



**Educational  
Theatre  
Association™**

## Behind the Scenes Technical Theatre Curriculum Overview

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### **UNIT Knowledge and skills:**

Be collaborative and open.

Need to understand their role on a production team.

Need to understand how to design for the unifying concept.

Need to understand the elements and principles of design.

Need to be able to present their ideas visually and verbally through technical drawings and models.

Need to be able to analyze a script for given circumstances and any functional needs of the design.

Need to be able to do targeted research to inform their design.

Need to be able to contribute ideas and accept and incorporate the ideas of others.

Need to be able to meet deadlines, budget, and take responsibility as a part of a team.

### **UNIT Learning goals:**

The students will learn how to create designs to support a unifying concept.

The students will research a script, story, scene or song with a focus on their design area.

The students will understand the function of a production budget.

The students will understand how to work as part of a production team.

The students practice working collaboratively and sharing leadership.

The students will contribute and accept ideas, take responsibility and meet deadlines.

The students collaboratively present the team's ideas visually and verbally through technical drawings and models.

### **UNIT Middle Grades National Theatre Standards:**

TH:Cr1.1.7b. Explain and present solutions to design challenges in a drama/ theatre work.

TH:Cr1.1.8b. Imagine and explore multiple perspectives and solutions to staging problems in a drama/theatre work.

TH:Cr2.1.7.b. Demonstrate mutual respect for self and other and their roles in preparing/devising a drama/theatre work.

TH:Cr2.1.8.b Share leadership and responsibilities to develop collaborative goals when preparing or devising drama/theatre work.

TH:Cr2-8. a. Articulate and apply critical analysis, background knowledge, research, and historical and cultural context to the development of original ideas for a drama/theatre work.

TH:Pr4.1.7.a. Consider various staging choices to enhance the story in a drama/theatre work.

TH:Pr5.1.7.b. Choose a variety of technical elements that can be applied to a design in a drama/theatre work.

TH:Pr5.1.8.b Use a variety of technical elements to create a design for a rehearsal or drama/theatre production.

Th:Re7.1.8.a. Apply criteria to the evaluation of artistic choices in a drama/theatre/work.

TH:Re8.1.7.a. Identify the artistic choices made based on personal experience in a drama/theatre work.

TH:Re8.1.8.a. Recognize and share artistic choices when participating in or observing a drama/theatre work.

Th:Re7.1.8.a. Apply criteria to the evaluation of artistic choices in a drama/theatre/work.

Th:Re8.1.8.c. Apply personal aesthetics, preferences and beliefs to evaluate a drama/theatre work.

TH: Cn11.2.7.a. Research and discuss how a playwright might have intended a drama/theatre work to be produced.

TH:Cn11.2.8.a. Research the story elements of a staged drama/theatre work and compare them to another production of the same work.

TH:Cn11.2.7 b. Examine artifacts from a time period and geographic location to better understand performance and design choices in a drama/theatre work.

## **UNIT High School National Theatre Standards**

### **If taught as an introductory HS class:**

TH:Cr1.1.II.a. Investigate historical and cultural conventions and their impact on the visual composition of a drama/theatre work.

TH:Cr2.1.I.a. Explore the function of history and culture in the development of a dramatic concept through a critical analysis of original ideas in a drama/theatre work.

TH:Cr2.1.I.b. Investigate the collaborative nature of the actor, director, playwright, and designers and explore their interdependent roles in a drama/theatre work.

TH:Pr5.1.I.b. Use researched technical elements to increase the impact of design for a drama/theatre production.

TH:Re7.1.I. a. Respond to what is seen, felt, and heard in a drama/theatre work to develop criteria for artistic choices.

TH:Re9.1.I.a. Examine a drama/ theatre work using supporting evidence and criteria, while considering art forms, history, culture, and other disciplines.

TH:Re9.1.I b. Consider the aesthetics of the production elements in a drama/theatre work.

TH:Re9.1.I c. Formulate a deeper understanding and appreciation of a drama/ theatre work by considering its specific purpose or intended audience.

TH:Cn11.2.I.a. Research how other theatre artists apply creative processes to tell stories in a devised or scripted drama/theatre work, using theatre research methods.

TH:Cn11.2.I.b. Use basic theatre research methods to better understand the social and cultural background of a drama/theatre work.

### **If taught as a more advanced HS unit:**

TH:Cr1.1.II.b. Understand and apply technology to design solutions for a drama/theatre work.

