation projects.
9. Read through the list of options and explain that students can also propose their own projects using one of the technologies that the class brainstormed. Students will complete the projects in small groups.

Curriculum Development Resources:

1. The stage and the school
2. www.readwritethink.org

Unit 4

Structures of Music and Drama

Interdisciplinary Connections/Content Area Integrations: Social Studies

NJCCCS	
1. 1.1C Grade 12 CPI 01	-Analyze examples of theatre’s influence on history and history’s influence on theatre in Western and non-Western theatre traditions.
2. 1.2A Grade 12 CPI 01	-Determine how dance, music, theatre, and visual art have influenced world cultures throughout history.
3. 1.2A Grade 12 CPI 02	-Justify the impact of innovations in the arts (e.g., the availability of music online) on societal norms and habits of mind in various historical eras.
4. 1.3C Grade 12 CPI 01	-Create plays that include well-structured plots and subplots, clear thematic intent, original characters, and technical theatrical elements appropriate to a variety of theatrical genres.
5. 1.3C Grade 12 CPI 02	-Create and evaluate performances by citing evidence of specific physical choices, sustained vocal technique, and clearly motivated actions.
6. 1.4A Grade 12 CPI 01	-Use contextual clues to differentiate between unique and common properties and to discern the cultural implications of works of dance, music, theatre, and visual art.
7. 1.4A Grade 12 CPI	-Speculate on the artist’s intent, using discipline-specific arts terminology and

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02	citing embedded clues to substantiate the hypothesis.
8. 1.4A Grade 12 CPI 03	-Develop informed personal responses to an assortment of artworks across the four arts disciplines (dance, music, theatre, and visual art), using historical significance, craftsmanship, cultural context, and originality as criteria for assigning value to the works.
9. 1.4A Grade 12 CPI 04	-Evaluate how exposure to various cultures influences individual, emotional, intellectual, and kinesthetic responses to artwork.
10. 1.4B Grade 12 CPI 03	-Determine the role of art and art-making in a global society by analyzing the influence of technology on the visual, performing, and multimedia arts for consumers, creators, and performers around the world.

Essential Questions:

1. What is the drama with drama?
2. What historical and cultural ideals shape drama in various time periods?

Instructional Outcomes:

What will the students learn?

1. Students will explore the various elements that ultimately define dramatic performance.
2. Students will explore various dramatic forms throughout a range of time periods.

Formative Assessments:

1. Individual and group goal setting
2. Log-in forms
3. Critique

Summative Assessments:

1. Recital hall presentation

Suggested Learning Activities:

1. Building an acoustically perfect hall in miniature.
2. Exploring the physics of sound waves through various methods.
3. In our school auditorium—create a lab to test how various amplification devices work on stage...including, basic voice, instruments, usage of megaphones, microphones, etc.

Curriculum Development Resources:

1. The stage and the school

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Unit 5
Creating a Musical

Unit Summary: In this unit, students will explore the various roles necessary to create their own musical production.

Interdisciplinary Connections/Content Area Integrations: Social Studies

NJCCCS	
1. 1.1C Grade 12 CPI 03	-Apply the basic physical and chemical properties (e.g., light, electricity, color, paint, scenic construction, costumes, makeup, and audio components) inherent in technical theatre to safely implement theatre design.
2. 1.3C Grade 12 CPI 02	-Create and evaluate performances by citing evidence of specific physical choices, sustained vocal technique, and clearly motivated actions.
3. 1.4A Grade 12 CPI 01	-Use contextual clues to differentiate between unique and common properties and to discern the cultural implications of works of dance, music, theatre, and visual art.
4. 1.4A Grade 12 CPI 02	-Speculate on the artist’s intent, using discipline-specific arts terminology and citing embedded clues to substantiate the hypothesis.
5. 1.4A Grade 12 CPI 03	-Develop informed personal responses to an assortment of artworks across the four arts disciplines (dance, music, theatre, and visual art), using historical significance, craftsmanship, cultural context, and originality as criteria for assigning value to the works.

Essential Questions:

1. Who’s job is it anyway?
2. How does the show go on?

Instructional Outcomes:
What will the students learn?

1. Students will explore the various roles and responsibilities found in producing a musical.
2. Students will develop their own musical and produce the various elements necessary to put on a performance.

Formative Assessments:

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1. Script
2. Costume plot
3. Set plot
4. Mock set
5. Blocking plan
6. Group and individual goal setting
7. Project management meeting notes

Summative Assessments:

1. Musical production
2. Formal critique

Suggested Learning Activities:

1. Students will explore the various roles in a musical production.
2. Students will report back to the class the various job descriptions.
3. Students will vote on a theme and create a production management team.
4. Students will create a musical, write a script, create costumes, write lyrics, create scenery, and perform a short show.

Curriculum Development Resources:

1. The stage and the school