

# Theatre

## Grades 9 – 12

Students in Grades 9-12 thrive on the challenges of increased academic rigor leading to advanced knowledge, skills, and artistic processes in preparation for college and career. By exploring connections to other disciplines, content standards guide students to artistic literacy in a rapidly changing world environment. Students find the high school theatre arts program to be one in which they are encouraged to develop their talents, abilities, and skills and to find personal satisfaction in creating, performing, responding, and connecting to a variety of artistic processes and products.

Three levels of theatre proficiency are provided for students in Grades 9-12: Proficient, Accomplished, and Advanced. Increased academic rigor at each level leads to mastery of content in the Advanced level. At the Proficient level, students begin to learn the legal and ethical implications of performing another's work. They also examine dramatic structure more completely, incorporate creativity and imagination into the production of a classroom script, begin to realize the role of self-evaluation, and expand performance through their knowledge of settings, materials, and production staffing. Students at this level begin to explore the world's cultures, identifying how the arts influence various cultures as well as how those cultures impact the arts.

The Accomplished level theatre classroom provides students with opportunities for rigorous academic study and response to performances as well as participation in a full theatrical production. Students at this level begin to transition from adolescence into early adulthood with varying abilities, learning styles, interests, and social skills. These students are challenged to begin justifying critical choices through the different aspects of theatre. Emphasis is placed on theatre's role in society and the ever-expanding opportunities for technology in the arts. At this level, students have an in-depth understanding of theatre's history and critically study the works of renowned playwrights.

The Advanced level is designed for students who have mastered basic theatre skills and concepts. Students are provided a more in-depth study of the history of theatre as well as a study of aesthetic and critical issues. They master the rigor of a professional production and are involved in an independent learning environment as they design, lead rehearsals, and take more responsibility for their own learning and products. Appropriate audience and performer etiquette is also stressed.

As students master standards in the Accomplished and Advanced levels, specific advanced courses may need to be designed on the local level to increase the depth of understanding and the quality of creating, performing, responding, and connecting. Elective courses might include Musical Theatre, Dramatic Media, Technical Theatre, Playwriting, Directing, Theatrical Design, Acting, or Theatre Management.

# Theatre Proficient

The Proficient level course builds sequentially upon theatre knowledge and skills developed in Grades 6-8. This level addresses students' intellectual needs, learning styles, talents, interest, and maturation levels. This level enables students to become proficient in the four Artistic Processes of Creating, Performing, Responding, and Connecting. For students who lack previous theatre courses, teachers may need to revisit and review standards from prior grade levels.

Proficient theatre students are more involved in character development, script analysis, collaboration, and the technical aspects of production. They are learning to weigh their strengths and weaknesses realistically through self-evaluation. In addition, they begin to learn about the legal and ethical implications of performing another's work, explore the history of theatre both in America and in the world, and examine more thoroughly the concepts of theatre, including elements of theatre and styles of performance. Students look at how society values the arts and begin to make critical judgments about these values and the arts that reflect them. The impact of language is stressed both in script evaluation and in students' choice and use of language in the theatre class and in other academic subjects.

*Students can:*

## CREATING

Envision, Conceptualize

1. Apply basic research to construct ideas about the visual composition of a drama/theatre work.
2. Explore the impact of technology on design choices in a drama/theatre work.

Develop

3. Use script analysis to generate ideas that represent a character who is believable and authentic in a drama/theatre work.
4. 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.  
Example: *Hamilton*
5. Investigate the collaborative nature of the actor, director, playwright, and designers and explore their interdependent roles in a drama/theatre work.

Rehearse

6. Practice and revise a devised or scripted drama/theatre work using theatrical staging conventions.  
Example: Identify and use basic stage areas and stage directions in rehearsal: upstage, downstage, stage right, stage left, cross, enter, exit, stage balance, composition, and picturization.
7. Explore physical, vocal, and emotional choices to develop a performance that is believable, authentic, and relevant to a drama/theatre work.
8. Create and refine the technical design choices to support the story and emotional impact of devised or scripted drama/theatre works.

## PERFORMING

### Select

9. Examine how character relationships assist in telling the story of a drama/theatre work.
10. Shape character choices in response to given circumstances in a drama/theatre work.

