

ARTS

and the

COMMON CORE

Unit Plan

Theater

Grade Level: High School - Grades 9 & 10

Title: Original Monologue Production

Length of Unit: Daily for 45 minutes, 30 sessions, 6 weeks

Unit Description: To assist students in their exploration of story creation, theatrical production and the variety of professional theatrical opportunities available. Students will create vivid, complex characters using different voice/body techniques. They will learn about careers in theater production and performance.

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What's Inside:

Big Ideas/Enduring Understandings

Essential Questions

Common Core and NYC Blueprint Standards

Sequence of Teaching and Learning Experiences

Academic/Content Vocabulary

Resources



THEATER HS UNIT: Original Monologue Production

Unit Topic & Length

Grade Level: High School, 9th and 10th grade

Frequency of Sessions: Daily for 45 minutes

Length of Unit: 30 sessions, six weeks

Learning Context: This unit is designed for first-year theatre students to assist in their exploration of story creation, theatrical production, and the variety of professional theatrical opportunities available.

BIG IDEAS / ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

- The process of creating a show necessitates many stages.
- Creating vivid, complex, well-rounded characters requires research and practice.
- An actor uses different voice/body techniques and choices to create a character.
- Careers in theater production and performance encompass a very wide range of activities.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- How does one use multiple research resources to create well-rounded, believable characters?
- How does revision in both the written and rehearsal process strengthen the final product?
- How does one use body and voice to transform written work into a believable character on stage?
- What does theater research look like?

COMMON CORE & NYC ARTS BLUEPRINTS STANDARDS

NYS: CCLS: English Language Arts 6–12, NYS: 6th Grade; NYS: CCLS: Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, & Technical Subjects 6-12, NYS: Grades 6-8, Capacities of the Literate Individual

Students Who Are College and Career Ready in Reading, Writing, Speaking, Listening, and Language:

- Demonstrate independence
- Build strong content knowledge
- Respond to the varying demands of audience, task, purpose, and discipline
- Comprehend as well as critique
- Value evidence.

NYC: Arts Blueprints: Theater, NYC: Grade 12, Theater
Theater Making: Acting

Imagination, Analysis, and Process Skills

Students increase their ability as imaginative and analytical actors while continuing to participate as collaborative ensemble members.

Students demonstrate the ability to reflect on and think critically about their work.

Imagination and Analysis. Students will be able to:

- Maintain consistent focus and concentration in improvisations, scene work, and performances
- Make inferences and connections, using research and analysis to inform an understanding of a play and character
- Analyze, interpret, memorize, and perform a scripted scene.

Theater Process: Students will be able to:

- Sustain consistent focus on and commitment to group activities and goals.

Performance Skills

Through sequential and sustained activities in various theater forms, students improve upon and gain new performance skills.

Students model proficiency in an area of acting by leading workshops, demonstrations, and in performance.

Physical: Students will be able to:

- Use voice and body expressively in improvisations, scene work, and performances
- Create imaginatively detailed physical gestures in service of a character
- Create personal blocking based on intuitive impulses in response to a text or improvisation scenario.

Vocal: Students will be able to:

- Demonstrate the ability to speak with clear diction.

Characterization: Students will be able to:

- Make character choices that are specific, detailed, and integrated to produce a unified impression in performance
- Use and incorporate research to inform character choices.

Theater Making: Playwriting/Play Making **Understanding Dramatic Structure**

Character: Students will be able to:

- Create and write vivid, complex, and well-rounded characters through a process of investigation and pre-writing activities
- Demonstrate an understanding of characters' emotional wants, needs, intentions, motivations, actions, and inner life.

Imagination, Analysis, and Process

Student playwrights extend and revise their written work guided by peer assessments and self-assessment.

Students refine their ability as playwrights to express point of view and personal vision.

Imagination and Analysis: Students will be able to:

- Use the critical and creative thinking skills of analyzing, synthesizing, imagining, and elaborating on information and research to generate ideas, concepts, and choices for written work
- Make choices that are clear, specific, detailed, and integrated to produce a unified dramatic text.

Writing/Literacy Processes: Students will be able to:

- Write vivid, complex, and well-rounded characters drawn from or inspired by a variety of sources materials
- Use acquired information and research to inform their writing
- Revise, refine, and extend a written project from first to final draft over a sustained period of time
- Evaluate, assess, and critique their work and that of their peers in a productive and respectful way.

**NYC: Arts Blueprints: Theater, NYC: Grade 12, Exploring Careers and Lifelong Learning
Awareness of Careers in Theater**

Students identify potential career paths through an exploration of the careers in theater, associated industries, and professional unions and guilds.

Students will be able to:

- Demonstrate an advanced understanding of the range of theater careers in teaching, production, performance, technical theater, and supporting occupations.

