

DRAMA VIDEO INFO SHEETS: ASPECTS OF DRAMA

Insert this section after page 10 in the
Toolkit Resources section of your binder.

DRAMA 1ST EDITION UPGRADE

Aspects of Drama

Video Excerpt Descriptions

ASPECTS OF DRAMA brings together video segments addressing a wide range of subjects and activities. This DVD includes demonstrations of creative dramatics activities appropriate for younger students; a variety of performance segments addressing cultures and styles in the Core Content, including reader's theater performances produced exclusively for the Drama Arts Toolkit; segments useful for social studies, reading, and vocational/practical studies applications; and an electronic field trip to an arts center.

Creative Dramatics

1 Creative Flow

From *Imagine That 4*

Length: 15:00

Host Curt Tofteland leads students in several activities designed to encourage make-believe and the flow of creative movement. Students pretend to be bacon frying, popcorn kernels popping, and balloons filling and emptying with air in an exercise called "Becoming." Moses Goldberg and actors at Stage One demonstrate how actors might prepare for roles as animals. Students then "Move in the Manner Of" various animals and objects and respond to music with movement. A downloadable teacher's guide for *Imagine That* is found at www.ket.org/education/guides/imaginethat.pdf.

Ideas for Use:

- Watch as a guide to leading your students in these or similar exercises.
- Show one or more exercises to students to try as they watch the video.
- Show one or more exercises to students as a discussion prompt after they have tried the exercises in the classroom.

2 Controlling Creative Energy

From *Imagine That 7*

Length: 05:09

Host Curt Tofteland leads students in an exploration of how actors use energy. In an activity called "Passing Energy," students pass an imaginary ball of energy to each other. Jean St. John and Steve Roenker of My Nose Turns Red theater company give some background on commedia dell' arte and discuss and show how actors control energy to perform this physical style of comedy. A downloadable teacher's guide for *Imagine That* is found at www.ket.org/education/guides/imaginethat.pdf.

Ideas for Use:

- Watch as a guide to leading your students in this exercise or similar activities.
- Pair the commedia dell' arte segment with the excerpt from *Pinocchio* on PERFORMANCE EXCERPTS to introduce or explore this type of theater.
- Show the commedia dell' arte segment to inspire student creation and performance of physical comedy routines in the spirit of commedia dell' arte.
- Show this segment, then show a segment from PERFORMANCE EXCERPTS and discuss how the actors use and control energy.

Elements of Drama

Excerpts from *Liz's Circus Story*

This section of the DVD includes three segments from an autobiographical one-woman play written and performed by Liz Bussey Fentress. The play spans 23 years, beginning when Liz is 21 and just graduated from the University of Wisconsin. With job prospects dim in her chosen field of theater, she takes a job as ringmistress, organist, and puppet show performer with Franzen Bros. Circus, a brand-new one-ring circus. Its founder, Wayne Franzen, has dreamed of starting a circus since he was a boy on a Wisconsin dairy farm. An extensive web site on *Liz's Circus Story* is available at www.ket.org/artstoolkit/drama/circusstory/.

1a Brand New Circus

Length: 03:17

The first segment is the play's opening. Liz introduces the circus and her own dream of becoming an actor.

1b First Night

Length: 02:50

With the circus's first performance just hours away, Liz plans the order of the acts, recounting the difficulties the circus has faced getting off the ground.

1c Circus of Lost Souls

Length: 03:53

Years later, after a few disappointing years pursuing acting in New York City, Liz has returned to do advance work for the circus. She tells the story of a circus worker named Killer and how he has found a sense of purpose working for the circus—so perhaps there is hope for other “lost souls.”

Ideas for Use:

- Use the segments as an exploration of the elements of drama—literary, technical, and performance. For literary elements: How does Fentress intertwine her story and that of other characters such as Franzen and Killer? For technical: Discuss the set, props, and sound. (Compare the scenes at the web site with and without sound effects.) For performance: How does Fentress convey multiple characters using her voice, expressions, and movements?
- Show the segments as an example of a monologue.
- Show as inspiration for students to write and/or perform monologues about their own experiences.

