

2. Help us understand your arts program by including one unit from your year long curriculum for one grade level/art discipline.

“Theatre at its core is the sacrifice of the actor for his audience.”

- Michael Workman, 4 year theatre student, CVHS senior

Drama 3-4 Unit Plan: Oedipus Rex and the Greek Theatre

I. Objective

Students will develop a deeper understanding of the elements of Greek theatre, its origins, and its connection to modern theatre through research and their study of Sophocles' Oedipus Rex.

II. California Theatre Standards

- 1.1 Use the vocabulary of theatre, such as genre, style, acting values, theme, and design, to describe theatrical experiences.
- 1.2 Research, analyze, or serve as the dramaturg for a play in collaboration with the director, designer, or playwright.
- 2.1 Make acting choices, using script analysis, character research, reflection and revision to create characters from classical, contemporary, realistic, and nonrealistic dramatic texts.
- 2.2 Improvise or write dialogues and scenes, applying basic dramatic structure (exposition, complication, crises, climax, and resolution) and including complex characters with unique dialogue that motivates the action.
- 2.3 Work collaboratively as designer, producer, or actor to meet directional goals in scenes and plays from a variety of contemporary and classical playwrights.
- 3.1 Research and perform monologues in various historical and cultural contexts, using accurate and consistent physical mannerisms and dialect.
- 4.2 Draw conclusions about the effectiveness of informal and formal productions, films/videos, or electronics media on the basis of intent, structure, and quality of the work.
- 4.3 Develop a thesis based on research as to why people create theatre.
- 5.3 Communicate creative design, and directorial choices to ensemble members, using leadership skills, aesthetic judgment, or problem-solving skills.

III. Learning Activity/Experience

Students will research the history of the Greek theatre, create a powerpoint presentation, and deliver presentation to the class, following the instructions on the handout. Then, as a class, students choreograph the sample dithyramb and read aloud Oedipus Rex. Students divide into groups and create their own modern plays using masks and the Greek structure of plays, as outlined on the handout. Students then follow the rehearsal schedule handout as they block and stage their scenes. Scenes will then be presented at an after school “Greek Festival” to invited guests.

IV. Daily Assessment

- ability to understand and re-state concepts by observation of presentation to class.
- ability to work in groups by informal observation of teachers.
- ability to synthesize acting techniques and the concepts of Greek history and theatre by observation of presentation to class.

Student Handout



Greek History Power Point Presentation
Total points: 200 points
Due date:

Requirements:

1. At least 20 slides
2. At least one picture/slide
3. Bullet phrases on each slide
4. List of all sources (web addresses, and hard copy material used)

Required Information

1. Describe the label the parts of a Greek theatre
2. Describe the purpose of the Greek chorus
3. List and describe the parts of a "Greek" play. Be sure to include:
 - Dithyrambes
 - Prologos
 - Parodos
 - First epeissodes
 - First stassima
 - Monodia, Diodia
 - Last epeissodes
 - Exodus
4. Biography of the major Greek playwrights
5. History and purpose of the "comedy"
6. History and purpose of the "tragedy"
7. Description of the Greek "festivals"
8. Use of masks
9. Use of costumes

Presentations will be delivered in class on: _____

Student Handout

Project: The Masks of Oedipus Rex

1. Write a modern adaptation to Oedipus the King, including a modern dythramb
no longer than 5 minutes in length, include Deus Ex Machina, choral leader, strophe, antestrophe
2. Draw a mask which represents the overall emotion and personality of your character
make sure the drawing is in full color and it is neat and creative.
3. Create a mask out of papier mache.
4. Rehearse your scenes according to the scenes schedule.
5. Perform the play with the masks to invited guests.

