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COMEDY OF MANNERS

By LINDSAY PRICE

The Comedy of Manners is a style of comedy that satirizes the behaviour, actions, fashions, and “manners” of a segment of society. Because it has such specific characteristics – from plot to dialogue, to characterization, to costumes – it’s an excellent era for students to learn and apply.

In this unit students are introduced to the style, learn some background, and apply the traits of the comedy of manners. The unit culminates in the creation of a modern scene.

1 - Introduction

The Comedy of Manners is a style of comedy that uses satire to highlight the behaviours, actions, fashions, and “manners” of a segment of society. In this lesson students discuss the nature of comedies that make fun of a group of people and the definition of satire. They are taken through a slide deck that introduces the background and style elements of the comedy of manners. Students also complete a Viewing Quiz.

2 - Manners and Codes in the Comedy of Manners

The comedy of manners is a style of comedy that uses satire to highlight the behaviours, actions, fashions, and “manners” of a segment of society. Students will explore the element of manners and codes of behaviour in a modern context, and then look at how the element is applied to a scene from *The Importance of Being Earnest*.

3 - Verbal Comedy in the Comedy of Manners

The comedy of manners is a style of comedy that uses satire to highlight the behaviours, actions, fashions, and “manners” of a segment of society. Students will explore aspects of verbal comedy in a modern context and then look at how the element is applied to a scene from *The Importance of Being Earnest*.

4 - Characters in the Comedy of Manners

The Comedy of Manners is a style of comedy that uses satire to highlight the behaviours, actions, fashions, and “manners” of a segment of society. Students will explore characters in the comedy of manners and then create a comedy of manners character profile with one of the characters from *The Importance of Being Earnest*.

5 - Culminating Assignment

In this culminating assignment, students will apply what they have learned throughout this unit to a modern devised scene.

Standards Connections

National Core Arts Standards

Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work - Grade 6

TH:Re8.1.6.b - Identify cultural perspectives that may influence the evaluation of a drama/theatre work.

Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work - Grade 7

TH:Re8.1.7.b - Describe how cultural perspectives can influence the evaluation of drama/theatre work.

Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work - Grade 8

TH:Re8.1.8.b - Analyze how cultural perspectives influence the evaluation of a drama/theatre work.

Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work - Grade HS Accomplished

TH:Re8.1.HSII.b - Apply concepts from a drama/theatre work for personal realization about cultural perspectives and understanding.

Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding - Grade 6

TH:Cn11.2.6.b - Investigate the time period and place of a drama/theatre work to better understand performance and design choices.

California VAPA Standards (2019)

6.TH:Re8 Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.

6.TH.Re8.b - Identify cultural contexts that may influence the evaluation of a drama/theatre work.

7.TH:Re8 Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.

7.TH.Re8.b - Describe how cultural contexts can influence the evaluation of drama/theatre work.

8.TH:Re8 Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.

8.TH.Re8.b - Analyze how cultural contexts influence the evaluation of a drama/theatre work.

Acc.TH:Re8 Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.

Acc.TH.Re8.b - Apply concepts from a drama/theatre work for personal realization about cultural contexts and understanding.

6.TH:Cn11.2 Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.

6.TH:Cn11.2.b - Investigate the time period and place of a drama/theatre work to better understand performance and design choices.

Colorado Academic Standards - Drama and Theatre Arts

Sixth Grade

DT.6.3.2.b - Students Can: Identify cultural perspectives that may influence the evaluation of a drama/theatre work.

Seventh Grade

DT.7.3.2.b - Students Can: Describe how cultural perspectives can influence the evaluation of drama/theatre work.

Eighth Grade

DT.8.3.2.b - Students Can: Analyze how cultural perspectives influence the evaluation of a drama/theatre work.

High School - Advanced Pathway

DT.H2.3.2.b - Students Can: Apply concepts from a drama/theatre work for personal realization about cultural perspectives and understanding.

Common Core

Language

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.L.1 - Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.L.2 - Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

Reading: Literature

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1 - Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

Language

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.1 - Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.2 - Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

Florida Sunshine State Standards

Critical Thinking & Reflection

TH.912.C.1.6 - Respond to theatrical works by identifying and interpreting influences of historical, social, or cultural contexts.