Content	Skills / Strategies
<p>Students will understand how to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Research and discuss a character by reading informational texts and consulting media sources for inspiration and fact-finding. 2) Create and revise original characters informed by research. 3) Use the created characters to write narrative monologues using well-chosen details and well-structured event sequences. 4) Use improvisation and repetition to discover and define appropriate vocal and physical character choices. 5) Memorize, rehearse, and revise character choices for production. 6) Perform the final production in front of an audience. 7) Observe and critique a performance. 	<p>Students will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Gather relevant information from multiple print, digital, and cinematic sources and integrate the information into dramatic writing. 2) Write narrative monologues to develop imagined experiences of theatre professionals in an audition-based situation using well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences based on their research. 3) Share and revise their work based on peer and teacher feedback. 4) Use guided exercises to inform physical and vocal choices that illuminate the character and add depth to the performance. 5) Memorize, block, and rehearse the created monologue. 6) Perform before a live audience.

ASSESSMENTS

Depth of Knowledge (DOK) Levels

Final Draft of Original Monologue

Summative: DOK 4 Extended Thinking: Written: Narrative

Teacher-to-Student: (DOK Level 4- Create, Synthesize, Connect)

Students submit a typed final draft of their edited original monologue for assessment based on a rubric created by the class.

Final Performance of Created Production

Summative: DOK 4 Extended Thinking: Performance: Authentic Task

Teacher-to-Student: (DOK Level 4- Create, Apply Concepts, Synthesize)

Students participate in a class-wide performance of the created original monologues using learned acting techniques for an invited audience. Students are assessed by a rubric created by the class.

Table Reading of First Draft of Monologue

Formative: DOK 3 Strategic Thinking: Written: Narrative

Teacher-to-Student: (DOK: Level 3- Construct, Revise; Level 2- Modify, Organize, Interpret; Level 1-Tell)

After creating the first draft of the monologue, students share their written work with the class to be assessed by the teacher.

Rehearsal Process

Formative: DOK 2 Basic Application: Performance: Authentic Task

Teacher-to-Student: (DOK: Level 2- Show, Interpret, Organize, Modify; Level 1- Memorize, Define)

Throughout the rehearsal process the teacher provides formative feedback.

Peer Review Writing Teams

Formative: DOK 4 Extended Thinking: Written: Narrative

Student-to-Student: (DOK: Level 4- Analyze, Critique; Level 3- Assess, Appraise, Cite Evidence, Differentiate, Develop a Logical Argument; Level 2- Interpret, Modify, Make Observations; Level 1- Define)

Students work in small groups (2–4) to share and reflect on the monologues during the editing process using the rubric as a reference tool for discussion.

Student Paired Rehearsal

Formative: DOK 4 Extended Thinking: Performance: Authentic Task

Student-to-Student: (DOK: Level 4- Analyze, Critique; Level 3- Assess, Appraise, Cite Evidence, Differentiate, Develop a Logical Argument; Level 2- Interpret, Modify, Make Observations; Level 1- Memorize, Define)

Students work in teams of two to three to view and critique one another's performances. The performance rubric is provided to help guide discussion.

Rehearsal Journal

Formative: DOK 4 Extended Thinking: Written: Journal/ Diary

Student-to-Self: (DOK: Level 4- Analyze, Critique, Synthesize; Level 2- Make observations, Summarize, Predict, Relate; Level 1- Recall, State, Recognize, Identify)

Student keeps a reflective journal of his/her writing and rehearsal processes to be submitted after the final performance.

Review of Rehearsal Video Capture

Formative: DOK 4 Extended Thinking: Performance: Skill Demonstration

Student-to-Self: (DOK: Level 4- Analyze, Critique, Synthesize; Level 3- Assess, Appraise, Critique, Revise, Compare; Level 2- Make observations; Level 1- Recognize, Identify)

Video is taken of each student while (s)he rehearses the original monologue. Students then review their own work and reflect on the strengths/challenges that they observe.



[Theater HS Unit Monologue Writing Rubric Attachment One](#)



[Theater HS Unit Performance Rubric Attachment Two](#)