### Prepare

11. Explore various acting techniques to expand skills in a rehearsal or drama/theatre performance.  
Examples: Laban effort shapes to enhance movement, Stanislavski method for character development, Alexander technique for breath and body control
12. Use researched technical elements to increase the impact of design for a drama/theatre production.

### Present

13. Perform a scripted drama/theatre work for a specific audience.  
Example: Perform a children's theatre piece for students in grades K-2 in their school system.

## RESPONDING

### Reflect

14. Respond to what is seen, felt, and heard in a drama/theatre work in order to make artistic choices.

### Interpret

15. Analyze and compare artistic choices in several drama/theatre works based on criteria developed from one's own experiences.
16. Identify and compare cultural perspectives and contexts that may influence the evaluation of a drama/theatre work.
17. Justify personal aesthetics, preferences, and beliefs through participation in and observation of a drama/theatre work.

### Evaluate

18. Examine a drama/ theatre work using supporting evidence and criteria, while considering art forms, history, culture, and other disciplines.
19. Consider the aesthetics of the production elements in a drama/theatre work.
20. Classify and explore a drama/ theatre work by considering its specific purpose or intended audience.

## CONNECTING

### Empathize

21. Examine how cultural perspectives, community ideas, and personal beliefs impact a drama/theatre work.

### Interrelate

22. Explore how cultural, global, and historic belief systems affect creative choices in a drama/theatre work.

## Research

23. Research how theatre artists apply creative processes to tell stories in a devised or scripted drama/theatre work, using theatre research methods.
24. Use basic theatre research methods to better understand the social and cultural background of a drama/theatre work.
25. Research the legal and ethical limitations and opportunities related to performing published material.

# Theatre

## Accomplished

The Accomplished level course is designed to build upon previous knowledge and skills through a rigorous study of theatre encompassing the four artistic processes of creating, performing, responding and connecting.

Students at the Accomplished level approach theatre as a substantive academic discipline. Students continue developing and interpreting scripts, directing, working collaboratively, and performing. The focus at this level is a comprehensive look at theatre, including how it has developed, how it functions in society, and the different aspects of theatre arts that must be assumed and mastered. Accomplished theatre students refine acting techniques and engage in focused study of the directing process. At the same time, they expand their exploration of theatre history and investigate the issues of aesthetics and criticism. Students master the effective use of theatrical technologies and tools for design. Accomplished level students are challenged to justify critical choices and examine the various aspects of theatre in society. Emphasis is placed on a high level of characterization, analysis, interpretation, design, and creation of new artistic works.

*Students can:*

### CREATING

Envision, Conceptualize

1. Investigate historical and cultural conventions and their impact on the visual composition of a drama/theatre work.
2. Interpret and apply technology to design solutions for a drama/theatre work.

Develop

3. Use personal experiences and knowledge to develop a character who is believable and authentic in a drama/theatre work.
4. Refine a dramatic concept to demonstrate a critical understanding of historical and cultural influences of original ideas applied to a drama/theatre work.
5. Collaborate as a creative team to make interpretive choices for a drama/theatre work.

Rehearse

6. Use the rehearsal process to analyze the dramatic concept and technical design elements of a devised or scripted drama/theatre work.
7. Use research and script analysis to revise physical and vocal choices impacting the believability and relevance of a drama/ theatre work.
8. Re-imagine and revise technical design choices during the course of a rehearsal process to enhance the story and emotional impact of a devised or scripted drama/theatre work.

## PERFORMING

### Select

9. Discover how unique choices shape believable and sustainable drama/theatre work.
10. Identify essential text information, research from various sources, and the director's concept that influence character choices in a drama/theatre work.

### Prepare

11. Refine a range of acting skills to build a believable and sustainable drama/theatre performance.
12. Apply technical elements and research to create a design that communicates the concept of a drama/theatre production.

### Present

13. Present a drama/theatre work using creative processes that shape the production for a specific audience.

## RESPONDING

### Reflect

14. Research historical and cultural context to structure and justify personal responses to a drama/theatre work.  
Example: Engage in dramaturgical research prior to seeing *To Kill a Mockingbird* in order to connect more effectively to the play and its historical and racial context.