Cultures/Periods/Styles

1 West African: Anansi's Rescue from the River

From *Telling Tales* #10

Length: 11:30

Mama Yaa (Gloria Bivens) tells one of the Anansi tales told by the Ashanti people of Ghana, West Africa. In many of the tales Anansi the spider—said to be the owner of all the stories in the world—is a trickster, but this tale is a “why” story, explaining how the moon came to be in the night sky. While on a journey deep in the forest, Anansi is eaten by a great fish. Each of Anansi's six sons uses a special power to help rescue him, and Anansi wants to reward them with the gift of a great light. Their bickering over who is most deserving of the gift leads Anansi to make a decision. A downloadable teacher's guide for *Telling Tales* is found at www.ket.org/itvvideos/offering/reading/tellingtales.htm.

Ideas for Use:

- Use to discuss similarities/differences between storytelling and acting.

- Show as an example of a “why” story. Compare it to another “why” story, such as “The Buzzard and the Monkey” on the STORYTELLING SAMPLER.
- Use this story as a prompt for encouraging students to write their own “why” stories.
- Use in conjunction with video segments “Gospel Train,” “Go Rabbit,” and “Rosebud-Trinidad” from KET's *Old Music for New Ears* series and “Little Johnny Brown” from KET's *Dancing Threads* series to explore how music, dance, and drama help define specific groups and reflect unique histories, situations, and perspectives.

2 Japan: Bunraku

From *Faces of Japan: Puppeteer's Apprentice*

Length: 06:29

In these two excerpts from a documentary on Bunraku, students meet an apprentice studying to be a puppeteer at Bunraku Theater in Osaka, learn a little bit about the history of this classic Japanese art form, and see puppets being manipulated in a performance excerpt.

Ideas for Use:

- Show to introduce a lesson or unit on Bunraku, Japanese culture, or puppetry.
- Show along with segments from the KABUKI video.

3 Greek Theater: Oedipus

Performed by Carmen Geraci and Sidney Shaw

Produced for the Drama Arts Toolkit

Length: 11:00

This is a reader's theater performance of a scene from *Oedipus the King* (or *Oedipus Rex*), generally regarded as the masterpiece work of the great Greek tragedian Sophocles (circa 497-406 BCE). Sophocles' career coincided with the rise, maturity, and downfall of the Athenian Empire. The play tells the story of the young King Oedipus. Oedipus learns that his predecessor, King Laius, had been murdered years ago. He vows to avenge the king and bring prosperity back to the kingdom. However, his pride makes him ignore the warnings of his brother-in-law, Creon, and the blind sage, Teiresias. Oedipus fails to see that he, in fact, mistakenly killed the former king. In this scene, Oedipus argues with Teiresias about Laius' murder. Director Robert Pickering introduces the scene with contextual information.

Ideas for Use:

- Show to introduce a lesson or unit on Greek theater.
- Show along with the Introduction to Greek Theater segment from ABOUT DRAMA.
- Have students give their own reader's theater performances of this and other scenes from Greek drama.

- Pair with the Scene from Hamlet on PERFORMANCE EXCERPTS and Macbeth, Kabuki-Style on KABUKI to explore the nature of the tragic hero.

4 Medieval: Everyman

Performed by Spencer Christensen and the Reader's Theater cast

Produced for the Drama Arts Toolkit

Length: 08:15

This is a reader's theater performance of part of *Everyman*, the best surviving example of the type of Medieval drama known as the morality play. Morality plays used allegory to dramatize moral struggles. The characters in a morality play were personifications of good and evil usually involved in a struggle for a man's soul. *Everyman*, written near the end of the 15th century, is a short play of some 900 lines. When the complacent *Everyman* is informed by Death of his approaching end, he can persuade none of his friends—including Beauty, Strength, Discretion, and Knowledge—to go with him, except Good Deeds. The play makes its grim point that we can take with us from this world nothing that we have received, only what we have given. Director Robert Pickering introduces the scene with contextual information.

