

Lesson Plan Title: Adaption from page to stage

How can this lesson's Inherent content be based in a wide range of resources so that our students of color, students with disabilities, and other marginalized students are integral to the content?

This lesson is all about adapting current events for the stage. You may use historical events if that works for your students and pick events that are important to their lives. These events could be from anywhere in the world and reflect your students. Newspapers can be in any language and in at any reading level. This lesson also uses two different songs from *Hamilton* both of which show diverse performers and perspectives.

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Description: In this writing lesson, students will adapt a current event story into a dramatic piece. They will justify their theatrical choices and revise their piece based on rehearsal and feedback.

Learning Outcomes:

Students will be able to:

- Research current events
- Create a short scene from their research and chosen event
- Critique their work and that of others
- Revise their scene based on feedback

Grade Level: High School Advanced

2014 National Core Theatre Standards:

TH:Re8.1.III.a. Use detailed supporting evidence and appropriate criteria to revise personal work and interpret the work of others when participating in or observing 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 nonwestern theatre traditions.

Time to Teach: 3 periods; 50 minutes (Optional 4th day)

Materials Required for Instruction:

Internet access and devices or printed articles/newspapers
Chart paper and/or Smart Board and/or white board
Writing utensils
Worksheets (see additional materials)
Extra paper for writing the scene
Projector or piece of technology on which you can play a video

Opening:

Show the opening number from *Hamilton*.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MT216BstSbc&feature=emb_logo

Then show this video (Immigrants, We Get the Job done)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6_35a7sn6ds

Alternative: You can show clips from Notes from the Field TED Talk:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KR8SwPmCFd4>

Instructional Procedures:

Day 1: Introduction and research

Step 1: Tell students that *Hamilton* was adapted from a book which was based on research about Alexander Hamilton. The second clip is a remix adaptation of lines from *Hamilton*. Ask students to Turn and Talk about what they noticed about both adaptations. Have a few students share what they noticed.

Step 2: Tell students, like Lin-Manuel Miranda and Anna Deavere Smith, they will be taking a current or historical event and dramatizing it. Have students THINK, PAIR, SHARE about these two questions which will be on chart paper (or SMART Board or White Board): Why would someone want to dramatize a current or historical event? What would a playwright need to consider when adapting a current or historical event?

Step 3: Have students share their answers while one or two students record their answers on the papers. (Things to highlight: Theatre is a great teaching tool to bring light to important, sometimes overlooked events. They feel passionate about a topic and want others to know about it. Playwrights would need to think about characters, conflict, story arc, 5 W's, etc.)

Step 4: Hand out Writing a Current Event into a Scene Worksheet and the internet connected devices or newspaper articles (or any other research materials you have). Tell students they are going to pick ONE event/story to adapt into a play. They should think about who is involved in the story and what the central conflict is. They should also think about why this story is important to tell. They will write a scene (no length constraints) with a beginning, middle, and end. That tells this story.

Step 5: Give them time to research and chose an article or articles as the basis of their plays. Tell them that they need to select their topic today and complete part of the worksheet.

Step 6: Collect the worksheet and make notes for students about what they have done so far.

Note on language in plays: I encourage students to create dialogue that is authentic to their characters. This sometimes includes strong language that might make some people (administrators, families, readers for play contests) uncomfortable. I only allow it (with some words completely off the table) if students can justify, using evidence, why it is important for their character and story to contain such language. It is usually a really great conversation and actually makes them do a lot more character and story work if they didn't have to justify the language, and it creates really thoughtful pieces that really feel like them. (Also many plays in the American canon use strong language as do some news articles (and subjects of news. You should do what you feel comfortable with in your classroom. I also sometimes do this on a case-by-case basis because every class and every student is different. In short, it is up to you as you are the authority of your classroom. I just wanted to let you know how I handle this and that it will come up.

Day 2: Writing (and additional research if necessary)

Step 1: Ask students what are their favorite adaptations (think book to movie or movie to book or movie to musical, etc, or in *Hairspray's* case movie to musical to movie). Ask them what had to change and have a class discussion about it. (Short discussion, main point is that most authors, even Miranda, had to choose what was important and make cuts to material. *Hamilton* the book is 818 pages! So they need to be thoughtful about what they include and cut.)

Step 2: Hand back the worksheet with the notes. Tell students they will continue their researching and writing.

Step 3: Allow those students who need to do more research to continue to research. Allow the other students to complete the worksheet and start writing their scenes. If students need more guidance on playwriting format, here are two resources:

- <http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/writersroom/scripts/stageus.pdf>
- [https://www.youthplays.com/userfiles/YouthPLAYS%20New%20Voices%20Format%20Sheet\(1\).pdf](https://www.youthplays.com/userfiles/YouthPLAYS%20New%20Voices%20Format%20Sheet(1).pdf)

Step 4: Meet one-on-one with each student to discuss why they chose their event and what they think are the most important parts to represent onstage and just a general checkup. Hand students the checklist and have them go over it to see what they've already accomplished and what they still need to work on.

Step 5: Have students take home any incomplete work to finish as homework. Collect any completed work.

Day 3: Feedback and editing

Step 1: Return any collected work and handout a fresh checklist to each student.

Step 2: Tell students that they are going to be in partnerships (you can pre-assign students, have them partner up, or randomly assign them, your call). They will trade scripts, read their partner's script, and complete the checklist for the script. They will then talk to each other about what they noticed in each other's scripts, what they wondered about, and what questions they have.

Step 3: Give students time to make any edits they want to make to their scripts after the feedback.

Step 4: Have all students fill out the checklist for their own script and answer the two reflection questions.

Step 5: Go to closing!