Historical & Global Connections

TH.912.H.1.1 - Analyze how playwrights' work reflects the cultural and socio-political framework in which it was created.

TH.912.H.1.3 - Present a design or perform in the style of a different historical or cultural context to gain appreciation of that time and culture.

Organizational Structure

TH.912.O.1.4 - Write an original script or a dramatic adaptation of a literary work to demonstrate knowledge of theatrical conventions.

TH.912.O.2.2 - Perform a scene or monologue in a non-traditional way that stays true to its dramatic structure and can be justified within the script.

Skills, Techniques & Processes

TH.912.S.2.3 - Demonstrate an understanding of a dramatic work by developing a character analysis for one or more of its major characters and show how the analysis clarifies the character's physical and emotional dimensions.

Georgia Performance Standards - Theatre Arts

Grade 6 - Connecting

TA6.CN.2 - Examine the role of theatre in a societal, cultural, and historical context., a. Describe the origins of theatre., b. Identify and analyze ways in which theatre influences and reflects the culture of a society., c. Utilize a multi-disciplinary approach to research, create, and support artistic choices., d. Examine the relevance of cultural and historical context.

Grade 7 - Creating

TA7.CR.2 - Develop scripts through theatrical techniques., a. Create ideas for stories., b. Analyze the theme and structure

of a play., c. Use the dramatic writing process to generate a script., d. Utilize dramatic conventions in the scriptwriting process (e.g. stage directions, dialogue, scenes).

Grade 7 - Connecting

TA7.CN.2 - Examine the role of theatre in a societal, cultural, and historical context., a. Examine theatre development throughout history., b. Identify and analyze cultural influences on theatre., c. Utilize multi-disciplinary research skills to obtain cultural and historical information to justify artistic choices (e.g. costuming, make-up, setting of a time period in relation to the play)., d. Draw conclusions about the influence of theatre on society.

Grade 8 - Connecting

TA8.CN.2 - Examine the role of theatre in a societal, cultural, and historical context., a. Compare and contrast how theatre evolves through time., b. Examine how culture is defined through theatre and other media., c. Apply advanced research skills to obtain appropriate cultural and historical information to rationalize artistic choices (e.g. costuming, make-up, setting of a time period in relation to the play)., d. Discuss theatre's role in reflecting the culture of a society.

Grades 9-12 - THEATRE HISTORY AND LITERATURE I AND II - Creating

TAHSTL.CR.1 - Develop original theatre literature., a. Compare and summarize theatre literature from various historical periods, cultures, and styles., b. Examine and outline the steps and conventions involved in the creation of a theatre text., c. Develop original texts using theatre techniques (e.g. improvisation, adapting non-theatre literature, playwriting exercises).

Grades 9-12 - THEATRE HISTORY AND LITERATURE I AND II - Performing

TAHSTL.PR.1 - Analyze characters in theatre literature from the perspective of an actor/performer., a. Use performance (e.g. oration, improvisation, rehearsed monologues, scenes) to analyze a character's role and significance to the meaning of the play.

Grades 9-12 - THEATRE HISTORY AND LITERATURE I AND II - Connecting

TAHSTL.CN.1 - Connect theatre literature to its dramaturgical contexts and other disciplines., a. Trace the development of theatre from earliest forms to contemporary forms., b. Identify and summarize contributions made to the development of theatre literature by different cultures and traditions., c. Research and explain how cultural and historical factors have influenced playwrights and theatre literature., d. Identify the elements, influences, and contributions of other art forms and content areas to theatre literature.

North Carolina Essential Standards 2024

Advanced High School Connect

AD.CN.1.1 - Analyze the impact of theatre throughout the world from the 1900s to the present on trends, styles, and artists, and their future implications.

Advanced High School Create

AD.CR.1.2 - Create a variety of extended scenes or plays inspired by various time periods or cultures.

Advanced High School Present

AD.PR.2.4 - Adapt staging and direction for various stage configurations.

