

SPARTA TWP. PUBLIC SCHOOLS

IMPROV & SKETCH COMEDY



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Adapted from:
New Jersey Student Learning Standards

Reviewed by:
Mr. Patrick McQueeney, Assistant Superintendent
Ms. Mary Hassenplug, Supervisor of English

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Sparta Township School District

18 Mohawk Avenue

Sparta, NJ 07871

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VISION

The Sparta Language Arts department is committed to offering our students rigorous and challenging curricula that enable them to fully develop critical and creative thinking and communication skills. Through this, we will guide our students to evolve into articulate, global citizens who persevere through challenges and voice their ideas with maturity and sensibility. Our combined efforts will provide them with the tools to transfer these acquired skills to various disciplines and real-world applications to better prepare them to contribute to and succeed in the 21st century

BELIEF STATEMENTS

- Foster an appreciation for reading and writing beyond their schooling
- Build confident, conscientious, independent readers and writers
- Expose students to multiple communication mediums to encourage digital citizenship
- Develop communication skills through the areas of reading, writing, speaking, listening, word study, and literary analysis
- Respond to the varying demands of audience, task, purpose, and discipline
- Guide students through the process from learning to read to reading to learn
- Teach students how to think, not what to think
- Challenge students to broaden their global perspectives and attitudes through open and respectful discourse, collaboration, and analysis
- Stress the value and skill of active listening
- Cultivate a sense of personal responsibility and accountability
- Promote shared responsibility for the education of our youth
- Aim to equip students both to read the world and write the future
- Inspire our students to surpass their own expectations

COURSE OVERVIEW

Improv & Sketch Comedy is a semester-long theatre elective that gives students the opportunity to get out of their seats and explore humor. Students begin the semester with a familiarization of the basic tools of a theatre artist, namely focus, voice, and body. As students become more comfortable on stage, they will develop a classroom culture of supporting each other on stage. These skills will translate into more complex improvisational games in which all students participate. Students will also approach comedy from the written/rehearsed side by developing their sketch comedy skills. Students will look to mentors within each field (improv and sketch comedy) to unlock their own comedic voices and find comfort in the collaborative environment.

COMPONENTS OF THE COURSE

The components of a successful Improv & Sketch Comedy program are:

- A collaborative learning environment. Students must feel comfortable on stage and in front of each other in order to overcome the enormous pressures that have convinced them that they could never do this kind of work. From the very outset of the course, it should be clear that actors are never adversarial on stage (even if their characters may be).
- Immediate feedback and/or intervention that focuses on reflection and sharpening of craft. When students break one of improv's fundamental rules by saying no, the teacher should pause the scene and ask students to examine how that choice damaged the scene and what other options could have kept the scene alive. This should never be done in anger or frustration-- these learning moments frame the class' growth mindset model.
- An emphasis on truth over comedy in improvisation. The immediate laugh might feel good, but selling out a fellow-performer for one laugh is cutting off the nose to spite the face. Students should be celebrated for their choices (something that they can control) over their comedy (which feels so out-of-their-control).
- Full participation from all students. Students may feel overwhelmed by the nature of the work, but a positive and supportive instructor/environment recognizes that students will only get better through participation. Instructors are encouraged to talk with students in low-stakes settings about participation so that the students know they are always supported by the instructor.
- An appreciation of student choices and ideas. Students should never be graded on how funny they are, and an instructor must make that clear from the outset of the course. Instead, all rubrics and grading should use the language of a student's actions instead of a more subjective valuation of those actions. Similarly, students need not agree with the teacher on what makes something funny. Whenever possible, students should be encouraged to share their own comedic preferences from the outside/professional world.
- Silliness. This course doesn't work if everyone is too cool to take a risk. Through warm-ups and improv games, the instruction must develop a classroom culture where students feel comfortable doing things they've never done before.