Ideas for Use:

- Show to introduce a lesson or unit on Medieval drama or history.
- Show along with the Mummer's Play video excerpt to demonstrate allegory.
- Have students give their own reader's theater performances of this and other scenes from Medieval drama.
- Discuss how this play might be staged using contemporary setting and characters.
- Have students write and perform their own allegories using contemporary characters.

5 Allegory: Mummer's Play

From *Winter: Season of Darkness and Light*

Length: 09:34

The tradition of mumming involved troupes of actors and minstrels who performed allegorical plays for neighbors and the community at the holiday or winter season in trade for food, drink, and tips. The script was usually transmitted by oral tradition. This tradition came to Appalachia from England as "breaking up Christmas," the

tradition of musicians, storytellers, and revelers holding a dance party at a home in the community, usually between Christmas Day and January 6. This performance was created by Joy D'Elia and Tommy Bledsoe and features a cast of musicians and actors.

Ideas for Use:

- Show along with the *Everyman* reading to demonstrate allegory.
- Have students write and perform their own allegories using contemporary characters.

6 Neo-Classicism: Tartuffe

Performed by Spencer Christensen, Kim Dixon, Adam Luckey, and Missy Johnston

Produced for the Drama Arts Toolkit

Length Scene 1: 07:10

Length Scene 2: 04:32

The art of satire reached a high point in Europe during the 17th and 18th centuries, exposing the follies of everything from individuals and the aristocracy to institutions like the church. French playwright Moliere's (1622-1673) mastery of the genre is clear in *Tartuffe*, a comedy that ridicules religious hypocrisy and pokes fun at the willingness of certain individuals to be manipulated by charm rather than substance. Tartuffe is a religious hypocrite who has ingratiated himself with Orgon, the head of an aristocratic house, in an attempt to win both Orgon's daughter in marriage and, ultimately, his wealth. This reader's theater presentation includes two scenes from the play. In the first, Dorine tries to make her mistress Mariane (Orgon's daughter) see that she can fight her father's decision to have her wed Tartuffe when she loves another. In the second scene, Cleante, Orgon's brother-in-law, confronts Tartuffe, who has managed to convince Orgon to disown his son Damis and hand over Damis' property to him. Director Robert Pickering introduces the scenes with contextual information.

Ideas for Use:

- Show as an example of satire. Trace the evolution of satire by comparing this scene to the scene from *Heartbreak House* by George Bernard Shaw.
- Have students present reader's theater performances of other scenes from the play.
- Have students plan the technical elements for a performance of this play. Encourage students to research the time period and strive for historical accuracy or set the play in another time peri-

od, indicating the time period through costumes and set.

- Pair with the scene from *A Doll's House* to initiate a discussion of the role of theater in commenting on society. Compare the two approaches—satire and realism.

7 Melodrama: Uncle Tom's Cabin

Performed by Whit Whitaker, Starr Fields, and Sidney Shaw

Produced for the Drama Arts Toolkit

Length: 06:12

This is a reader's theater performance of a scene from George Aiken's 19th century dramatization of the novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Harriett Beecher Stowe's book was the best-selling novel of the 19th century—both praised for its anti-slavery stance and criticized for perpetuating racial stereotypes. Given the lax copyright laws of the time, stage plays based on *Uncle Tom's Cabin*—"Tom shows"—began to appear while the story itself was still being serialized. These plays varied tremendously in their politics—some faithfully reflected Stowe's sentimentalized antislavery politics, while others were more moderate, or even pro-slavery. In this scene, the escaped slave Eliza reunites with her husband George and their friend Phineas. She recounts how she crossed the Ohio River with their child while escaping from slave hunters. Phineas warns them that the hunters are still in pursuit. Their exaggerated language and performance are characteristic of melodramas, which were popular at the time. Director Robert Pickering introduces the scene with contextual information.

