

Let's Go to the Theater! A lesson for elementary students

This lesson will prepare your students for attending a performance at the Performing Arts and Event Center (PAEC) and help them understand the elements of a live show.

Note: for all discussions you may wish to have students talk in pairs or small groups rather than the whole class.

Learning Target

- I can think carefully about and discuss the elements of live theater.

Success Criteria

- I used pictures and video to analyze elements of live theater.
- I developed a scene using the elements of live theater.
- I watched a live theater performance with one or more elements in mind.
- I discussed and wrote about my learning.

1. Discuss with your students (you may wish to chart their answers):

- What kinds of shows are there in theaters?
- What shows have you seen in a theater?
- What is the difference between seeing a movie and seeing a live show?
- What do you know about going to the theater?
- What do you know about what happens in a theater?
- What do you know about what happens on the stage?
- What do you think you need to put on a show?
- What do you know about what the audience does during a performance?
- What do you wonder about live theater and seeing a performance?

2. Discuss the elements to look for in a theater performance (the show you see may or may not have all of these). Use the included examples (at the end of the lesson) in your discussion.

- Sets: Everything on the stage that helps create the setting. Some parts may be painted to represent a setting.
 - How could we represent our classroom on the stage? Discuss that putting everything on the stage would be too crowded for the actors. What would be just enough? What parts would they have to represent by painting or other suggestions?
- Costumes: What the actors wear to help create their character.
 - What costumes have they seen actors wear on TV or in movies? How do the costumes help tell about the character?



- Makeup: Makes the actor's facial expressions stand out and can help create their character.
 - How can makeup help describe a character?
- Props: the items the actors hold or use to tell the story.
 - What props would you need if you were playing a doctor? Teacher? Fairy? Construction worker? Etc.
- Lights: Used not just to light the stage, but also to create the setting and the mood or for special effects.
 - Can you imagine different ways to use lights? What parts of stories do you think would need certain lighting?
- Sound: Effects that help create the setting and tell the story.
 - What sound effects have you heard on TV or in movies? What could happen in a show that you think would need a sound effect?
- Music: Used to create the setting, set the mood, or tell the story.
 - How do different kinds of music make you feel? Can you think of movies where a song helps tell the story?
- Expression: The style in which the actors convey their character. They can use facial expressions, gestures, and style of speaking.
 - Show your neighbor your happy (sad, angry, surprised, etc.) expression. Show another neighbor your happy (sad, angry, surprised, etc.) body language. Say "I want to go home" in a happy (sad, angry, surprised, etc.) voice.

3. Show your students the videos clips at fwpaec.org. (These may or may not be from the show you will attend). Ask them to look for the elements previously discussed.

After watching each clip, ask:

- What did you notice about the performance?
- How do all the parts tell the story, set the mood, show the theme, or share the culture?
 - What clues make you say that?
- What parts of theater performance are you interested in seeing when you come to the PAEC?
 - You may wish to have students pick a certain element to pay particular attention to, then share with the class or write about after the performance.

4. Activity (Integrated with Common Core English Language Arts)

- Put the students in groups of four. Tell them that they are going to imagine that they are planning a show to tell a story they have recently read. (Or choose well-known stories).
- Introduce the word "scene." A scene is a part of a play in which an event or series of events happen in one place. For example, in a play of *Little Red Riding Hood*, the first



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scene is the when Little Red Riding Hood is at home with her mother and the second is when she's in the forest and meets the wolf. Ask the students where she goes next (Grandma's house). That is the next scene.

- Have the groups pick one part of the story (one scene), discuss their ideas for their shows, and then each student choose a role.
 - The writer will write the dialog for a scene from the story. The costumer will draw costumes for the characters in the scene. The set designer will draw the set for the scene. The prop master will make a list of all the props the actors would need for the scene. See included worksheets.
 - Make sure they are discussing their elements as they work to ensure all of the parts make sense together.