SCOPE AND SEQUENCE

(Pacing Guide)

Weeks Taught <i>(20 Total)</i>	Units of Study
6 Weeks	Fundamentals of Improvisation
6 Weeks	Sketch Comedy Concepts
6 Weeks	Punch Up & Performance: Using Improv to Produce Sketches
2 Weeks	Musical Parodies

CONTENT AREA:			
	Improv & Sketch Comedy	GRADE LEVEL	9-12
UNIT 1:			
	Fundamentals of Improvisation		
UNIT SUMMARY			
<p>The primary purpose of the first unit of Improv & Sketch Comedy is to familiarize students with the basics of theatrical performance while also creating good improvisational habits. Students will begin exploring fundamental tools of performance (voice, body, focus) through large (full or half-class) activities to reduce the fear and build familiarity among performers. The collaborative environment should take primacy over the comedy at this point. This is especially important during improvisational activities, where the instructor should emphasize elements of truth (setting, location, and relationships) and “saying yes” over humor-first choices.</p>			
NEW JERSEY STUDENT LEARNING STANDARDS			
<p>9.3.12.AR-PRF.1 Describe the scope of the Performing Arts Career Pathway and the roles of various individuals in it.</p> <p>9.3.12.AR-PRF.2 Demonstrate the fundamental elements, techniques, principles and processes of various dance styles and traditions.</p> <p>9.3.12.AR-PRF.5 Explain key issues affecting the creation of characters, acting skills and roles.</p> <p>9.3.12.AR-PRF.6 Create stage, film, television or electronic media scripts in a variety of traditional and current formats.</p> <p>9.3.12.AR-PRF.7 Describe how technology and technical support enhance performing arts productions.</p>			

9.3.12.AR-PRF.8 Analyze all facets of stage and performing arts production management.

NJSLSA.R2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

NJSLSA.R3. Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

NJSLSA.R5. 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.

NJSLSA.R7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

NJSLSA.W2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

NJSLSA.W3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

NJSLSA.W4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

NJSLSA.SL1. 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.

NJSLSA.SL2. Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

NJSLSA.SL6. Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

NJSLSA.L1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

NJSLSA.L3. 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.

NJSLSA.L5. Demonstrate understanding of word relationships and nuances in word meanings.

NJSLSA.L6. Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when encountering an unknown term important to comprehension or expression.

21st CENTURY LIFE AND CAREER READY PRACTICES

CRP1. Act as a responsible and contributing citizen and employee.

CRP2. Apply appropriate academic and technical skills.

CRP3. Attend to personal health and financial well-being.

CRP4. Communicate clearly and effectively and with reason.

CRP5. Consider the environmental, social and economic impacts of decisions.

CRP6. Demonstrate creativity and innovation.

CRP7. Employ valid and reliable research strategies.

CRP8. Utilize critical thinking to make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.

CRP9. Model integrity, ethical leadership and effective management.
 CRP10. Plan education and career paths aligned to personal goals.
 CRP11. Use technology to enhance productivity.
 CRP12. Work productively in teams while using cultural global competence.

TECHNOLOGY STANDARDS

8.1.12.A.1 Understand and use technology systems.
 8.1.12.A.2 Select and use applications effectively and productively.
 8.1.12.B.1 Apply existing knowledge to generate new ideas, products, or processes.
 8.1.12.B.2 Create original works as a means of personal or group expression.
 8.1.12.C.1 Interact, collaborate, and publish with peers, experts, or others by employing a variety of digital environments and media.
 8.1.12.C.2 Communicate information and ideas to multiple audiences using a variety of media and formats.
 8.1.12.C.4 Contribute to project teams to produce original works or solve problems.
 8.1.12.D.1 Advocate and practice safe, legal, and responsible use of information and technology.
 8.1.12.D. 2 Demonstrate personal responsibility for lifelong learning.
 8.1.12.D.5 Exhibit leadership for digital citizenship.
 8.1.12.E.1 Plan strategies to guide inquiry.
 8.1.12.E.2 Locate, organize, analyze, evaluate, synthesize, and ethically use information from a variety of sources and media.
 8.1.12.E.3 Evaluate and select information sources and digital tools based on the appropriateness for specific tasks.
 8.1.12.F.1 Identify and define authentic problems and significant questions for investigation.
 8.1.12.F.2 Plan and manage activities to develop a solution or complete a project.
 8.1.12.F.3 Collect and analyze data to identify solutions and/or make informed decisions.