Sequence of Teaching & Learning Experiences	Academic/Content Vocabulary
<p>WEEK 1: Introduction to Unit of Study</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribution of Unit Syllabus (SEE: attached example) • Play first 1:30 of "I Hope I Get It" from <i>A Chorus Line</i> (project or hand out lyrics for visual reference) • Ask students to predict what the musical is about based on what they have read and heard. • Have students identify at least three things an actor must do in a musical audition. • Read handout about the history of <i>A Chorus Line</i>. • View documentary film <i>Every Little Step</i> (SEE: attached handout to facilitate active viewing) (See attachment.) • Read reviews of both the original (1978) and revival (2006) productions of <i>A Chorus Line</i>. • Students write one paragraph summarizing what they learned about the audition process. <p>WEEK 2: Beginning the Writing Process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students complete a timed character analysis in which they write brief answers to a series of questions generated by the teacher to help students explore the character that they are creating. (See bulleted examples, below.) <p>NOTE: This concept of a "Timed Analysis" often works more effectively than a traditional "fill-in-the-blank" type of handout in that it forces students to write and make decisions quickly. For example, the teacher may say, "Your character needs a first, middle, and last name. You have 20 seconds, go!" (Students can always revise and change things, but this approach helps them to start the process.) The first three questions (Name, Age, and Role in the Theatre) should be limited to 10-to-20-second response times. Other topics, written in the first person, may have a response time of 1 to 3 minutes, in which the student should continually write to discover more details. Students should skip lines between responses in order to add information or finish responses later. A few good topics for students to explore may be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe a what you do in a typical day, beginning with waking up (2 minutes) • Describe your family (1 minute) • Describe where you live in detail (2 minutes) • What is your biggest insecurity? Why? (3 minutes) • What is your biggest dream? Why? (3 minutes) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teacher should now discuss narrative structure (including rising action, climax, falling action, and conclusion). (See attached storytelling handout.) A passage from <i>On the Line: The Creation of a Chorus Line</i> will help students understand how to condense and focus character stories into dramatic pieces. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monologue • Character voice (internal/external conflict, intentions, cultural elements) • Character narrative • Dramatic structure (rising action, climax, falling action) • Physicality/gesture (non-verbal communication, command of physical energy, space, period movement) • Vocalization (breath control, volume, projection, diction/articulation, inflection) • Rehearsal (improvisation, table read, blocking, run-through, final dress rehearsal) • Recognize • Identify • Observations • Critique • Revise • Analyze

- Students now read sample lyrics ("At the Ballet" and "I Hope I Get It") and Paul's monologue from *Chorus Line*. **NOTE:** These lyrics should be studied in paper form, without musical accompaniment, as a written text. It may help some students to read the text without repeated choruses for continuity. For more examples, one may want to look at "With One Look" from *Sunset Boulevard (1995)* or "Part of It All" from *Title of Show (2009)*.
- Teacher facilitates a discussion in which the students create the **Written Monologue Rubric**, identifying what makes written stories successful. (**SEE:** Attachment One)
- Using the character analysis created, students write a first draft of their 1-to-2-minute narrative monologue. The character should tell a story about one particular audition in which (s)he was involved (as an actor, playwright, director, stage manager, etc.). **NOTE:** Some students may opt to write original monologues while others may choose to simply continue a story presented in one of the examples.
- The teacher leads a short training in how to discuss and critique the work of classmates:
 - Clarifying Questions (anything that an observer needs to more clearly understand in order to discuss the work)
 - Observations (a description of what was seen without any value or judgment phrases attached)
 - Values (things that the observers found successful in the work)
 - Wishes (things that the observers felt the performer/writer could focus on before the next sharing)
- Students share their first draft with a partner or small group, using the Written Monologue Rubric (SEE Attachment) as a guide for discussion.
- Students edit or revise their monologue based on the peer feedback.
- Students share their second draft with the class as a whole, and the class discusses the monologue using the rubric as a guide for discussion.
- Students edit or revise the second draft based on peer and teacher feedback to develop the working draft of their monologue.

WEEK 3: Developing a Character Performance

- Students engage in a "walking exercise" in which they create individual physicality for their character while moving, standing, and sitting within a group setting. **NOTE:** This "walking exercise" has students find a 6-to-10-foot stretch of floor in which they can pace back and forth without encountering any other student. They begin to pace as themselves (actor neutral), and the teacher prompts them to think about aspects of their movement that they can manipulate to create the

character:

- Rate of speed
 - Posture
 - Eye focus (ahead, the ground, all around)
 - Hand activity
 - Specific characteristics (a limp, shuffling feet, etc.)
 - A character habit
- The process is repeated while sitting.
 - Once the students have developed physical traits and habits for their characters, they work in pairs to answer improvised questions in which they use the physical traits and layer on vocal choices to communicate the character they have created.
NOTE: This also works well when students work in pairs and the teacher asks the questions. The "non-acting" student observes.
 - Once the response is completed, the observing student responds with observations about the character, allowing the performing student to adjust his/her choices accordingly to communicate the character more clearly. The pair then switch roles. (This exercise continues for several rounds with multiple pairings of students.)