5. Wrap-Up

- Decide how the students will collaborate to share their work with the class. They could present their plans on poster board and do a class gallery walk, or present their scene plans orally in groups. You may wish to have them actually act them out.
- Refer back to the discussion questions from part 1. What can they answer more completely now? Discuss with the students or have them write about what they learned about the theater from doing this activity.

6. After your visit to the PAEC

- Refer back to the discussion questions from part 1 again. What can they answer even more completely now? Discuss what they've learned about the theater.
- Fill out and discuss the "What did you see at the PAEC?" sheet as a class, small groups, or individually.

Aligned Washington State Learning Standards

Common Core English Language Arts Standards: Anchor Standards

- Key Ideas and Details:
 - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.1: Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
 - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.3: Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.
- Craft and Structure:
 - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.4: Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.
 - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.5: Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.
- Text Types and Purposes:



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- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details and well-structured event sequences.
- Comprehension and Collaboration:
 - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.1: Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- Knowledge of Language:
 - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.L.3: Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

The Arts Learning Standards: Theater: Anchor Standards

- Creating
 1. Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.
 2. Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.
- Performing
 4. Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation.
 6. Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.
- Responding
 7. Perceive and analyze artistic work.
 8. Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.

Thank you and we hope you enjoyed experiencing the arts with us!



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Playwright

Name: _____

This pre-write will help you get ready to write what the actors will say.

Our story: _____

Who are the characters in this scene? _____

What is happening in this scene? _____

What is the problem in this scene? _____

What happened before this scene?

What happens after this scene?

How do the characters feel in this scene? _____

Now you are ready to start writing! On a separate sheet of paper write in order what each character will say in the scene.



Costumer

Name: _____

This pre-write will help you get ready to draw what the actors will wear.

Our story: _____

Who are the characters in this scene? _____

Are the characters inside or outside? _____

What is the time of year and weather? _____

What do the characters do in this scene? _____

What kinds of clothes do they need? _____

What are the personalities of the characters? _____

How can you show their personalities through their costumes? _____

Now you are ready to start designing! On a separate sheet of paper draw the costume for each character in the scene.

Set Designer

Name: _____

This pre-write will help you get ready to design the setting of your scene.

Our story: _____

Does the scene take place inside or outside? _____

What is the time of year and weather? _____

Where does this scene take place? Describe the location with details. _____

What do the actors do in this scene? _____

What needs to happen in this scene? _____

Now you are ready to start designing! On a separate sheet of paper draw the set where the action will take place.

Prop Master

Name: _____

This pre-write will help you plan the props for your scene.

Our story: _____

What do the characters do in this scene? _____

What needs to happen in this scene? _____

Will the characters pick anything up or sit down? Describe. _____

List all of the props the actors will need to perform their actions. Include anything they can pick up and anything movable, even tables and chairs.

Character: _____

What he/she needs:

What he/she will do with it:

Character: _____

What he/she needs:

What he/she will do with it:

Continue on the back if you need more room to list the props.



What did you see at the PAEC?

Name:

	Sets	Costumes	Makeup	Props
Describe				
What effect did they have on the show?				

	Lights	Sound	Music	Expression
Describe				
What effect did they have on the show?				