CROSS CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

ELA - Narrative world building
 Theatre Arts - Character development and truth in performance
 Philosophy - Exploring worldviews/openness (through “yes”)
 Physical Education - Awareness of the body and its role in performance

ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS	ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS
<p>Students will understand that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When actors choose humor over truth, then they risk being selfish on stage. • Establishing truthful circumstances creates a more reliable foundation for a comedic scene. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why is truth more important than humor in an improvised performance? • What are the dangers of saying no? How can improvisors give each other gifts instead? • How do improvisors use circumstances to keep a scene alive?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Denying an actor’s choices can lead to miscommunication and hesitation on stage. • Good actors make good choices about settings, wants, and relationships. 		
UNIT LEARNING TARGETS (Students will know how to...)		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply breathing and focus techniques • Build coherent narratives based on incomplete given circumstances • Live truthfully under imaginary circumstances • Create characters with wants and relationships • Collaborate to create an environment of reflection and trust • Reflect on performance choices • Analyze the essential demands of the medium 		
LEARNING ACTIVITIES: (Students will be able to...)		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharpen performance and focus skills through vocal and physical warm-ups • Create characters in games like 4-Square, Switch, and Ding • Say “yes” to the scene partner’s ideas (in the moment) while also adding new circumstances to the scene • Tell an original story in a group using only one sentence at a time • Distinguish between improvisation and sketch comedy • Evaluate the truthfulness of choices 		
EVIDENCE OF LEARNING:		
FORMATIVE ASSESSMENTS	SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENTS	ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily vocal, physical, and focus warm ups • Improv v. Sketch: The Say Yes workshop • Switch • 4-Square • Ding • Character walks • Animal characters • Reflections (graded and informal) • “What Would You Do?” (turn-and-talks) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Troupe performance of any two games 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small audience performance
INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS/RESOURCES		TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES

Improv Games: 4-Square, Switch, Ding, #-Headed genius Vocal/physical/focus warm-ups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Michael Scott improv in “Email Surveillance” • “Dead parrot” sketch from <i>Monty Python’s Flying Circus</i> • Best of <i>Whose Line is It Anyway?</i>
DIFFERENTIATION:	
Sparta Twp. Public Schools Differentiation Strategies	
TEACHER NOTES:	

CONTENT AREA:	Improv & Sketch Comedy	GRADE LEVEL	9-12
UNIT 2:	Sketch Comedy Concepts		
UNIT SUMMARY			
<p>Now that students have a sense of performance fundamentals, their attention turns to sketch comedy. The on-stage focus continues sharpening many of the same skills from the introductory unit: focus, voice, and body. Students will continue to create exciting characters and consider the stage (as a space) and staging (as a theatrical skill) while on stage during this unit. Sketch Comedy Concepts also opens students to the more writerly approaches to comedy through script writing and sketch analysis. Students will watch and evaluate mentor sketches to better understand the structural needs of an effective sketch.</p>			
NEW JERSEY STUDENT LEARNING STANDARDS			
<p>9.3.12.AR-PRF.1 Describe the scope of the Performing Arts Career Pathway and the roles of various individuals in it.</p> <p>9.3.12.AR-PRF.5 Explain key issues affecting the creation of characters, acting skills and roles.</p> <p>9.3.12.AR-PRF.6 Create stage, film, television or electronic media scripts in a variety of traditional and current formats.</p> <p>9.3.12.AR-PRF.7 Describe how technology and technical support enhance performing arts productions.</p> <p>9.3.12.AR-PRF.8 Analyze all facets of stage and performing arts production management.</p>			

NJSLSA.R2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

NJSLSA.R3. Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

NJSLSA.R4. 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.

NJSLSA.R5. 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.

NJSLSA.R6. Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

NJSLSA.R7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

NJSLSA.W2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

NJSLSA.W3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

NJSLSA.W4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

NJSLSA.W5. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

NJSLSA.W6. Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.

NJSLSA.W10. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

NJSLSA.SL1. 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.

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NJSLSA.L2. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

NJSLSA.L3. 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.

NJSLSA.L5. Demonstrate understanding of word relationships and nuances in word meanings.

NJSLSA.L6. Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level;

demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when encountering an unknown term important to comprehension or expression.