Creation of Motivated Blocking

- The teacher introduces the concept of motivated blocking. The teacher leads a basic discussion/ demonstration of "Planes, Levels, and Proximity" by using two student volunteers and placing them in different places on stage. The teacher may ask the following questions based on the simple tableaux:
 - Do these people know one another?
 - Who has the power in this scene?
 - What does this positioning tell us about the character relationship?
- In two to four groups (so that the remaining students can observe and critique the featured group from the audience point of view), students are asked to form a chorus line and choose a pose that communicates their character. Each group then shares the final tableau for discussion.

WEEK 4: Monologue Rehearsal

- To facilitate transfer into a solo performance, one volunteer student presents his or her monologue to the class, and the teacher facilitates the blocking process for the first few beats (maybe 30 seconds), focusing on questions that may motivate movement.
- Once the students have achieved the ability to communicate their individual characters both physically and verbally and better understand the process of blocking, they begin to transfer those skills into individually staging the monologue that they created. After staging the monologue with attention to physical and verbal choices and creating motivated blocking, students share the monologue with a partner or small group.

- Teacher facilitates student discussion to develop the **Performance Rubric**. (**SEE**: Attachment Two)
- Peers review one another's performances using the Performance Rubric to guide discussion.
- Students individually revise their performances based on peer feedback.
- While students continue to revise and rehearse, the teacher will individually meet with students to provide rubric-based feedback and support and monitor progress.
- Students then share their staged, rehearsed monologue with the class in an individual performance. The teacher and students discuss the monologue using the Performance Rubric to guide discussion.

WEEK 5: Final Show Creation

- The teacher reviews all students' monologues and separates the monologues into groups by category (the teacher can determine categories based on shared themes or unifying characteristics as he/she sees fit).
- The teacher then distributes these groups of monologues. The class is divided into the set groups and provided copies of each of the monologues. Students then work to establish an order of presentation within their group based on their knowledge of dramatic structure.
- Students are then placed on stage by the teacher and directed in transitional movements to clarify the overall performance. (Students maintain their created blocking during each individual monologue performance.)
- Students now rehearse in these groups

WEEK 6: Final Show Rehearsal and Performance

- The teacher may add minimal tech and costume elements as needed.
- Students memorize and run the show, conduct a dress rehearsal, and present a final performance for an audience.



[Storytelling Lesson Plan Attachment Three](#)



[Sample Syllabus for Students Attachment Four](#)



[Song Analysis \("God I Hope I Get It" Attachment Five](#)



[Identifying Theater Roles Worksheet Attachment Six](#)



[Sample Storytelling Monologue Attachment Seven](#)

RESOURCES

Video: *Every Little Step* (Documentary Film, 2008)

Literary:

- Robert Viagas, Baayork Lee, Thommie Walsh, with the Entire Cast, *On The Line: The Creation of a Chorus Line* (New York: William Morrow, 1990)

Handouts:

- **Lyric: "At the Ballet"** (*A Chorus Line*, 1975)
- **Lyric: "I Hope I Get It"** (*A Chorus Line*, 1975)
- **Monologue: Paul's Monologue** (*A Chorus Line*, 1975)

On-Line:

- **Michael Bennett- PBS** (<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/broadway/stars/michael-bennett/>)
- **Review: Original Production of *A Chorus Line*, 1975** (*A Chorus Line: Review, The New York*

Times, May 22, 1975



<http://theater.nytimes.com/2006/10/06/theater/reviews/06chor.html?pagewanted=all>)

- **Review: Revival Production of *A Chorus Line*, 2006** (*A Chorus Line: Review, The New York*

Times, Oct. 6, 2006



[http://theater.nytimes.com/mem/theater/treview.html?html_title=&tols_title=A%20CHORUS%20LINE%20\(PLAY\)&pdate=19750522&byline=By%20CLIVE%20BARNES&id=1077011428934](http://theater.nytimes.com/mem/theater/treview.html?html_title=&tols_title=A%20CHORUS%20LINE%20(PLAY)&pdate=19750522&byline=By%20CLIVE%20BARNES&id=1077011428934))

New York Times Obituary: Michael Bennett

(<http://www.nytimes.com/1987/07/03/obituaries/michael-bennett-theater-innovator-dies-at-44.html?pagewanted=all&src=pm>)

Additional Reading:

- Ken Mandelbaum, *A Chorus Line & the Musicals of Michael Bennett* (New York: St. Martin's, 1989)
- John Bush Jones, *Our Musicals, Ourselves: A Social History of the American Musical Theater* (Lebanon, NH: Brandeis University Press, 2003)