Tacoma City Ballet, *Cinderella*



Rain, a Tribute to the Beatles Image ©Matt Christine Photography



Tacoma City Ballet, *The Nutcracker and the Tale of the Hard Nut*



Rain, a Tribute to the Beatles Image ©RichardLovrich



Celtic Nights, *Oceans of Hope*



Golden Dragon Acrobats



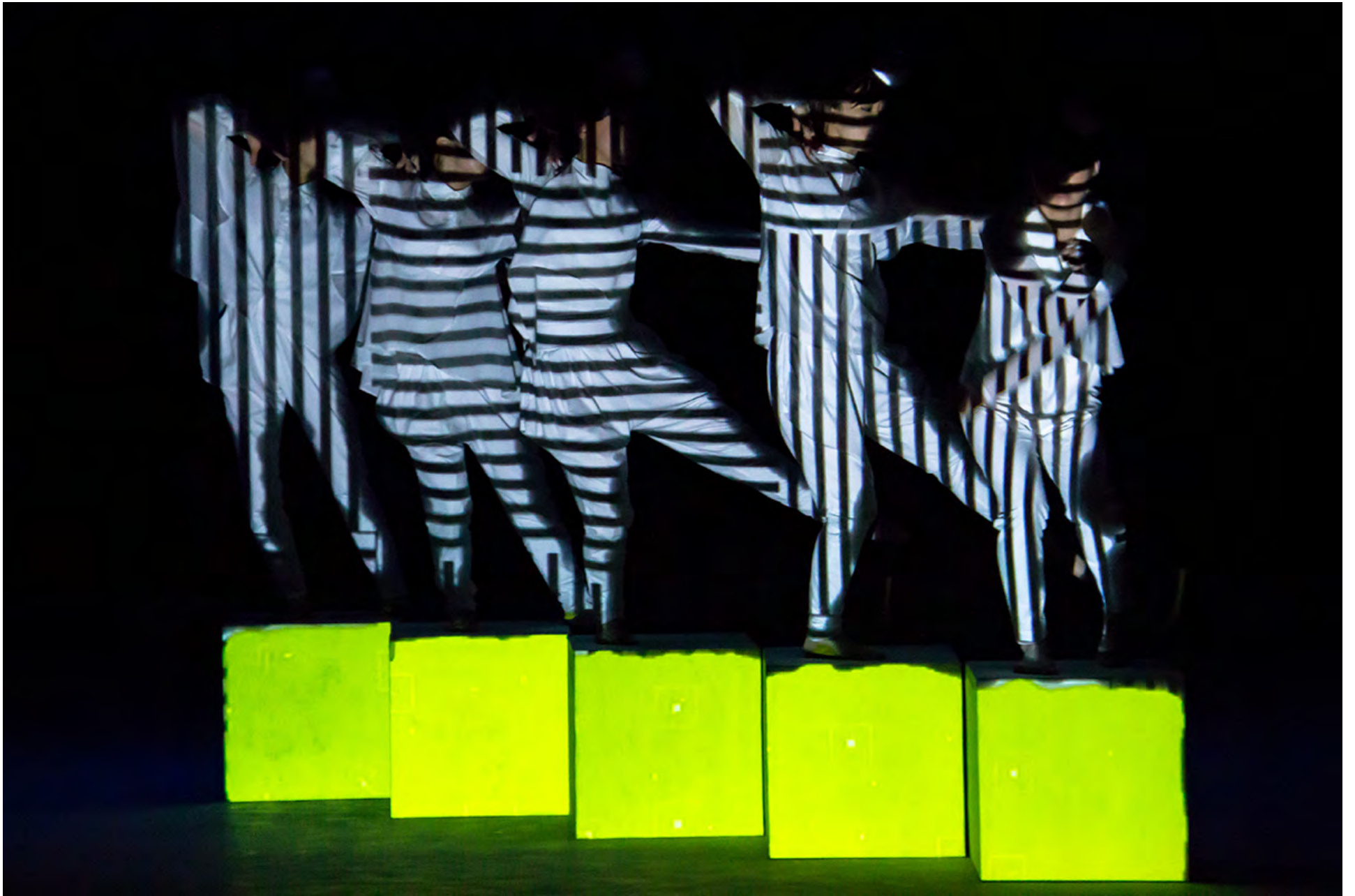
Golden Dragon Acrobats



ElevenPlay



Golden Dragon Acrobats



Elevenplay



Ambiguous Dance Company, *Rhythm of Human*



Pushcart Players, *The Velveteen Rabbit Reborn*



Shadow Theater Verba



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