21st CENTURY LIFE AND CAREER READY PRACTICES

- CRP1. Act as a responsible and contributing citizen and employee.
- CRP2. Apply appropriate academic and technical skills.
- CRP3. Attend to personal health and financial well-being.
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- CRP5. Consider the environmental, social and economic impacts of decisions.
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- CRP9. Model integrity, ethical leadership and effective management.
- CRP10. Plan education and career paths aligned to personal goals.
- CRP11. Use technology to enhance productivity.
- CRP12. Work productively in teams while using cultural global competence.

TECHNOLOGY STANDARDS

- 8.1.12.A.1 Understand and use technology systems.
- 8.1.12.A.2 Select and use applications effectively and productively.
- 8.1.12.B.1 Apply existing knowledge to generate new ideas, products, or processes.
- 8.1.12.B.2 Create original works as a means of personal or group expression.
- 8.1.12.C.1 Interact, collaborate, and publish with peers, experts, or others by employing a variety of digital environments and media.
- 8.1.12.C.2 Communicate information and ideas to multiple audiences using a variety of media and formats.
- 8.1.12.C.4 Contribute to project teams to produce original works or solve problems.
- 8.1.12.D.1 Advocate and practice safe, legal, and responsible use of information and technology.
- 8.1.12.D. 2 Demonstrate personal responsibility for lifelong learning.
- 8.1.12.D.5 Exhibit leadership for digital citizenship.
- 8.1.12.E.1 Plan strategies to guide inquiry.
- 8.1.12.E.2 Locate, organize, analyze, evaluate, synthesize, and ethically use information from a variety of sources and media.
- 8.1.12.E.3 Evaluate and select information sources and digital tools based on the appropriateness for specific tasks.
- 8.1.12.F.1 Identify and define authentic problems and significant questions for investigation.
- 8.1.12.F.2 Plan and manage activities to develop a solution or complete a project.
- 8.1.12.F.3 Collect and analyze data to identify solutions and/or make informed decisions.

CROSS CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

ELA - Narrative world building, formatting conventions of playwriting

Theatre Arts - Character development and truth in performance
 Philosophy/Psychology - Exploration of what makes something funny
 History - Appreciation of seminal comedians and sketches
 Physical Education - Awareness of the body and its role in performance
 Dance/Choreography - Analysis of movement in character development and staging
 Costume Design - Evaluation of how production choices enhance characterization and comedy

ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS		ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS	
<p>Students will understand that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sketch writing is less focused on truthful storytelling than improv. A sketch is shaped instead by escalating gags. • Writers and performers make big choices in sketch comedy to create new opportunities for humor. • Professional writing conventions help writers and actors communicate while adding a sense of authenticity to the product. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What distinguishes a sketch from improvisation? How do writers go from a premise to a full sketch? • How do performance and writing choices synthesize to create comedy? • To what extent does a professional writing process create a more satisfying communal product? 	
UNIT LEARNING TARGETS (Students will know how to...)			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze structural conventions across multiple texts • Evaluate characterization in writing and performance • Design creative written products that value tone over narrative • Apply conventions of professional language/writing • Collaborate to develop ideas into more sustained writing products • Interpret the impacts of production choices on a text 			
LEARNING ACTIVITIES: (Students will be able to...)			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze how a sketch escalates gags to reach a punchline • Develop incongruity to create a sketch seed that asks “What if...?” • Apply proper playwriting conventions to collaborate on a sketch script • Evaluate characterization in mentor sketches • Analyze how production elements (set, costumes, sound, lighting, etc.) enhance comedy and characterization in a sketch • Collaborate to develop sketch seeds that become complete sketches • Use cold-reading skills to make comedic choices during table reads 			
EVIDENCE OF LEARNING:			
FORMATIVE ASSESSMENTS	SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENTS	ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENTS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily warm-ups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written sketch 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Filmed sketch 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sketch turn-and-talks ● Sketch Harkness ● Sketch seeds ● Student-selected sketches ● Escalation & punchlines in <i>SNL</i>, <i>Tim & Eric</i>, <i>Key & Peele</i>, <i>All That!</i>, and <i>Monty Python</i> exemplars ● Table reads ● Reflection ● Stage movement work ● Props game (improv) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Production materials for sketch 	
INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS/RESOURCES		TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES
<p>Stage space Vocal/physical warm ups Character building games Improv games: Props, World’s Worst, “What if...?” fairy tales</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Student-selected sketches ● “Who’s on First?” from Abbott & Costello ● “Free Real Estate” and “Check It Out! With Steve Brule” from <i>Tim & Eric</i> ● Various <i>SNL</i> sketches (especially “David Pumpkins” and “Friendo”) ● “East/West College Bowl” from <i>Key & Peele</i> ● Librarian sketches from <i>All That!</i> ● “Argument” sketch from <i>Monty Python’s Flying Circus</i> ● CeltX or WriterDuet
DIFFERENTIATION:		
<p>Sparta Twp. Public Schools Differentiation Strategies</p>		