TH:Cr1.1.II.a. Investigate historical and cultural conventions and their impact on the visual composition of a drama/theatre work.

TH:Cr1.1.III.a. Synthesize knowledge from a variety of dramatic forms, theatrical conventions, and technologies to create the visual composition of a drama/ theatre work.

TH:Cr1.1.III.b. Create a complete design for a drama/theatre work that incorporates all elements of technology.

TH:Cr2.1.II.a. Refine a dramatic concept to demonstrate a critical understanding of historical and cultural influences of original ideas applied to a drama/theatre work.

TH:Cr2.1.II.b. Cooperate as a creative team to make interpretive choices for a drama/theatre work.

TH:Cr2.1.III.a. Develop and synthesize original ideas in a drama/theatre work utilizing critical analysis, historical and cultural context, research, and western or non-western theatre traditions.

TH:Cr2.1.III.b. Collaborate as a creative team to discover artistic solutions and make interpretive choices in a devised or scripted drama/theatre work.

TH:Pr4.1.II.a. Discover how unique choices shape believable and sustainable drama/ theatre work.

TH:Pr4.1.II.b. Identify essential text information, research from various sources, and the director's concept that influence character choices in a drama/theatre work.

TH:Pr4.1.III.a. Apply reliable research of directors' styles to form unique choices for a directorial concept in a drama/theatre work.

TH:Pr5.1.II. b. Apply technical elements and research to create a design that communicates the concept of a drama/theatre production.

TH:Pr5.1.III.b. Explain and justify the selection of technical elements used to build a design that communicates the concept of a drama/theatre production.

TH:Re7.1.II.a. Demonstrate an understanding of multiple interpretations of artistic criteria and how each might be used to influence future artistic choices of a drama/theatre work.

TH:Re7.1.III.a. Use historical and cultural context to structure and justify personal responses to a drama/theatre work.

TH:Re9.1.II.a. Analyze and assess a drama/theatre work by connecting it to art forms, history, culture, and other disciplines using supporting evidence and criteria.

TH:Re9.1.II.b. Construct meaning in a drama/theatre work, considering personal aesthetics and knowledge of production elements while respecting others' interpretations.

TH:Re9.1.III.a. Research and synthesize cultural and historical information related to a drama/theatre work to support or evaluate artistic choices.

TH:Re9.1.III b. Analyze and evaluate varied aesthetic interpretations of production elements for the same drama/theatre work.

TH:Cn11.2.II.a. Formulate creative choices for a devised or scripted drama/theatre work based on theatre research about the selected topic.

TH:Cn11.2.III.a. Justify the creative choices made in a devised or scripted drama/theatre work, based on a critical interpretation of specific data from theatre research.

TH:Cn11.2.III.b. Present and support an opinion about the social, cultural, and historical understandings of a drama/theatre work, based on critical research.

### **UNIT “I Can” Statements**

I can contribute to the work of a production team.

I can work collaboratively and share leadership.

I can contribute and accept ideas, take responsibilities and meet deadlines.

I can create a design to support a unifying concept that takes into account any given circumstances, available resources and functionality.

I can present my ideas visually using technical drawings and models.

I can conduct the needed research to understand how to create my design.

### **UNIT Materials:**

A video copy of the 1978 musical “The Wiz” starring Diana Ross and Michael Jackson (Universal Pictures & Motown Productions)

An iPad, tablet, computer or cell phone with the ability to access the internet and other designated online sites and the ability to capture digital images.

A method of collecting, organizing, storing and sharing student work (such as device file folders, Google Drive, Canvas, etc.)

Composition book or journal, sketch pads, colored pencils, markers and art supplies, graph paper, black cardboard stock, glue stick.

Students creating costume designs will use paper and art supplies and then take a digital photograph

Students creating scene designs will use cardboard stock, paper and arts supplies and then take a digital photograph.

Students creating sound designs will use either Garage Band or an internet-based sound application.

Students creating light designs will need the ability to use and take screenshots from the Online Light Lab at

<https://scenicandlighting.com/lightlab/>

Copies of the rubric.

### **Planning for all learners:**

- Students with special needs may be paired with other students to help with the creation of the actual design while still incorporating their ideas.

- Tasks can each be broken into smaller, more manageable parts and completed one at a time.

- Elements of design may be taught through multiple means, such as an oral presentation and discussion, reading a text on the material with questions to answer, or improv activities which explore each element.