Ideas for Use:

- Show to initiate a discussion of melodrama.
- Show and compare to the novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.
- Have students write and perform melodramatic scenes based on books they have read.
- Have students research the origins of the Uncle Tom character, said to be based on Josiah Henson of Henderson, Kentucky.

8 Realism: A Doll's House

Performed by Kim Dixon and Adam Luckey (with Misty Adams)

Produced for the Drama Arts Toolkit

Length: 08:00

Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906) is considered one of the most influential playwrights in the rise of modern realistic drama. His works examined the realities behind the Victorian values of family life and propriety, and these challenges to his time were often considered scandalous and outrageous. This reader's theater performance presents a scene from *A Doll's House*, writ-

ten in 1879. The play is a scathing criticism of the traditional roles of men and women in Victorian marriage. Just before the scene opens, a former employee (Krogstad) of the protagonist's husband (Torvald Helmer) has threatened to blackmail Nora, the protagonist. The blackmail stems from Krogstad's knowledge that Nora forged a loan application to pay for a trip. In the scene, Torvald affectionately treats Nora like a plaything. It is clear that he does not understand why Nora is nervous and preoccupied. But it is also clear that Nora sees why she cannot tell Torvald about her predicament. By the play's end, Torvald has learned Nora's secret, and though he forgives her, Nora realizes that he is not the noble creature she has supposed him to be. Director Robert Pickering introduces the scene with contextual information.

Ideas for Use:

- Show as an example of realism.
- Show to initiate a discussion of the purposes of drama/social commentary.
- Use in conjunction with a unit exploring the status of women.
- Have students predict the outcome of the play and write a concluding scene between Nora and Torvald.

9 American Musical Theater: The Glass Christmas Tree

Performed by Stage One

From *The Glass Christmas Tree*

Length: 06:43

In this holiday musical by Billy Edd Wheeler and Ewel Cornett, photographer Lewis Hine uses his camera in a glass factory to help the children who work there. In this scene, the children sneak into the factory at night and encounter Hine, who explains what he is trying to do. The children sing "Pitiful." Hine is an historical figure whose photographs were instrumental in documenting the abuses of children in factories.

Reader's Theater

In a reader's theater format, the actors read from the scripts wearing everyday clothes and seated or standing on a stage in limbo or with a minimal set. This format focuses on the script itself and forces the viewer to use his or her imagination. This format offers a model for student readings and an opportunity to have students imagine (and produce) the scene in costume and with sets, lighting, props, and music.

Ideas for Use:

- Show as an example of a musical. Discuss how the music and acting are combined.
- Analyze in terms of the dramatic elements.
- Have students discuss or work in groups to plan how a story or book they have read might be adapted as a musical.
- Use in conjunction with social studies/American history/economics to discuss the need for child labor laws.

10a Contemporary American Theater: The Ryan Interview

Performed by Eddie Bracken and Ashley Judd
From *American Shorts: The Ryan Interview*
Length: 02:24

The Ryan Interview was written by one of America's foremost playwrights of the 20th century, Arthur Miller. In this 35-minute play, shot entirely on location in Kentucky, Ashley Judd plays a journalist given the assignment of interviewing Mr. Ryan (Eddie Bracken) on the occasion of his 100th birthday. She expects the result to be a curiosity piece, but as she talks with this man whose front yard is filled with his collection of junk, she slowly realizes that Ryan is also a collector of stories from a vanished world—and a front-porch philosopher full of earthy wisdom.

Ideas for Use:

- Show as an example of contemporary theater.
- Show as an example of a duet.
- Show and compare to another work by Miller, e.g. *The Crucible* or *Death of a Salesman*.
- Show and analyze in terms of the elements of drama.
- Discuss how this scene might be different if performed onstage instead of on video.