Student Handout

The Dithyramb

An Ode (song) To the gods

Chorus: Death is around us and we do not heal
The light is before us and we do not see
We do not see without your help
We give it to you thanks and sacrifice
So that our crops will grow
So that our wine will flow
So that our children will sing to their children

Thespsis leaves the Chorus:

Chorus Leader: Oh Zeus --

All: Protect us and watch us and help us --

Chorus Leader: Oh Zeus

All: Zeus -- Zeus -- Zeus -- Zeus

Chorus Leader: Our great leader -- Our great provider

All: Give us food so that we may live

Chorus Leader: Apollo --

All: Give us light so that we can see

Aschylsus Adds An Actor:

Chorus Leader: All hail -- bow to our king Oedipus

Chorus: Oedipus save us -- we are poor and sick

Chorus Leader: Thebes is filled with disease.

Chorus: Our crops do not grow

Chorus Leader: Our children die in their mother's arms

Chorus: Help us!

Oedipus: Children! Be silent!

I teach theatre history through performance.
The students learn by doing.

I wrote this Dithyramb as an example to reflect the events within the play Oedipus Rex while demonstrating the evolution of Greek drama. The students will perform and choreograph the dithyramb and experience the movement from the tradition of the chorus leader, to the entrance of Thespsis, and finally to the addition of actors by the subsequent playwrights.

Chorus: It is Oedipus our king! Our good King! Bow down to our good King!

Oedipus: Tell me the reason for your pain! Why is Thebes shrouded in death!

Sophocles Adds Another Actor

Blind Soothsayer: I have the answer Oedipus

Chorus Leader: The man

Chorus: Cannot see, but yet he knows the truth

Oedipus: Come before me blind man and tell me the truth

Soothsayer: The Oracle has been set by the gods

Chorus: Our King will kill his father and marry his mother

Oedipus: But I left my family and avoided the Oracle

Soothsayer: And you answered the riddle of the Sphinx

Chorus Leader: What crawls in the morning

Chorus: Walks on Two Legs in the afternoon

Soothsayer: And Three Legs in the evening

Chorus: Mankind!

Oedipus Scenes Rehearsal Schedule

Day I

- ✓ Read through the scene
- ✓ Determine setting (doesn't have to follow the script)
- ✓ Determine characters – make it interesting!
- ✓ Brainstorm unique ways to stage this – something new, different, interesting
- ✓ Write general character goals:
- ✓ What does each character want
- ✓ What is stopping them
- ✓ What is their strategy to achieve their goals
- ✓ What movement strategies can you add

Day II

- ✓ Break your scene into beats
- ✓ Label the literal content of each beat
- ✓ Label what each character wants in each beat
- ✓ Write out the subtext of each beat if there is one

Homework: First half of the character questions

Day III

- ✓ Read through the script again, answering the following questions:
- ✓ What is this scene about? What is the mood of this scene? Where does it change? What is the tone? Where does it change?
- ✓ Label the changes. What causes these changes?
- ✓ What will your set look like? How can you use the following:
 - Variety, Levels, Theatricality
- ✓ Label the action beats:
 - When is your character attacking, and when is he retreating?

Homework: Second half of the character questions and character sketch

Day IV

- ✓ Share your character sketch with your partner. Make any changes that don't match your scene or your partner's sketch.
- ✓ Read through your scene again – but this time, walk around while you read it. Place your set pieces in your area and walk around while you read the script. Try to be really wild in your movement.
- ✓ Now, it's time to do some real blocking – Focus on levels, variety, and theatricality.
- ✓ Examine when one character is more powerful than the other, examine when one character is attacking and the other retreating. How can the other character protect himself?
- ✓ Find interesting strategies to achieve their goals!
- ✓ Remember – don't stick to the script – but don't ignore it!

Homework: Memorize your scene.

Rehearsal

- ✓ Run through the blocking from the day before -- your first blocking try is usually not the best -- make some changes, perhaps you can take even more risks.
- ✓ After going through it once, find somebody to watch you. Try to give a hundred percent when you go through it. It is always good for others to see your scene when you're at your best.
- ✓ After you run through it, ask the person watching you very specific questions. Don't just ask, "What did you think?" No! Ask, do you see levels, could you tell who was in power, did you understand the mood I tried to create, did you understand what each character wanted, etc!

