

Theater

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FIFTH GRADE

Fifth Grade (HP 6)

Title Shakespeare's Words

Time Frame One 60-minute class period

Overview After researching online for words created by William Shakespeare, students play a game where teams compete to draw visual representations of a word and have their teammates guess the word.

Standards Historical and Cultural Perspective, Creative Expression

Arts Benchmarks	
Identify major works of great playwrights and recognize contributions of prominent theatre artists.	TH-HP-M6
Demonstrate self-expression and various emotions individually and in groups.	TH-CE-M1

Foundation Skills Communication, Linking and Generating Knowledge

Student Understandings

Students identify major works of great playwrights and recognize contributions of prominent theatre artists. As they analyze the contributions of prominent theatre artists, students develop an understanding of the common and unique characteristics of contributions of prominent theatre artists.

Materials and Equipment

index cards and a list of Shakespearean words; possibly access to the Internet

Prior Knowledge

Students should be familiar with playing "picture charades."

Sample Lesson

Begin the class by explaining to the students that many of our modern words and a number of common phrases were created by William Shakespeare. He created words we recognize clearly such as majestic, blushing, and swagger. These are just a few examples, but there are over 2,000 possible words attributed to Shakespeare. In the Resources section of this lesson are links to sites providing lists of words created by Shakespeare. Using one or more of these sites, the students create cards with one of Shakespeare's words on each of them. Be sure to use words that can be represented in drawing form. Allow students five to ten minutes to formulate the index cards. It is also possible to create the cards before class and have them ready in order to save time.

The students participate in an activity where they form four teams to compete against each other. Each team must select a person to draw and two people to guess what word is being illustrated per round. For instance, if the word were eyeball, which is a word created by Shakespeare, the person drawing may draw a picture of an eye and a basketball. The people guessing would combine the two pictures to form the word "eyeball." If they guess correctly in the span of 30 seconds to one minute, they get a point. If they do not, each opposing team gets a chance to guess for a point. This process repeats until each person has had two or three turns. The team with the highest score wins. In the process, the students have identified words created by Shakespeare. This should take about 30 to 40 minutes to complete.

Use the remaining class time to lead a discussion with the students about what they learned about Shakespeare and his words. Students discuss how seeing the words drawn out helped them understand the meanings of the words better.

Sample Assessments

Formative

Students respond to the following questions in class discussion:

- What are some words that Shakespeare created?
- How can visual representations help us better understand word meanings?
- How many words did Shakespeare create?

Resources

The following links give information about Shakespeare and the words he created. Some are simply information, while others are actual lists of words:

<http://shakespeare.mit.edu/works.html>

<http://www.op97.k12.il.us/LAB/shakespeare/words/shakewords.html>

<http://jumbiewatch.blogspot.com/2007/08/words-created-by-william-shakespeare.html>

<http://webtech.kennesaw.edu/jcheek3/shakespeare.htm>

Fifth Grade (HP 5)

Title Asian Performance Art

Time Frame Two 60-minute classes

Overview Students investigate a given form of Asian performance art and create a program insert.

Standards Historical and Cultural Perspective, Creative Expression

Arts Benchmarks	
Describe and compare careers in theatre arts and roles of theatre artists in various cultures and time periods.	TH-HP-M5
Compare/contrast and demonstrate various performance methods and styles.	TH-CE-M5

Foundation Skills Communication, Problem Solving, Linking and Generating Knowledge

Student Understandings

Having studied theatre in various cultures and time periods, students describe careers in theatre arts and roles of theatre artists in various cultures and time periods. Students gain an understanding of the relative value of theatre arts to any given society and/or time period.

Materials and Equipment

reference materials on Asian music, dance, and drama forms; videotapes or audiotapes of Asian music, dance, and drama forms; maps of Asia; access to computers; various brochures and programs; various arts and crafts materials

Sample Lesson

As the students enter the room, divide the class into four teams of theatrical agents. Explain that each team of agents represent a troupe of performers or artists from a different Asian culture. Tell the teams that it is their responsibility, therefore, to learn as much as they can about the art form and then prepare a program insert to supply background information to American audiences. The notes should tell the audience how to look at and listen to each art form in order to understand and enjoy it.