10b Contemporary American Theater: Interviews with Arthur Miller, Ashley Judd, and Eddie Bracken

From *American Shorts: The Ryan Interview*
Length: 06:53

Playwright Arthur Miller discusses what was on his mind in writing *The Ryan Interview*—the human need to connect to a past, the rapidly changing American countryside and culture, and the importance of valuing older people. He discusses who the characters were based on. Actress Ashley Judd and actor Eddie Bracken chime in about the importance of listening.

Ideas for Use:

- Show with the performance segment from *The Ryan Interview*.
- Show along with the interview segment with Marsha Norman on ABOUT DRAMA and compare the two playwrights' descriptions of where they get their ideas.
- Show this and the performance segment before having students interview older people in their community.

11a The State of Contemporary American Theater: Interview with Arthur Miller

From *American Shorts: The Ryan Interview*
Length: 02:12

One of the world's preeminent contemporary playwrights, Arthur Miller, discusses the state of American theater and the difficulties of getting a serious play produced on Broadway.

Ideas for Use:

- Show in conjunction with the performance segment from Miller's play *The Ryan Interview*.
- Show as a prelude to student research about the economic and financial challenges faced by arts organizations in their community, state, and nation.

11b The State of Contemporary American Theater: The Importance of Regional Theater

From *American Shorts: The Ryan Interview*
Length: 09:04

Arthur Miller's play *The Ryan Interview* was commissioned by Actors Theatre of Louisville in 1993. This Kentucky theater organization is a major force in contemporary theater, and this documentary segment profiles its Humana Festival of New American Plays held each year. The segment includes comments by several playwrights as well as ATL staff.

Ideas for Use:

- Show in conjunction with the Arthur Miller interview and have students explore the state of theater in contemporary America.
- Show in advance of reading *The Gin Game*, viewing *Crimes of the Heart*, or exploring other contemporary works.
- Show in advance of the current year's festival.
- Show before taking students to see a production at Actors Theatre.

Drama Across the Curriculum

1 Drama Based on History: *Jemima Boone*

Performed by Stage One

From *Jemima Boone: Daughter of Kentucky*

Length: 05:12

This play about the daughter of Kentucky's most famous pioneer was written by Moses Goldberg, then-producing director of Stage One. Goldberg said he wanted to portray Kentucky history through the eyes of a female protagonist. The story of the pioneers' longing for independence and their complex relationship with the Indians in Kentucky is told in flashback. This scene opens with the older Jemima recalling a date in 1773. The scene transports us to that day. Daniel and his son James are setting a trap for food. Jemima arrives to tell Daniel that he is needed back in camp. After he leaves, James and Jemima encounter an Indian who speaks French. Through a misunderstanding, James and the Indian fight to a tragic end for both.

Ideas for Use:

- Use as part of a unit of Kentucky history.
- Compare to scenes from *Appleseed John* (found on the From Page to Stage CD-ROM) in terms of history and elements of drama.
- Use to initiate discussion and activities relating to communication barriers and cultural prejudices.
- Have students try to communicate information to each other without speaking. Is the meaning clear?
- Have students choose historical figures or events and write dramatic scenes about them.

2 Staging Historical Drama: *As It Is in Heaven*

Performed by the University of Kentucky Theatre

Department

From *Mixed Media*

Length: 08:24

This segment offers a behind-the-scenes look as the University of Kentucky Theatre Department prepares for a production of *As It Is in Heaven*, a play by Arlene Hutton about Shaker women at Pleasant Hill, Kentucky, in the 1830s. In the segment, we see actors practicing songs and scenes from the play. The director, Rhoda Gail Pollock, and others discuss the challenges of portraying history onstage, how they work with others in the production, and how theater connects an audience with the past.

Ideas for Use:

- Show to introduce a discussion of historical drama. For example, why is the use of singing and dancing appropriate for this par-

ticular play?