Advanced High School Respond

AD.RE.1.2 - Evaluate the impact of theatrical works on

intended audiences.

North Carolina Essential Standards 2010

Advanced High School Standards - Culture

A.CU.1.1 - Interpret theatre arts from personal, cultural, and historical contexts.

A.CU.2.2 - Integrate conventions and structures of theatre when creating formal or informal theatre productions.

Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for Theatre Arts

MS 117.211 LI - Historical and cultural relevance

C.4.A - demonstrate the role of theatre as a reflection of history, society, and culture through participation in dramatic activities.

MS 117.212 LII - Historical and cultural relevance

B.4.A - demonstrate knowledge of theatre as a reflection of life in particular times, places, and cultures.

MS 117.213 LIII - Historical and cultural relevance

B.4.A - demonstrate theatre as a reflection of life in particular times, places, and cultures through performance.

B.4.B - explore theatre heritage such as historical and cultural influences as it is preserved in dramatic text, traditions, and conventions.

HS 117.315 LI - Foundations: Inquiry and Understanding

C.1.E - analyze characters by describing attributes such as physical, intellectual, emotional, and social dimensions through reading scripts of published plays.

HS 117.315 LI - Historical and cultural relevance

C.4.A - portray theatre as a reflection of life in particular times, places, and cultures.

C.4.B - relate historical and cultural influences on theatre.

C.4.D - appreciate the cultural heritages of world drama and theatre and identify key figures, works, and trends in dramatic literature.

HS 117.316 LII - Historical and cultural relevance

C.4.A - analyze historical and cultural influences on theatre.

HS 117.317 LIII - Historical and cultural relevance

C.4.A - evaluate historical and cultural influences on theatre.

HS 117.318 LIV - Historical and cultural relevance

C.4.A - evaluate historical and cultural influences on theatre.

Alberta, Canada

Theatre Studies Drama 30 (Early or Middle or Late drama)

4 - recognize dramatic structure of a play

5 - recognize elements of tragedy and comedy

6 - recognize realism and selected other significant theatre styles

Playwriting - Drama 20

1 - demonstrate understanding of the basic structure of a play

3 - demonstrate understanding of script format

6 - identify character types and their functions and

attributes

Junior Goal III Objectives

develop awareness of various conventions of theatre

Junior Orientation

meet deadlines and follow through on individual and group commitments

Junior Goal I Objectives

develop the ability to initiate, organize and present a project within a given set of guidelines

develop the ability to interact effectively and constructively in a group process

Theatre Studies Level II - Intermediate (Theatre History)

4 - recognize that drama exists in every culture

5 - recognize that "theatre is a mirror of society".

6 - show awareness of selected periods and playwrights

Senior Goal I Objectives

demonstrate the ability to contribute effectively and constructively to the group process

Senior Goal III Objectives

explore various conventions and traditions of theatre

British Columbia (2018)

GRADE 6 - ARTS - Exploring and creating

Create artistic works collaboratively and as an individual using ideas inspired by imagination, inquiry, experimentation, and purposeful play

Demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of personal, social, cultural, historical, and environmental contexts in relation to the arts

Explore relationships between identity, place, culture, society, and belonging through the arts

Intentionally select and apply materials, movements, technologies, environments, tools, and techniques by combining and arranging artistic elements, processes, and principles in art making

GRADE 6 - ARTS - Reasoning and reflecting

Reflect on works of art and creative processes to understand artists' intentions

GRADE 6 - ARTS - Communicating and documenting

Describe, interpret and respond to works of art and explore artists' intent

Express, feelings, ideas, and experiences through the arts

Take creative risks to express feelings, ideas, and experiences

GRADE 7 - ARTS - Exploring and creating

Create artistic works collaboratively and as an individual using ideas inspired by imagination, inquiry, experimentation, and purposeful play

Demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of personal, social, cultural, historical, and environmental contexts in relation to the arts

Explore relationships between identity, place, culture, society, and belonging through the arts

Intentionally select and apply materials, movements, technologies, environments, tools, and techniques by combining and arranging artistic elements, processes, and principles in art making