After all of the groups are broken up, assign each group one of the following subjects: Kabuki, Indonesian shadow puppets, Chinese opera, and Balinese dance. Each group will be responsible for creating a program insert on their subject. Give them access to the Internet, as well as video and audio clips of each art form. Allow the students at least 30 to 40 minutes to research their given art form. As they research, circulate from group to group every three to five minutes, checking for understanding and participation from all members, providing guidance, and answering questions. As they research, they should be answering the following questions:

1. Is there a story? What is it? What is the setting?
2. Who is involved with the performance?
3. How are the costumes and props made?
4. What kind of training did the performers need?
5. What native or unusual instruments were used? How are they played?
6. What does this piece tell us about this culture?

After each of the questions is answered, the group should work toward creating a presentation of some sort to present to the rest of the class. This presentation can be simply a speech, an interpretive performance, a model, a visual aid, a skit, or anything students choose. The important part is that they convey the information they learned about the art form to the rest of the class. It is important that the presentation be of the students' choosing. Each presentation should take no longer than three to five minutes. As each group presents their information, all the other students should engage in *split-page notetaking* ([view literacy strategy descriptions](#)). One side of their page should list the art form, and the other side should answer the six questions from above. This entire process should take about 20 to 30 minutes. As the students leave the class for the day, make sure to take up any written work they have completed on the project.

As students enter the room the following day, split them back into groups, and return any work that was taken up. Inform them that they will be creating a program insert, or a brochure on their particular art form. At this time, show the students examples of brochures and programs and ask them what they have in common. As they answer, write what they say on the board. They should eventually deduce that each brochure or program should include the following information:

1. Background information on the art form (training)
2. Illustrations of the art form
3. Information about the staging of the art form (costumes, makeup, etc.)
4. Cultural significance of the art form
5. Critique or opinions about the art form

These things may not necessarily be in an actual brochure or program every time, but for teaching purposes, make sure the students use these guidelines. This explanation should take about 15 minutes.

Allow the groups to create their brochures or program inserts. Provide them with markers, crayons, Internet access, and anything else they may need to create their piece of work. This should take about 25 minutes to complete. During this 25 minutes, circulate around the class checking for participation and understanding. Answer any questions the students may have. If possible, make a copy of the program for each student, with all four sections in it. If this is not possible, simply pass the finished program around so that everyone can see all four parts to it.

While it is being passed around, show the entire class five minutes of video of each art form. This should take 20 minutes. Allow them to connect what they have seen and taken notes on visually in their minds.

A possible extension or alteration to this lesson would be to forgo using Asian art forms, and assign each group a country to research and identify an art form from.

Sample Assessments

Formative

Students analyze the emotional and social impact of dramatic events in other cultures.

Students explain how culture affects the content and production values of dramatic performances.

Students respond to the following questions in class discussion and in *learning logs*:

What are four types of Asian performance art?

What is the purpose of programs and brochures?

Summative

The creation of a presentation as a group, and the creation of a brochure or program explaining each art form.

Resources

These websites contain information and examples of each of the art forms found in this lesson:

<http://www.japan-guide.com/e/e2090.html>
<http://asnic.utexas.edu/asnic/countries/japan/kabuki.html>
<http://www.travelchinaguide.com/intro/arts/chinese-opera.htm>
http://www.illuminatedlantern.com/cinema/archives/a_short_history_of_chinese_opera.php
http://www.cwu.edu/~robinsos/ppages/resources/Theatre_History/Theahis_9.html
<http://www.chinapage.com/beijing-opera.html> <http://discover-indo.tierranet.com/wayang.html>
<http://www.art-pacific.com/artifacts/indonesi/puppets/wayang.htm>
<http://www.indo.com/interests/dance.html>
http://www.seasite.niu.edu/Indonesian/Budaya_Bangsa/Balinese_dance/Default.htm

SEVENTH GRADE

Seventh Grade (CA2)

Title Exploring Obstacles

Time Frame One 75-minute period

Overview Students explore Uta Hagen's obstacle technique by participating in an exercise in which given obstacles affect the way a certain task is achieved.

Standards Critical Analysis and Creative Expression

Arts Benchmarks	
Analyze descriptions, dialogues, and actions to explain character traits, personality, motivations, emotional perceptions, and ethical choices.	TH-CA-M2
Demonstrate role playing individually and in interpersonal situations.	TH-CE-M2
Create improvisations and scripted scenes based on personal experience, imagination, literature, and history.	TH-CE-M4

Foundation Skills Communication, Problem Solving, Linking and Generating Knowledge

Student Understandings

Students analyze descriptions, dialogues, and actions to explain character traits, personality, motivations, emotional perceptions, and ethical choices.