**THEATER HS ORIGINAL MONOLOGUE UNIT
ATTACHMENT ONE**

WRITTEN MONOLOGUE RUBRIC

Name: _____ Class: _____

Criteria	4 (Yes)	3 (Yes, but..)	2 (No, but...)	1 (No)
Story	Monologue has a clear, relatable story with rising action, a climax and a conclusion.	Monologue has the idea of a story, but the plot does not lead to a climactic point.	Monologue is written but no personal story is involved (the story does not go anywhere).	No monologue is written.
Character Voice	The character's voice is clear and consistent, reveals the age, socio-economic status, and background of the character.	The character has a consistent way of speaking, but the voice does not reveal more in-depth traits of his or her background or social situations.	The character has an inconsistent voice or specific choices have not been made.	No monologue is written.
Use of Research	The monologue clearly incorporates the research and uses it actively.	The monologue is appropriate to the situation, but does not incorporate research.	The monologue is off-topic or does not reflect the realities studied in the research.	No monologue is written.
Length	The monologue falls comfortably within the time guideline.	The monologue barely falls within or outside of the time guidelines.	The monologue is either too long or too short To fit the guidelines of the assignment.	No monologue is written.
Participation	Actor consistently participates in the writing process.	Actor usually participates in the writing process.	Actor sometimes participates in the writing process.	No monologue is written.

Total Points: _____

Suggested Point Conversion:			
20 points = 100	15 points = 85	10 points = 70	5 points = 55
19 points = 97	14 points = 82	9 points = 67	4 points = 45
18 points = 94	13 points = 79	8 points = 64	0 points = 0
17 points = 91	12 points = 76	7 points = 61	
16 points = 88	11 points = 73	6 points = 58	

THEATER HS ORIGINAL MONOLOGUE UNIT

ATTACHMENT TWO

FINAL MONOLOGUE PERFORMANCE RUBRIC

(1-4 ranking, with 4 as the highest)

Student Name: _____ Class: _____

Criteria	4	3	2	1
Physicality	Movement and habit choices are clear and consistent and are connected to the character.	Movement and habit choices are clear but not consistent or connected to the character.	Movement choices are present but are not clear, consistent, or connected to the character.	No movement or habit choices are present.
Vocalization	Actor can consistently be heard and understood. Appropriate adaptations are made for the character created.	Actor can be consistently heard and understood, but adaptations are not made for the character.	Actor can sometimes be heard and understood and no adaptations are made for the character.	Actor cannot be heard or understood.
Blocking	Actor moves when and where (s)he is intended to with clear motivation.	Actor moves when intended, but the movement is not motivated.	Actor does not move on cue and lacks any sense of motivation for movement.	No blocking is used in the scene.
Memorization	Actor completely memorizes the monologue and delivers smoothly.	Actor memorizes, but the delivery is uneven with pauses, stutters or backtracks	Actor memorizes some or most of the monologue but does not learn all lines.	Actor does not memorize the monologue.
Participation	Actor consistently participates in rehearsal times.	Actor usually participates in rehearsal times.	Actor sometimes participates in rehearsal times.	Actor never participates in rehearsal times.

Total Points: _____

Suggested Point Conversion:

20 points = 100	15 points = 85	10 points = 70	5 points = 55
19 points = 97	14 points = 82	9 points = 67	4 points = 45
18 points = 94	13 points = 79	8 points = 64	0 points = 0
17 points = 91	12 points = 76	7 points = 61	
16 points = 88	11 points = 73	6 points = 58	

THEATER HS ORIGINAL MONOLOGUE UNIT ATTACHMENT THREE

How Do You Tell a Story? LESSON PLAN WORKSHEET

Lesson Title: How do you tell a story!

Unit Title: Original Monologue Production

Where in the Unit does this lesson fall: Introduction to unit

Grade Level: 9-12 (can also be adapted to work for Middle-school/Junior High students)

Central Question: What elements does every good story need to have?

PURPOSE OF LESSON:

- a) Students will use prior knowledge to access their intrinsic understanding of the basic elements of plot structure (exposition, rising action, climax, etc..) through discussing favorite childhood fairytales
- b) Students will identify the elements needed to “tell” a good story
- c) To allow students to extend their knowledge of the role & power literary structure and the specific use of language play in storytelling through analyzing song lyrics from “*At the Ballet*” from *A Chorus Line*
- d) To engage students in the process of creating original work

Students will

- Use prior knowledge to access understanding of story sequence by writing down 5 events that take place in a favorite childhood fairytale
- Collaborate with a peer to identify the basic elements of plot structure with a partner through identifying common elements shared in the fairytales (exposition, plot, rising action, climax, falling action, resolution-denouement) through the exploration of favorite fairytales
- Explore the role language and literary devices (such as repetition) play in telling a story and in creating a character voice by analyzing the lyrics to a song
- Begin the process of creating a narrative by making connections to song lyrics and continuing the story revealed by the song

MATERIALS NEEDED: Pens/pencils, paper, chart paper, excerpt of song lyrics to “*At the Ballet*” from *A Chorus Line*

AIM: How can we identify the elements needed to tell a good story?