TEACHER NOTES:**CONTENT AREA:**

Improv & Sketch Comedy

GRADE LEVEL

9-12

UNIT 3:

Punch Up & Performance: Using Improv to Produce Sketches

UNIT SUMMARY

Now that students are familiar with the fundamental components of sketch comedy writing and improvisation, the third unit will pursue the two skills in tandem. Students will create a full 30-minute comedy show that combines improvisation and sketch comedy. Each day will begin with full-class instruction and will then give groups time to rehearse the various components of the show. The unit begins with more of a focus on improvisation, where students will learn more advanced short-form games and experiment with some long-form improv. Students will use this rehearsal time to practice the games and develop sketch seed ideas. Each troupe member must participate in at least one sketch and at least one improv game during the show.

NEW JERSEY STUDENT LEARNING STANDARDS

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9.3.12.AR-PRF.2 Demonstrate the fundamental elements, techniques, principles and processes of various dance styles and traditions.

9.3.12.AR-PRF.5 Explain key issues affecting the creation of characters, acting skills and roles.

9.3.12.AR-PRF.6 Create stage, film, television or electronic media scripts in a variety of traditional and current formats.

9.3.12.AR-PRF.7 Describe how technology and technical support enhance performing arts productions.

9.3.12.AR-PRF.8 Analyze all facets of stage and performing arts production management.

NJSLSA.R1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences and relevant connections from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

NJSLSA.R3. Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

NJSLSA.R4. 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.

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NJSLSA.L3. 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.

NJSLSA.L4. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases by using context clues, analyzing meaningful word parts, and consulting general and specialized reference materials, as appropriate.

NJSLSA.L5. Demonstrate understanding of word relationships and nuances in word meanings.

NJSLSA.L6. Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when encountering an unknown term important to comprehension or expression.

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 Theatre Arts - Character development and truth in performance
 Philosophy/Psychology - Exploration of what makes something funny
 Physical Education - Awareness of the body and its role in performance
 Dance/Choreography - Analysis of movement in character development and staging
 Costume Design - Evaluation of how production choices enhance characterization and comedy

ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS	ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS
<p>Students will understand that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rehearsal and collaboration help a comedy troupe to discover new opportunities for humor. • Different comedians have different talents, and the production process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can you rehearse for something that is made up on the spot? How can rehearsals open up new avenues for comedy? • How do comedy troupes draw on a range of talents to produce a completely original

<p>should honor those talents by giving those artists the opportunity to express their gifts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Even as the ideas/games become more complex, the fundamental significance of saying “yes, and” remains a core component of creating comedy on stage 	<p>work of comedy?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What makes comedy fundamentals so fundamental? How can we continue to apply that foundation to more complex tasks?
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UNIT LEARNING TARGETS (Students will know how to...)

- Collaborate to produce a coherent product
- Reflect on personal strengths in relation to the troupe’s needs
- Curate a collection of artistic expressions that show the varying talents of a group
- Perpetually revise texts until the deadline
- Develop characters that show physical and vocal choices
- Apply fundamentals of performance to more challenging tasks

LEARNING ACTIVITIES: (Students will be able to...)