Vocabulary : obstacle

Materials and Equipment

Props needed for the obstacle exercise are a shirt, a sponge or cloth, a squirt bottle, and a bar of soap.

Sample Lesson

Before students enter the room, place several objects in the way of their normal paths to their desks. The teacher's desk may be two feet from the entrance to the room, forcing students to walk around it. Books may be scattered around on the floor that students will have to step over. All student desks may be facing different directions, prohibiting students from facing the front of the classroom. Choose which obstacles work for the classroom space, and set up the room accordingly.

Upon entering the room, students are directed to travel to their seats. Questions may arise, but instruct students to be seated, using whatever means necessary. Once seated, ask all students to face the front of the classroom. This may require them moving their desks back to the original position, depending on what obstacles were put into place. Once all students are facing the front of the room, ask them to explain what was different about the paths to their desks and what they had to do to accomplish the task of sitting down in those desks. They describe the obstacles in their way and the way in which they overcame those obstacles. Explain to the students that the obstacles they faced when traveling to their seats can be compared to the obstacles faced by actors when portraying a role (five minutes).

Write the following definition on the board:

Obstacle – That which stands in the way or opposes; a hindrance, an obstruction to one's progress.

Ask the students if they have seen or experienced an obstacle course. In every obstacle course, there are several things standing in the path between the start and the finish. The person traveling through the obstacle course must navigate and overcome the obstacles in order to get to the finish line. Ask students to describe an obstacle they face in daily life. Explain that this doesn't have to be a physical object standing in their way; it can be anything that prevents or hinders them from completing a certain task. These may include: getting ready for school while sharing their bathroom with a sibling, completing homework assignments on days when they have ball practice, packing a lunch when there isn't anything in the refrigerator, keeping a secret when they are dying to tell their best friend, etc. If students have difficulty coming up with obstacles that aren't physical objects, give them some examples of these obstacles to get their ideas flowing (ten minutes).

Introduce the theatre artist, Uta Hagen. Explain that she was born in Germany in 1919 and made her Broadway debut in 1938. In addition to her career as an actress, she became a prominent teacher of acting techniques. One of her techniques, fully explained in her teachings and in her books, is based on the idea that a character faces obstacles when trying to achieve certain tasks within the play. For an actor, identifying these obstacles will give strength to the actor's performance. By identifying the obstacle, the need to overcome that obstacle becomes greater, and the actor gives a stronger performance. Answer any questions that the students may have regarding this topic. More information can be found in the resources listed below (ten minutes).

Students participate in an exercise which will illustrate Uta Hagen's obstacle technique. Volunteers use the given props to act out a character's attempting to remove a stain from a shirt. The props should include a shirt, a sponge or cloth, a squirt bottle, and a bar of soap. Each volunteer is given a different obstacle to face when attempting to remove the stain. Select the first volunteer. Explain to the student that his/her obstacle comes from his/her *character*, which is a perfectionist, causing him/her to want to remove the stain completely and "perfectly." While the student attempts to remove the stain against this obstacle, instruct the rest of the class to make observations in a *learning log* ([view literacy strategy descriptions](#)). They should record where the obstacle comes from, what the obstacle is, and the observed effect that the obstacle has on the actor. After the volunteer has acted out his or her scene, ask the volunteer to describe to the rest of the class how the obstacle affected his or her attempt to remove the stain. Responses may include that it made him or her slow down and take extra care to remove the stain or that it made him or her stress out over removing the stain.

Repeat the activity with a second volunteer. Explain to this student that the obstacle comes from his/her past, which is a very poor childhood, and this shirt is the first expensive piece of clothing that he/she has ever owned. While the student attempts to remove the stain against this obstacle, instruct the rest of the class to again record and make observations in their *learning log*. After the volunteer has acted out his or her scene, ask the volunteer to describe to the rest of the class how the obstacle affected his or her attempt to remove the stain. Responses may include that it made him or her very emotional because of the sentimental attachment to the shirt or that it made him or her take extra care because of the value of the shirt.