OBJECTIVE: To allow students to explore the elements of storytelling and the role language plays in revealing the story of a character as preparation for creating a creative narrative.

PROCEDURE

- 1) Ask students to think of a fairytale they loved as a child.
- 2) Ask students to write down **5** things that happened in that story in order
- 3) Ask students to share out with the class
- 4) Have students turn to the person to their right and identify 3 things that both of their stories have in common
- 5) Teacher will time the activity and post chart paper with the heading:
EVERY ONE OF THESE STORIES HAS.....

- 6) Student teams will share out their findings and the teacher will chart student responses
- 7) The class will categorize the information gathered (5 W’s , plot character roles within a story-antagonist/protagonist, etc...)
- 8) Have the students gather in a circle, and distribute an excerpt of the character of Sheila’s song lyrics to “*At the Ballet*” from *A Chorus Line* to students
- 9) Have the students read the lyrics aloud as a group with each student taking 1 line.
- 10) Ask students if the song tells a story. Have them cite examples from the song to support their response
- 11) Ask students to identify elements of plot structure within the song
- 12) Hand out “*At the Ballet*” worksheet
- 13) Ask students to independently continue the lyrics as a monologue from the point where the song leaves off based on both their own personal experiences, and the information provided by the character in the song.
- 14) Students will work independently for the rest of the lesson

NOTE: Lyrics from the song “I Hope I Get It” can also be used. This is a more easily accessible to students with low reading levels or special learning needs

SUMMARY/ REFLECTION

THEATER HS ORIGINAL MONOLOGUES UNIT ATTACHMENT FOUR

SAMPLE UNIT SYLLABUS:

“The Audition” Original Monologue Writing & Performance

UNIT DESCRIPTION:

Throughout the first marking period, we will be studying the various careers in professional theatre and the process of creating an original show. By the end of the marking period, we will stage a series of original monologues that will be performed for an invited audience.

UNIT OBJECTIVES:

- 1.) Students will understand the many stages of the show creation process.
- 2.) Students will create and write vivid, complex, and well-rounded characters.
- 3.) Students will use vocal and physical choices to create a character.
- 4.) Students will understand the range of theater careers in production and performance.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:

- 1.) How does one use multiple research resources to create well-rounded, believable characters?
- 2.) How does revision in both the written and rehearsal process strengthen the final product?
- 3.) How does one use body and voice to transfer written work into a believable character on stage?
- 4.) What does theater research look like?

WEEKLY BREAKDOWN:

- **Week 1: Introduction to Unit:**

We will study the history of *A Chorus Line*, an original musical that used the stories of working actors to tell the tale of one high-stakes audition. We will view “Every Little Step,” a documentary about the casting of the 2006 revival of this musical, and we will study examples from the show of how these stories were adapted for the stage.

Assignments:

- Active Viewing Checklist
- Viewing Summary

- **Week 2: Beginning the Writing Process**

We will create original characters and write, share, and edit original monologues for these characters.

Assignments:

- Original Character Analysis
- First and Second Drafts of Original Monologue

WEEKLY BREAKDOWN (CONTINUED):

- **Week 3: Creating a Character and Blocking**
We will examine how an actor uses his or her body and voice to create a unique, well-rounded character and how to create motivated staging for a performance.
- **Week 4: Monologue Performance**
Using all of the skills that you have learned, you will work in small groups to memorize and rehearse your original monologues to prepare for the final production.

Assignment:

- Class Sharing of Monologue Performance
- **Week 5: Final Show Creation**
We will work in small groups to organize the monologues into a complete theatrical experience and add group stage pictures and transitional movement to keep the show moving.
- **Week 6: Tech Rehearsal and Performance**
We will add necessary scenery, sound, lights, and costumes and perform the show in front of an audience.
 - Final Performance of Monologue

ASSESSMENTS:

You will receive two major grades during this unit. We will work together to create rubrics that outline the expectations for each of these assessments:

- **Final Draft of an Original Monologue**
- **Final Monologue Performance**

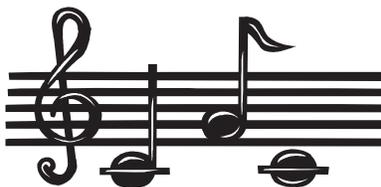
Smaller grades for this unit will include:

- **An Active Viewing Checklist and Summary of “Every Little Step”**
- **A First Draft of an Original Monologue**
- **Class Performance of the Monologue**

Other grading criteria:

- **Attendance**
- **Participation**
- **Memorization**

THEATER HS ORIGINAL MONOLOGUES UNIT
ATTACHMENT FIVE



SONG ANALYSIS ACTIVITY WORKSHEET

Student Name _____ *Date* _____

God I hope I Get it

Lyrics from **A Chorus Line**

ZACH

Step, kick, kick, leap, kick, touch...Again! Step, kick, kick, leap, kick, touch...Again! Step, kick, kick, leap, kick, touch...Again! Step, kick, kick, leap, kick, touch...Right! That connects with... Turn, turn, out, in, jump, step, Step, kick, kick, leap, kick, touch. Got it?... Going on. And... Turn, turn, touch, down, back, step, Pivot, step, walk, walk, walk. Right! Let's do the whole combination, Facing away from the mirror. From the top. **A-Five, six, seven, eight!**

ALL

God, I hope I get it. I hope I get it. How many people does he need?

BOYS

How many people does he need?

GIRLS

God, I hope I get it.

ALL

I hope I get it. How many boys, how many girls?

GIRLS

How many boys, how many...?

ALL

Look at all the people! At all the people. How many people does he need? How many boys, how many girls? How many people does he...?

I really need this job. Please God, I need this job. I've got to get this job.

ALL

God, I really blew it! I really blew it! How could I do a thing like that?

BOYS

How could I do a thing like...

ALL

Now I'll never make it! I'll never make it! He doesn't like the way I look. He doesn't like the way I dance. He doesn't like the way I...

ALL

GOD, I think I've got it. I think I've got it. I knew he liked me all the time. Still it isn't over.

MAGGIE

What's coming next?

ALL

It isn't over.

MIKE

What happens now?

ALL

I can't imagine what he wants.

GIRLS

I can't imagine what he...

ALL

God, I hope I get it! I hope I get it. I've come this far, but even so It could be yes, it could be no, How many people does he...?

I really need this job
My unemployment is gone.

ALL

Please, God, I need this job.
I knew I had it from the start.
I've got to get this show.

PAUL

Who am I anyway? Am I my resume? That is a picture of a person I don't know.
What does he want from me? What should I try to be? So many faces all around, and here we go. I need this job, oh
God, I need this show.

Song Analysis Activity

Directions: Please examine the excerpt of song lyrics from *God I hope I Get It* from *A Chorus Line*, and answer the questions below.

1. Who are the characters in this song, where are they, what are they doing, and why are they there?

2. Use context clues to infer who the character of Zach is and what role he plays within this song. Cite evidence from the song lyrics above to support your opinion.

3. Identify who the other characters in this song are.

4. What conclusion can you draw about the internal conflict that all of the characters (with the exception of Zach) are struggling with in this song? Please cite 2 pieces of evidence to support your opinion.

5. Identify 2 external conflicts that several of the characters are facing in this song are faced with?

6. What are some situations outside of a theatrical audition in which people may feel like they're auditioning? What feelings do these situations bring up?

**THEATER HS ORIGINAL MONOLOGUES UNIT
ATTACHMENT SIX**

**How Many Different Theater Roles Can You Identify from
the Documentary Film “Every Little Step?”**

Name _____ Date _____

Part I: Identifying the Roles of Theater Professionals at an Audition

Directions: Identify and put a check next to the role of each theater professional you saw participating in the audition process in the film. You will have 10 seconds-starting now!

1. Director _____
2. Casting Agent _____
3. Costume Designer _____
4. Stage Manager _____
5. Choreographer _____
6. Set Designer _____
7. Dresser _____
8. Actor/singer/dancers _____
9. Accompanist _____
10. Prop Master _____
11. Assistant to the Casting Director _____
12. Lighting Designer _____
13. Conductor _____

Part II: Describing the Responsibilities of Theatrical Professionals

Directions: Choose 3 of the roles that you saw, explain what each was responsible for in the audition studio. (on back)

Role #1 _____

Responsibilities:

Role #2 _____

Responsibilities:

Role #3 _____

Responsibilities:

Part III: Making Personal Connections

Directions: Please answer each of the questions

1. Identify the person in the film you connected with the most. Why?

2. Cite one specific moment in the film where you felt connected to an action, response, or conflict this character experienced.

THEATER HS ORIGINAL MONOLOGUE UNIT ATTACHMENT SEVEN

Storytelling through Character Monologue

In A Chorus Line, many of the stories are told through song. Paul's story is different in that it is told through a traditional spoken monologue. This monologue is effective because it reveals character while still conveying a complete story--from disquietude to discovery/illumination to redemption--in this case, about a young man discovering his sexuality, hiding it, and eventually being honest with both himself and his parents.

PAUL

No. Ah . . . Okay. From seeing all those movie musicals, I used to dance around on the street, and I'd get caught all the time. God, it was embarrassing. I was always being Cyd Charisse . . . Always. Which I don't really understand, because I always wanted to be an actor. I mean, I really wanted to perform. Once my cousin said to me, "You'll never be an actor" and I knew she was telling me this because I was such a sissy. I mean, I was terribly effeminate. I always knew I was gay, but that didn't bother me. What bothered me was that I didn't know how to be a boy.