- Have students choose an historical event and plan appropriate components and necessary research in order to write or direct a play about the event.
- Have students list the various jobs mentioned in the segment and the activities of each job.
- Have students research and write dramatic scenes based on historical characters or events. Have students direct and perform each others' scenes and discuss the roles of playwright and director.
- Show this segment along with *The Ryan Interview* segment and interview in which Arthur Miller discusses drama as a way to connect to the past.

3 Drama Based on History: *Gov. Edwin Morrow*

Performed by Vic Hellard, Jr.

From *Kentucky Chautauqua: Characters from Kentucky History*

Length: 12:48

This segment opens with a brief explanation of Chautauqua and its history, then transitions to background information on the subject of this performance, Edwin Porch Morrow, Kentucky governor from 1919 to 1923. In his monologue as Morrow, Vic Hellard, Jr., speaks colorfully in monologue and while "conversing" with his friend and chief political rival Owsley Stanley. Note: The segment includes extensive references to drinking bourbon, along with the expletives "damn" and "hell."

Ideas for Use:

- Show as an example of a monologue.
- Show and discuss as historical drama. What about history does the viewer learn? Does it seem reliable?
- Compare to Liz Bussey Fentress' performance in the *Liz's Circus Story* segments. How are the two performances similar and different?
- Analyze the segment in terms of the elements of drama.
- Have students choose a figure from history and write a Chautauqua-style monologue.

4 Drama Based on Literature: *The Tell-Tale Heart*

Performed by Kevin Hardesty

From *GED Connection: Reading*

Length: 01:42

Actor Kevin Hardesty reads a brief passage from the Edgar Allan Poe story "The Tell-Tale Heart." The text is shown on-screen alongside his performance.

Ideas for Use:

- Show in conjunction with reading "The Tell-Tale Heart" or other work by Poe.
- Show and analyze in terms of the elements of drama. How

does the actor convey the character, the action, and the mood of this story? Have students close their eyes and listen to the soliloquy. How effective is the actor's voice alone?

- Show as an example of a soliloquy.
- Show along with the other toolkit segment featuring Hardesty as the actor—the Scene from *Hamlet* on PERFORMANCE EXCERPTS—and compare the actor's performances.
- Have students choose a favorite passage from a work of literature and give a dramatic reading for the class.

5 Bringing a Theatrical Work to Television

From *Wind in the Willows*

Length: 14:00

This segment shows preparations for a KET taping of the Stage One performance of *Wind in the Willows*. As he puts on his makeup, an actor talks about preparing for his role as an animal. Also included are technical preparations required by the addition of television to the production—stringing cable, setting cameras—and interviews with the lighting designer, audio supervisors, and director. A downloadable teacher's guide about this program is available at www.ket.org/education/guides/witw_guide.pdf.

Ideas for Use:

- Show in conjunction with the performance segments from *Wind in the Willows* on PERFORMANCE EXCERPTS.
- Discuss the preparations for taping a theatrical performance. (Additional information can be found at the *Liz's Circus Story* web site.)
- Have students list the jobs mentioned in the segment, then research additional information about each job.
- As a class, plan how you would videotape a class performance. What activities would be necessary? See how many you can come with that do not involve on-stage performance.

6 Electronic Field Trip to the Kentucky Center for the Performing Arts

A documentary shown in its entirety.

Length: 60:00

This documentary takes students on a tour of Kentucky's largest performing arts space to meet some of the artists and technicians who create professional theater and musical events. The Kentucky Center, located on the riverfront in Louisville, houses several different theaters and is the home base of several professional arts organizations. During the field trip, students follow one produc-

tion—a touring Broadway show—from initial planning to the excitement of opening night. KET's cameras go behind the curtains to talk with actors, dancers, and musicians as they prepare to go on stage; learn about the many and varied career possibilities in the performing arts; watch as the stage is readied for a large-scale theater production; and learn about innovative ways to make performances accessible to the visually and aurally impaired.

Ideas for Use:

- Show as part of vocational studies exploration of careers in the arts.
- Show in advance of or after a field trip to a professional performance.

DRAMA 1ST EDITION UPGRADE