Repeat the activity with a third volunteer. Explain to this student the obstacle comes from *time*. He/she only has five minutes in which to remove the stain. While the student attempts to remove the stain against this obstacle, instruct the rest of the class to again record and make observations in their *learning log*. After the volunteer has acted out his or her scene, ask the volunteer to describe to the rest of the class how the obstacle affected his or her attempt to remove the stain. Responses may include that it made him or her work very quickly or that it made him or her frustrated with the entire task and decide to throw away the shirt.

Repeat the activity with the following obstacles:

- Obstacle that comes from *the object*: this shirt was borrowed from your best friend and you promised to take good care of it.
- Obstacle that comes from *the circumstances*: you were on your way to an important interview, spilled coffee on your shirt, and have stopped to clean it at a store near the interview site.
- Obstacle that comes from *the relationship*: your mother gave you this shirt and asked you to wear it to the family reunion.
- Obstacle that comes from *the place*: the countertop or table on which you're trying to remove the stain is dirty.
- Obstacle that comes from *the weather*: it's 100 degrees outside and your air-conditioner is broken.

During each performance, the rest of the class should record the obstacle, its origin, and make observations in their *learning logs*. Volunteers should describe to the rest of the class how the obstacles affected their attempts to remove the stain. Allow 30 minutes for the performances and related discussions.

Lead a class discussion comparing and contrasting the acting responses to the given obstacles. With which obstacles did the actor take more care and with which did the actor speed through the task? With which obstacles did the actor appear frustrated and with which did the actor remain calm? With which obstacles did the actor demonstrate a strong emotional force driving the action? Allow students to expand upon their ideas and offer other ideas of how to overcome the given obstacles. Ask students to describe what the same scene might look like without an obstacle. Which is more interesting to watch – an actor attempting to overcome an obstacle or an actor simply completing a task with no obstacle hindering him? Explain that the very essence of theatre is conflict; we are entertained by watching characters deal with conflict. The more conflict, the greater the drama. If an actor can help create more conflict by identifying an obstacle and working hard to overcome it, then that actor has heightened the drama of the piece. The class discussion should last approximately ten minutes.

Bring closure to the lesson by asking the class to come up with other obstacles that a person might face when removing a stain from a shirt. When a student suggests an example, ask them to identify where the obstacle comes from: *the character, the character's past, time, the object, the circumstances, the relationship, the place, or the weather*. This closing discussion should last the remainder of the class period.

Sample Assessments

Formative

Students use criteria to describe, analyze, and constructively evaluate the perceived effectiveness of artistic choices found in dramatic performances.

Students individually create characters and actions that create tensions and suspense.
Students refine and record dialogue and action.

Students answer the following questions and prompts in class discussion:

What is an obstacle?

How can identifying an obstacle strengthen an actor's performance?

Give an example of an obstacle and identify where the obstacle comes from: *the character, the character's past, time, the object, the circumstances, the relationship, the place, or the weather.*

Resources

Uta Hagen's book in which she details the obstacle exercise on pages 180-183:

Hagen, U., & Frankel, H. (1973). *Respect for acting*. New York: Macmillan.

More information on Uta Hagen and her acting techniques can be found at the following websites:

<http://www.owl.net.rice.edu/~thea301/Rigdon/Exercise%20Sheet%20rev.htm>

<http://www.hbstudio.org/index.htm>

EIGHTH GRADE

Eighth Grade Lesson (CA1)

Title Functions of Lighting Design

Time Frame One 60-minute period

Overview After studying the functions of lighting design, students critically analyze the lighting design of *Into the Woods*.

Standards Critical Analysis and Creative Expression

Arts Benchmarks	
Explain how elements of theatre and principles of communication are used in works created for the stage and other dramatic arts.	TH-CA-M1
Engage in individual and collaborative use of technical dimensions of the dramatic form such as theatrical space, scenery, set design, costuming, and make-up.	TH-CE-M6

Foundation Skills Communication, Problem Solving, Linking and Generating Knowledge

Student Understandings

Students explain how elements of theatre and principles of communication are used in works created for the stage and other dramatic arts. As students analyze a theatrical work for lighting elements and communication principles, students develop an understanding of an author/playwright's intent in creating a theatrical work.