### Interpret

15. Develop detailed supporting evidence and criteria to reinforce artistic choices, when participating in or observing a drama/theatre work.
16. Apply concepts from a drama/theatre work for personal realization about cultural perspectives and understanding.
17. Debate and distinguish multiple aesthetics, preferences, and beliefs through participation in and observation of drama/theatre work.

### Evaluate

18. Research and synthesize cultural and historical information related to a drama/theatre work to support or evaluate artistic choices.
19. Construct meaning in a drama/theatre work, considering personal aesthetics and knowledge of production elements while respecting others' interpretations.
20. Analyze how a drama/theatre work communicates for a specific purpose and audience.

## CONNECTING

### Empathize

21. Choose and interpret a drama/theatre work to reflect or question personal beliefs.

### Interrelate

22. Develop a drama/theatre work that identifies and questions cultural, global, or historic belief systems.

Research

23. Formulate creative choices for a devised or scripted drama/theatre work based on theatre research about a selected topic.
24. Explore how personal beliefs and biases can affect the interpretation of research data applied in drama/theatre work.

# Theatre

## Advanced

The Advanced level course is designed for students who have mastered basic theatre skills and concepts and are ready to become innovative practitioners in theatre. Students enrolled in this level depend upon peers for social interaction, acceptance, and, to a degree, success. The classroom environment promotes social interaction through the theatrical production process. Students are required to work cooperatively in a group setting, yet are able to maintain independence and identity throughout the process. Possession of a solid theatre background, maturity, dependability, analytical skills, self-discipline, self-motivation, and focus are characteristics of successful Advanced theatre students.

Advanced students apply prior knowledge of script writing, analyze a variety of texts to determine character development, and demonstrate directorial and more advanced acting techniques. They recognize and are able to describe the impact of history and theatre upon each other. The Advanced theatre student demonstrates artistic literacy, a broadened worldview, and effective communication skills. Students are ready to use the knowledge, skills, and artistic processes learned in the theatre classroom toward career readiness or post-secondary education.

*Students can:*

### CREATING

Envision, Conceptualize

1. Synthesize knowledge from a variety of dramatic forms, theatrical conventions, and technologies to create the visual composition of a drama/theatre work.
2. Create a complete design for a drama/theatre work that incorporates elements of theatrical technology.

Develop

3. Integrate cultural and historical contexts with personal experiences to create a character that is believable and authentic in a drama/theatre work.
4. 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.
5. Collaborate as a creative team to discover artistic solutions and make interpretive choices in a devised or scripted drama/theatre work.

Rehearse

6. Refine, transform, and re-imagine a devised or scripted drama/theatre work using the rehearsal process to invent or re-imagine style, genre, form, and conventions.
7. Synthesize ideas from research, script analysis, and context to create a performance that is believable, authentic, and relevant in a drama/theatre work.
8. Apply a high level of technical proficiency to the rehearsal process to support the story and emotional impact of a devised or scripted drama/theatre work.



## PERFORMING

### Select

9. Apply reliable research of directors' styles to form unique choices for a directorial concept in a drama/theatre work.
10. Apply a variety of researched acting techniques as an approach to character choices in a drama/theatre work.

### Prepare

11. Collect and use a variety of acting exercises from reliable resources to prepare a believable and sustainable performance.
12. Explain and justify the selection of technical elements used to build a design that communicates the concept of a drama/theatre production.

### Present

13. Present a drama/theatre production for a specific audience that employs research and analysis grounded in the creative perspectives of the playwright, director, designer, and dramaturge.

## RESPONDING

### Reflect

14. 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.

### Interpret

15. 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.
16. Use understanding of cultures and contexts to shape personal responses to drama/theatre work.
17. Support and explain aesthetics, preferences, and beliefs to create a context for critical research that informs artistic decisions in a drama/theatre work.

### Evaluate

18. Analyze and assess a drama/theatre work by connecting it to art forms, history, culture, and other disciplines, using supporting evidence and criteria.
19. Analyze and evaluate varied aesthetic interpretations of production elements for the same drama/theatre work.
20. Synthesize and debate the connection between a drama/theatre work and contemporary issues that may impact audiences.

## CONNECTING

### Empathize

21. Collaborate on a drama/theatre work that examines a critical global issue using multiple personal, community, and cultural perspectives.