One day I looked at myself in the mirror and said, "You're fourteen years old and you're a faggot. What are you going to do with your life?" By that time I was in Cardinal Hayes High School. There were three thousand boys there. I had no protection any more. No homeroom where I could be charming and funny with the tough guys so they'd fight my battles for me. Like when I went to small schools. I liked school. But my grades got so bad. Even if I knew the answers to questions, I wouldn't raise my hand because I would be afraid they would laugh at me. They'd even whistle at me in the halls. It was awful . . . just awful. Finally, I went down to the Principal's office and said: "I'm a homosexual." Well, it was a Catholic high school at around nineteen sixty-two and at the age of fifteen you just didn't say that. He said: "Would you like to see a psychologist?" And I did. And he said: "I think you're very well-adjusted for your age and I think you should quit school." So, I did. But I didn't really want to. I couldn't take it anymore.

See, when I quit school, what I was doing was trying to find out who I was and how to be a man. You know, there are a lot of people in this world who don't know how to be men. And since then, I found out that I am one. I was looking for the wrong thing. I was trying to learn how to be butch. Anyway, I started hanging around Seventy-Second Street, meeting all these really strange people. Just trying to make friends that were like me. So that I'd understand what it was that I was.

Somebody told me they were looking for male dancers for the Jewel Box Revue, you know, the drag show. So, I go down to audition. Now, from all those years of pretending I was Cyd Charisse, I had this fabulous extension. I mean I could turn . . . anything my first audition. And they said to me: "You're too short to be a boy, would you like to be a pony?"; And I said: "What's that?"; And they said: "A girl."; "What do I have to do?"; "Show us your legs." So I went and they hiked up my dungarees and they put on a pair of nylon stockings and high heels. It was freaky. It was incredible. And then they brought me back downstairs and they said: "Oh, you have wonderful legs." I said: "Really? Terrific. . . ."

It's so strange thinking about this. It was a whole lifetime ago. I was just past sixteen. Anyway, then there was this thing of me trying to hide it from my parents. That was something. 'Cause I had to

buy all this stuff. Like, ah, shoes to rehearse in, earrings, makeup. And I would hide it all and my mother would find it. I told her there was this girl in the show and she didn't want her mother to know what she was doing and I was holding this stuff for her. She believed me.

Well, I was finally in show business. It was the asshole of show business — but it was a job. Nothing to brag about. I had friends. But after a while it was so demeaning. Nobody at the Jewel Box had any dignity and most of them were ashamed of themselves and considered themselves freaks. I don't know, I think it was the lack of dignity that got to me, so I left. Oh, I muddled around for a while. I worked as an office boy, a waiter — But without an education, you can't get a good job. So, when the Jewel Box called and asked if I'd come back, I went.

We were working the Apollo Theatre on a Hundred and Twenty-Fifth Street. Doing four shows a day with a movie. It was really tacky. The show was going to go to Chicago. My parents wanted to say goodbye and they were going to bring my luggage to the theatre after the show. Well, we were doing this oriental number and I looked like Anna May Wong. I had these two great big chrysanthemums on either side my head and a huge headdress with gold balls hanging all over it. I was going on for the finale and going down the stairs and who should I see standing by the stage door . . . my parents. They got there too early. I freaked. I didn't know what to do. I thought to myself: "I know, I'll just walk quickly past them like all the others and they'll never recognize me." So I took a deep breath and started down the stairs and just as I passed my mother I heard her say: "Oh, my God." Well . . . I died. But what could I do? I had to go on for the finale so I just kept going. After the show I went back to my dressing room and after I'd finished dressing and taking my makeup off, I went back down stairs. And there they were standing in the middle of all these . . . And all they said to me was please write, make sure you eat and take care of yourself. And just before my parents left, my father turned to the producer and said: "Take care of my son . . ."; That was the first time he ever called me that . . . I . . . ah . . . I . . . ah . . ." << breaks down >>

TRY TO FIND THE FOLLOWING IN THE STORY:

1. What words or lines describe what Paul looks or acts like as a person?
2. What is the basic challenge that Paul faces at the prologue?
3. What problems arise because of this challenge?
4. How does he face this challenge?
5. Does his first attempt to face the challenge work? Does he feel better or worse after his first attempt?
6. What does he do next?
7. What second problem is introduced to raise the stakes or importance of the original problem?
8. What is the climactic moment in the story when both problems converge?
9. How does he respond to the climax?
10. What happens at the end?
11. Does this monologue end happily or sadly? Why do you think so?