Vocabulary: lighting design, lighting designer, gobo, scrim

Materials and Equipment

DVD of *Into the Woods*

Prior Knowledge

Students should have viewed the DVD of the stage production, *Into the Woods*.

Sample Lesson

After viewing the DVD of *Into the Woods*, lead a class discussion focused on the use of lighting in the production. Ask the students to describe what they saw, what they liked, what they didn't like. Ask students to compare and contrast the lighting during different scenes. How did the lighting contribute to the production as a whole? Did the lighting make the production more entertaining? This opening discussion should last approximately ten minutes.

Explain that the lighting is designed for a production by a lighting designer. The lighting designer has to consider the functions of lighting design when planning what the lighting will be in each particular scene. On the board, list the functions of lighting design:

1. The primary function of lighting design is illumination. The audience has to be able to clearly see what is taking place on stage.
2. Lighting can draw focus to a particular area or the stage, a particular character, or a particular action that is taking place on stage.
3. Lighting can help to create the mood of a particular scene.

4. Lighting can show the location and time of day. For example, bright lighting could be used for a scene that takes place on a beach. Orange and red lights could be used for a scene that takes place at sunset.

Introduction of these functions should last approximately 15 minutes.

After discussing these functions, discuss as a class how these functions were reflected in the lighting design of *Into the Woods*. Draw on the comments and answers from the previous class discussion. Ask students to evaluate the lighting design and offer their opinions on how the design helped to tell the story. Discuss the mood and atmosphere of different scenes in the show. How did the lighting in those particular scenes reflect the mood and atmosphere? Did the lighting draw the audience into the world of the play? Some examples of the lighting effects include:

- In the first scene, lighting is used to focus the audience's attention on where the action is taking place. At any given time, one or all of the three houses (Cinderella's, Jack's, the Baker's) is lit, depending on where the action is and where the audience needs to look.
- Approximately 15 minutes into the DVD, when the backdrop of the houses flies out, characters are shown journeying "into the woods." Colored lights are used, shining through the fog, to create depth and establish the setting as a thick, wooded area. As the song ends, the colors of the lights are changed to emphasize the ending of the musical number.
- Approximately 16 minutes into the DVD, Cinderella is seated in front of a tree. Lighting and a scrim are used to create the effect of someone inside the tree. Scrim is a piece of fabric that when lit from the front is opaque, and when lit from behind is translucent. When this particular scrim is lit from within the tree, the character can be seen. When lit from in front of the tree, the character cannot be seen.
- Approximately 18 minutes into the DVD, after Little Red Riding Hood meets the Wolf, a red light helps create a sense of danger. A scrolling gobo of trees is used to give the appearance that Little Red is skipping through the woods. A gobo is a small plate with holes cut in it to create patterns of light when placed over the lantern of a theatrical light. The one used in this scene has the pattern of the trees cut into it.
- Approximately 29 minutes into the DVD, Little Red Riding Hood arrives at her grandmother's cottage. Again a scrim is used and lit accordingly to give the effect of the interior of the cottage.
- Throughout the DVD, spotlights are used to focus on a character's singing a solo.
- Approximately two hours and ten minutes into the DVD, orange lights and a yellow round light shone on the backdrop establish the time of the scene as sunset.

The discussion of various lighting effects throughout the production should last approximately 25 minutes.

Possible extension activities could include a lighting design project in which students apply their knowledge of the functions of lighting design to their own designs for a selected play. A written plan for the lighting effects could be the final product.

Sample Assessments

Formative

Students explain the functions of lighting in creating an environment appropriate for drama.
Students work collaboratively and safely to select and create lighting to signify environments.
Students respond to the following questions in class discussion and in *learning logs*:

What is a lighting designer?

What are the functions of lighting design?

What information can the lighting give the audience?

How can lighting help to tell a story?

How does lighting contribute to the overall theatrical experience?

How does lighting help create the mood and atmosphere of the production?

Resources

Information about theatrical lighting can be found at:

<http://stagelightingprimer.com/> and

<http://www.stage-lighting-museum.com/museum/HTML/history.HTML>.

Brandman Productions (Producer), & Lapine, J. (Director). (1991). *Into the woods* [Motion picture].
United States: Image Entertainment.

Information about *Into the Woods* can be found at:

<http://broadwaymusicalhome.com/shows/intothewoods.htm> and

http://www.musicalheaven.com/i/into_the_woods.shtml.