- Alternative to sketching would be to utilize drawing applications, adaptive tools and/or tools on a computer or tablet.

- Alternative to a written analysis and research would be an oral analysis (such as character interviews) or evaluation with the teacher.

- If the student is unable to share in front of large groups, sharing the portfolio with the entire class would be sharing it with a smaller group or just with the teacher.

- Students can be allowed to sign their presentation or use adaptive tools.

- English language learners could be provided with translations of all instructions.

- Alternative to sharing the design with the entire class would be sharing it with a smaller group or just with the teacher.

For General Guidelines for Inclusion in the Arts, see Guiding Principles for Inclusion (The National Core Arts Standards Inclusion Strategies)

<https://www.nationalartsstandards.org/sites/default/files/Guiding%20Principles%20for%20Inclusion.pdf>

**UNIT Overview:** After watching the movie *“The Wiz” (Universal Pictures and MoTown Productions, 1978)* or a suitable substitute with a playscript available, students will learn about the importance of a director’s concept and research to a production. The students will complete units of instruction in costume design, scenic design, lighting design and sound design. Then, each student will choose a design specialty and be placed in small groups to act as production teams. These production teams will create a concept for their scene and lighting, sound, scenic and costume designs. A royalty free script of *The Wizard of Oz* by Erin Moughon-Smith is included with this curriculum OR the teacher may choose another script with appropriate licensing fees paid. Final designs will be presented as a student showcase, using Google Slides or other PowerPoint or presentation tool. **Note: for purposes of organization, this unit is planned assuming an instructional week is defined as 5 days at 35-45 minutes per day. It is understood that this may vary from classroom to classroom, so the classroom teacher can plan accordingly.**

### **Week ONE- Introduction Week**

Introduce the project and the idea of a unifying concept. (In this case: What if the Wizard of Oz happened in Harlem, NY? A magical world in a contemporary city.)

Introduce *The Wiz* and guide the students through watching the show, using assignments and discussion prompts provided. Hand out journals and help students conduct internet research.

**Weekly goals:** Students watch *The Wiz*, learn to use their iPads to research the show, save an image, take a screenshot, take a picture, use an online file sharing system like Google or Canvas to create and save documents, etc. Students complete a mini research project that will help them understand design.

### **Week Two – iPad Launch and Research**

Depending on class time, finish watching *The Wiz*. Help the students identify a research topic for deep understanding of the show. Research topics examples: Harlem or other NYC locations- Wizard of Oz- 1978 fashion- 1978 apartments in NY, the director of the production, etc. Guide the students to think about what the colors, music, etc. that gave *The Wiz* a unified look and addressed the production concept. (What colors do they see used? How do the costumes stand out from the set, etc.)

**Weekly Goals:** Students identify research topics and learn how to use the internet to research and deepen understanding of a production, script or story. Students need to be able to successfully access the internet, identify appropriate resources, find and save images, sounds, articles, etc.

### **Weeks Three, Four, Five and Six – Design Challenges** (either costuming, set, lights or sound)

After a visit from a working designer or watching a video to introduce the designer’s role, students will receive a design challenge, they will use their research and what they know about *The Wiz* and the unifying concept to complete the challenge, following the designers process of: Research- Plan- Design. Weekly design challenge will be either a costume, a light design, a sound scape, or a set design for a given scene or moment from *The Wiz*. Make sure the students are thinking about what they know about the production and the unifying concept. Guide the students through their weekly design challenge (using the detailed curriculum) -monitor their progress and collect and document their finished work.

**Weekly Goals:** Students complete a design challenge.

### **Weeks Seven, Eight & Nine: Production Design Teams**

Students receive their scripts (short scenes taken from *The Wizard of Oz* by Erin Moughon-Smith- one scene per production team) and based on their interests are placed in production design teams with costumer designers, a set designer, a lighting designer and a sound designer on each team. Their challenge is to work as a team to decide on a concept and where to place *The Wizard of Oz* in order to come up with a unifying concept. (A nearby landmark? Some city of the future? Trapped in a video game? the possibilities are endless) Work with the students to guide them into production teams, help them through the creation of a unifying concept, and keep them on task creating their designs. This could end in a showcase or open house for parents where students could practice communicating their designs to others- think Science Fair for Theatre!

**Three week goal:** Students form production teams, research and identify a unifying concept and create scenic, sound, light and costume designs to support their scene and unifying concept, then share their concepts as design presentations to the larger group.