GRADE 7 - ARTS - Reasoning and reflecting

Reflect on works of art and creative processes to

understand artists' intentions

GRADE 7 - ARTS - Communicating and documenting

Express, feelings, ideas, and experiences through the arts

Take creative risks to express feelings, ideas, and experiences

GRADE 8 - ARTS - Exploring and creating

Create artistic works collaboratively and as an individual using ideas inspired by imagination, inquiry, experimentation, and purposeful play

Demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of personal, social, cultural, historical, and environmental contexts in relation to the arts

Explore relationships between identity, place, culture, society, and belonging through arts activities and experiences

GRADE 8 - ARTS - Communicating and documenting

Take creative risks to express feelings, ideas, and experiences

GRADE 9 - DRAMA - Exploring and creating

Create dramatic works both collaboratively and as an individual, using ideas inspired by imagination, inquiry, and purposeful play

Demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of personal, social, cultural, historical, and environmental in relation to drama

Explore relationships between identity, place, culture, society, and belonging through dramatic experiences

Take creative risks to experience and express thoughts, emotions, and meaning

GRADE 10 - DRAMA - Explore and Create

Develop performance skills in a variety of contexts

Improvise and take creative risks to express meaning

GRADE 10 - DRAMA - Reason and reflect

Describe, analyze, and respond using drama-specific language

GRADE 10 - DRAMA - Connect and expand

Demonstrate respect for self, others, and the audience

GRADE 11 - DRAMA - Explore and Create

Create, rehearse, and refine dramatic works through collaborative and individual presentation or performance

Develop and refine performance skills in a variety of contexts

Improvise and take creative risks using imagination, exploration, and inquiry

GRADE 11 - DRAMA - Reason and reflect

Demonstrate awareness of self, others, and audience

Receive and apply constructive feedback to develop and refine ideas

GRADE 11 - DRAMA - Connect and expand

Demonstrate awareness of self, others, and audience

GRADE 12 - DRAMA - Explore and Create

Create, rehearse, and refine dramatic works through collaborative and individual presentation or performance

Develop a repertoire of dramatic skills, vocabulary, and techniques through presentation or performance

Develop and refine performance skills in a variety of contexts

Improvise and take creative risks using imagination, exploration, and inquiry

GRADE 12 - DRAMA - Reason and reflect

Evaluate the social, cultural, historical, environmental, and

personal contexts of dramatic works

Use self-reflection and awareness of audience to refine ideas

GRADE 12 - DRAMA - Connect and expand

Demonstrate respect for self, others, and audience

Ontario, Canada

Grades 9 & 10 - Foundations - Context and Influences

C.2.1 - identify ways in which dramatic expression and performance reflect communities and cultures, past and present (e.g., the prominence of socially and/or politically powerful characters in the drama of pre-industrial societies; the use of boy actors for female roles in Shakespearean theatre; the emphasis on religious themes in the drama of many cultures in different eras)

C.2.2 - describe how drama is used for various purposes in a range of social contexts (e.g., to express or celebrate group or community sentiments or values in street theatre or parades; to mark important historical or religious anniversaries of a country or culture; to raise awareness of social, environmental, and political issues; to explore personal relationships or social arrangements)

Grades 9 & 10 - Reflecting, Responding and Analyzing - Drama and Society

B.2.1 - identify different types of drama and explain their function in diverse communities and cultures from the past and present (e.g., the function of television, film, or video game dramas with predictable plot lines and stock or stereotypical characters in today's society; the function of theatre in ancient Greece, liturgical drama in medieval Europe, Shakespearean drama in Elizabethan England, and/or "social problem" dramas today)

Virginia Standards Of Learning (2020)

Theatre Arts II: Dramatic Literature And Theatre History

TH.12 - The student will refine physical and vocal techniques for theatre performance.

TH.13 - The student will demonstrate techniques for actor preparation.

Theatre Arts II: Dramatic Literature And Theatre History

TH.6 - The student will explore historical and cultural aspects of theatrical works.

Theatre Arts II: Dramatic Literature And Theatre History

TH.1 - The student will write an original script utilizing an accepted script format and revise based on feedback.