#### Interrelate

22. Integrate conventions and knowledge from different art forms and other disciplines to develop a cross-cultural drama/theatre work.

#### Research

23. Justify the creative choices made in a devised or scripted drama/theatre work, based on a critical interpretation of specific data from theatre research.
24. Present and support an opinion about the social, cultural, and historical understanding of a drama/theatre work, based on critical research.

# Theatre Glossary

- Action** – That which happens physically in a play and involves a distinct beginning, middle, and end.
- Aesthetics** – Study of the nature of beauty.
- Antagonist** – Either of two opponents in a conflict, or the character who opposes the protagonist.
- Articulate** – To speak distinctly.
- Audition** – Competitive tryout for a performer seeking a role in a theatrical production. The process may include interviews, “cold” reading from the script, the presentation of a prepared audition piece, improvisations, dance, movement, singing, or any combinations of these.
- Backdrop** – Pieces of scenery that are hung over the stage and often “fly” in and out; often painted but can also be full wall units with doors and windows.
- Backstage** – Stage area beyond the acting area.
- Blocking** – Term given to the staging of the actual movements of each cast member or actor.
- Cast (verb)** – To choose a person to perform a theatrical part; (noun) group of people to perform a theatrical work.
- Catharsis** – Release of emotions caused in a tragedy.
- Center stage** – The center area of the stage.
- Character** – Person or figure in the world of the play possessing specific qualities and traits within the context of the story or drama.
- Characterization** – Putting together all facets of a character to make that character a living, convincing being.
- Chorus** – Group of actors in Greek drama of the 5th century B.C., who sang, chanted, spoke, and moved, usually in unison.
- Classical** – A drama/theatre work written before the 20<sup>th</sup> century.
- Climax** – The point of highest tension in a dramatic presentation.
- Comedy** – A play in which the protagonist achieves his goal; often treats characters and situations in a humorous way.
- Commedia del’ Arte** – Improvised comedy with stock characters; originated in 16<sup>th</sup> century Italy.
- Conflict** – Struggle between two opposing forces.
- Costume** – Clothing worn by an actor during a performance.
- Creative Drama** – An improvisational, non-exhibitional, process-oriented form of drama, where participants are guided by a leader to imagine, enact, and reflect on experiences both real and imagined.
- Crisis** – Moment of decision for the leading character; the highest point of conflict.
- Criticism** – Verbalized response to the play or script that is meant to enrich the experience for others.
- Cue** – Audible, verbal, or physical signal indicating that an action will occur.
- Cyclorama** – White or blue tautly-stretched canvas drop or plaster dome across the back wall of the stage which, when lit, simulates the sky.
- Dialect** – Regional or ethnic speech, sometimes necessary for an actor in a particular role.
- Dialogue** – The lines of a play spoken by characters.
- Director** – The person responsible for molding all aspects of a production into a unified whole.
- Downstage** – Stage area closest to the audience.
- Drama** – A literary composition performed on stage.
- Dramatic play** – Scenarios created by children when at play.
- Dramaturge** – A resource person who provides in-depth knowledge to theatre personnel and audiences.
- Elements of theatre** – Plot, character, setting, dialogue, design, and theme.
- Elizabethan** – The period of English theatre during the reign of Elizabeth I until the closing of English theatres in 1640.
- Ensemble** – The dynamic interaction and harmonious blending of the efforts of the many artists involved in the dramatic activity of a theatrical production.
- Enunciation** – Articulation; to speak or pronounce words clearly.
- Exposition** – Opening of the play that explains the background and sets the plot in motion.
- Flats** – Frame constructed of 1-by-3 boards covered with canvas, painted, and used most often for interior or exterior walls of a building in a stage setting.
- Floor plan** – Top view of a set showing the setting arrangement.

**Formal performance space** – Area designed for theatrical performances, including proscenium stage, arena stage, black box theatre, thrust stage, and stadium stage.

**Genre** – A category of plays, such as comedy, tragedy, melodrama, or farce.

**Gesturing** – The movement of body or limbs to suggest thought or feeling.

**Improvisation** – The impromptu portrayal of a character or scene without any rehearsal or preparation.

**Informal performance space** – Acting or audience space designed for another purpose. Productions in streets, bus terminals, gymnasiums, parks, and the like are said to use informal playing space.