Optional Day 4: Read plays aloud as a class. (Have the writers cast their pieces with actors in the class. I recommend it being a cold reading, but if you have time for rehearsal, go for it!) Allow writers to submit another draft based on the reading.

Assessment:

Checklist and Final Reflection (attached)

Peer Assessment using the checklist

Closing:

Show this video which is the opening number from *Sweeney Todd*, but set to the music of the opening number of *Hamilton* with the original cast of *Hamilton*. It's a fun and silly adaptation which is just a fun way to end. Let students know that anything can be adapted (though to make sure to get permission from the original creators! Lin definitely did in all cases!) And celebrate!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bruTOQoNtO4>

ALTERNATIVE: Watch all of *Notes From the Field* or a docu-drama of your choice.

Please use the space below for suggestions for any adaptations or accommodations for inclusion of special needs learners.

News sources could be pre-screened and focus on topics specific to your students (like the fight for the Americans with Disabilities Act or DACA or anything that matches their experiences).

This website has lists of news sources for kids (a variety of reading levels):

<http://gws.ala.org/category/social-sciences/news-current-events>

You could assign each student an article or have a list for them to select from.

Students could work in pairs or small groups instead of by themselves.

Encourage multi-lingual students to find sources in any language they speak and to write an adaptation that incorporates multiple languages.

Work with their history teachers and learning specialists to see what they are studying and have them adapt something they are learning from history.

Preview the lessons a day early or as a homework assignment.

Please use the space below to list any suggestions for multi-cultural inclusions.

Encourage students to pick topics that are important to them. Encourage students to use current events from outside of the United States or to focus on local and community papers. Really anything that opens up the conversation!

Works Cited:

Potential news sources:

<http://gws.ala.org/category/social-sciences/news-current-events>

<https://apnews.com/>

<https://www.wsj.com/>

<https://www.reuters.com/>

<https://www.bbc.com/news>

www.nytimes.com

www.washingtonpost.com

Other site for historical and current content:

<https://blackworkbroadway.com/Info>

Video clips:

Hamilton opening Grammy's: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MT216BstSbc&feature=emb_logo

Immigrants, We Get the Job Done: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6_35a7sn6ds

Hamilton/Sweeney Todd: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bruTOQoNtO4>

Notes from the Field (full movie): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r3uVnftc_Vo

Formatting guidelines for plays:

<http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/writersroom/scripts/stageus.pdf>

[https://www.youthplays.com/userfiles/YouthPLAYS%20New%20Voices%20Format%20Sheet\(1\).pdf](https://www.youthplays.com/userfiles/YouthPLAYS%20New%20Voices%20Format%20Sheet(1).pdf)

Name:

Date:

Writing a Current Event into a Scene Worksheet

Use this space to plan your scene. Think about the following questions. They should be short answers, just jumping off points for you to get started working! You can also work first, and fill these in after you've written some or all of your scene.

Part 1: Current Event Information

1. List your source(s) for your current event:

2. In one-two sentences, summarize your current event:

3. Who from the event will you include in your scene? (Describe who they are and what their relationship.)

4. Where does it take place? (Location/Setting)

5. When does it take place? (Time)

6. What is the conflict/problem of story that your scene will focus on?

7. Why is this the conflict/problem?

8. What is the resolution of your story? (How does it end? Is the problem solved or not solved?)

9. Why do you think this story is important to tell on stage?

Part 2: Character Objectives and Motivations

Answer the following questions for each character. (You may not need all five spaces or you may need more. It is all dependent on your play. Use what you need.)

1. Name: _____

a. Age: _____

b. Three words to describe your character:

c. Relationship to other characters in play:

d. Their objective:

e. Why they want their objective:

f. How their objective conflicts with another character(s):

g. What tactics do they employ to get their objective?

2. Name: _____

a. Age: _____

b. Three words to describe your character:

c. Relationship to other characters in play:

d. Their objective:

e. Why they want their objective:

f. How their objective conflicts with another character(s):

g. What tactics do they employ to get their objective?

3. Name: _____

a. Age: _____

b. Three words to describe your character:

c. Relationship to other characters in play:

d. Their objective:

e. Why they want their objective:

f. How their objective conflicts with another character(s):

g. What tactics do they employ to get their objective?

4. Name: _____

a. Age: _____

b. Three words to describe your character:

c. Relationship to other characters in play:

d. Their objective:

e. Why they want their objective:

f. How their objective conflicts with another character(s):

g. What tactics do they employ to get their objective?

5. Name: _____

a. Age: _____

b. Three words to describe your character:

c. Relationship to other characters in play:

d. Their objective:

e. Why they want their objective:

f. How their objective conflicts with another character(s):

g. What tactics do they employ to get their objective?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Current Event Checklist and Final Reflection

Use this checklist to give your partner feedback. After you've received your feedback and made any changes you want to your scene, complete this checklist and the two questions after.

	Yes! Absolutely!	Sort of, but I need a little more work.	I need more time and maybe some help to get it there.
My scene has a beginning, middle, and end.			
Evidence:			
My scene includes all of the pivotal characters from the current event.			
Evidence:			
My scene has the conflict/problem from the current event as the central focus of it.			
Evidence:			
Each of my characters has a clear objective, and at least two characters have competing objectives.			
Evidence:			
Each of my character uses multiple tactics to try and achieve their objective.			
Evidence:			
Each of my character uses multiple tactics to try and achieve their objective.			
Evidence:			

	Yes! Absolutely!	Sort of, but I need a little more work.	I need more time and maybe some help to get it there.
My scene makes the time and place of the event clear.			
Evidence:			
Anyone reading or seeing my scene would know what the current event I chose is.			
Evidence:			

1. What part of your scene are most proud of? Explain.

2. What part of your scene do you want to keep working on? Explain.