**Initial incident** – The first and most important event in a play from which the rest of the plot develops.

**Kabuki** – Popular Japanese drama incorporating stylized costumes, acting, makeup, and music.

**Lighting plot** – The lighting designer’s graphic rendering of the arrangement of lights and their connections.

**Locomotor movement** – Moving through space and time.

**Makeup** – Cosmetics worn by male and female actors to create a character or reflect a historical period.

**Melodrama** – A 19<sup>th</sup> century style of drama characterized by emotion, suspense, virtue, and moral.

**Method** – Acting style characterized by a variety of techniques to simulate realism.

**Monologue** – A long speech by an individual.

**Musical theatre** – A theatrical form that integrates drama, music, and dance; originated in 19<sup>th</sup> century America.

**Noh** – Japanese theatre style featuring masked male actors who create a drama.

**Non-locomotor movement** – Action performed while staying in one place.

**Pantomime** – The art of acting without words.

**Picturization** – Representation of ideas, characters, or themes through stage pictures.

**Pitch** – The relative highness or lowness of the voice.

**Platform** – Raised area to add level(s).

**Play** – A dramatic composition; bringing an action or story to life on a stage.

**Playwright** – A person who writes plays; a dramatist.

**Plot** – The series of related events that take place in a play (See also Exposition, Conflict, and Crisis).

**Process drama** – Form of drama in which the teacher and students create an imaginary world and work to address challenges or events through dramatic improvisation within a classroom setting. There is no written script.

**Projection** – Vocalization that can be heard at a distance.

**Properties, props** – Objects used on stage such as furniture, glasses, and books.

**Proscenium arch** – Picture-frame acting area with all of the audience sitting and facing the stage.

**Protean staging** – Scenery or staging that is simple; can be arranged and rearranged to suggest a variety of settings, and whose basic properties are changed by its use.

**Puppetry** – Inanimate objects brought to life through manipulation to convey a story. Types of puppets may include rod, hand, and marionette.

**Reader’s Theatre** – A performance created by reading from a script rather than from memory.

**Rehearsal** – Session where actors and technicians practice for a performance.

**Resolution** – Part of a play in which the major dramatic conflict is reconciled; also called the denouement.

**Resonance** – The placement of vocal reverberation for maximum sound (Examples: nasal resonance, chest resonance and mask resonance).

**Rhythm** – The timing and pace of drama; beat or tempo of performance.

**Rising action** – The series of events following the initial incident.

**Scenery** – Painted backdrops on a theatrical stage.

**Scenes** – Traditionally a portion of a play, usually part of an act. In a classroom setting, stand-alone scenes can be used for scene study.

**Screenplay** – The script of a movie, including acting instructions and scene directions.

**Screenwriter** – A writer of screenplays.

**Script** – The text of a theatrical production.

**Setting** – Time and place in which a dramatic work takes place.

**Special effects** – Technical effects, usually spectacular, found in a play, television program, or film; can vary from the relatively simple gunshot to a vast flood or thermonuclear war.

**Stage left** – The side of the stage on the actor’s left when he is facing downstage.

**Stage manager** – The person who is in complete charge backstage during rehearsals and performances.

**Stage position** – The position of the actor in relation to the audience (as in full front, full back, and right profile).

**Stage right** – The side of the stage on the actor’s right when he is facing downstage.

**Storyboard** – Visual blueprint of the sequence of events in a story.

**Story drama** – Use of existing literature or created stories in informal dramatizations.

**Style** – The way in which a play is written, acted, or produced.

**Subtext** – Character interpretations that are not stated in a script but are interpreted by an actor, director, and audience.

**Tableau** – Scene created by actors who remain motionless and silent. The plural is *tableaux*.

**Theatre of the Absurd** – A form of theater in which language becomes unconventional, and in which political and social problems are examined and presented to the audience in unconventional ways.

**Theme** – An idea or point of view depicted in a work of art.

**Tone** – The quality and pitch of a vocalization.

**Tragedy** – A serious drama in which the protagonist does not achieve his goals or objectives.

**Upstage** – Stage area farthest away from the audience.

**Volume** – The strength, force, or intensity with which sound is made.

**Wings** – Offstage areas to the right and left of the stage.