- Design a 30-minute comedy show with sketches and improvisation
- Contribute to the planning, writing, rewriting, and production of sketches
- Improvise within a sketch rehearsal to find new opportunities for humor
- Design costumes, props, and other set pieces to enhance the comedy/truth of a performance on a limited (\$0) budget
- Apply improvisational fundamentals to more complicated games and activities
- Reflect on the process of comedy development

EVIDENCE OF LEARNING:

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENTS	SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENTS	ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily warm-ups • Rehearsal journal • World’s Worst (game) • Party quirks (game) • Superheroes (game) • What’s a chair? (props/set exploration) • Drafts of sketches • Conferences with teacher 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comedy performance: sketch • Comedy performance: improv 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Filmed comedy performance in front of a live audience

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS/RESOURCES	TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES
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Performance space Improv games: World's Worst, Party quirks, superheroes Simple chair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CeltX or WriterDuet • Punch up scene from <i>Louie</i> episode "Ellie"
DIFFERENTIATION:	
Sparta Twp. Public Schools Differentiation Strategies	
TEACHER NOTES:	

CONTENT AREA:	Improv & Sketch Comedy	GRADE LEVEL	9-12
UNIT 4:	Musical Parodies		
UNIT SUMMARY			
<p>The course ends with a bit of a victory-lap unit. Now that students have accomplished the hardest aspect of the course (the comedy show), they will spend the final two weeks of the semester examining a short-form of comedy: the parody. Students will examine exemplar parody geniuses like Weird Al Yankovic and share their own examples of parodies based on songs that they like. Students will work independently or in groups to create their own parody songs. During the final week of the course, we will sing parody songs and play improv games to celebrate what was learned in the course.</p>			
NEW JERSEY STUDENT LEARNING STANDARDS			
<p>9.3.12.AR-PRF.1 Describe the scope of the Performing Arts Career Pathway and the roles of various individuals in it.</p> <p>9.3.12.AR-PRF.3 Perform a varied repertoire of vocal and/or instrumental music representing diverse styles, cultures and historical periods.</p> <p>9.3.12.AR-PRF.5 Explain key issues affecting the creation of characters, acting skills and roles.</p> <p>9.3.12.AR-PRF.6 Create stage, film, television or electronic media scripts in a variety of traditional and current formats.</p> <p>9.3.12.AR-PRF.7 Describe how technology and technical support enhance performing arts productions.</p> <p>9.3.12.AR-PRF.8 Analyze all facets of stage and performing arts production management.</p> <p>NJSLSA.R4. 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.</p>			

NJSLSA.R5. 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.

NJSLSA.R6. Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

NJSLSA.R7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

NJSLSA.W3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

NJSLSA.W4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

NJSLSA.W5. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

NJSLSA.W6. Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.

NJSLSA.W7. Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects, utilizing an inquiry-based research process, based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

NJSLSA.W9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

NJSLSA.W10. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

NJSLSA.SL1. 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.

NJSLSA.SL6. Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

NJSLSA.L1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

NJSLSA.L2. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

NJSLSA.L3. 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.

NJSLSA.L4. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases by using context clues, analyzing meaningful word parts, and consulting general and specialized reference materials, as appropriate.

NJSLSA.L5. Demonstrate understanding of word relationships and nuances in word meanings.

NJSLSA.L6. Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when encountering an unknown term important to comprehension or expression.

- CRP1. Act as a responsible and contributing citizen and employee.
- CRP2. Apply appropriate academic and technical skills.
- CRP3. Attend to personal health and financial well-being.
- CRP4. Communicate clearly and effectively and with reason.
- CRP5. Consider the environmental, social and economic impacts of decisions.
- CRP6. Demonstrate creativity and innovation.
- CRP7. Employ valid and reliable research strategies.
- CRP8. Utilize critical thinking to make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.
- CRP9. Model integrity, ethical leadership and effective management.
- CRP10. Plan education and career paths aligned to personal goals.
- CRP11. Use technology to enhance productivity.
- CRP12. Work productively in teams while using cultural global competence.

TECHNOLOGY STANDARDS

- 8.1.12.A.1 Understand and use technology systems.
- 8.1.12.A.2 Select and use applications effectively and productively.
- 8.1.12.B.1 Apply existing knowledge to generate new ideas, products, or processes.
- 8.1.12.B.2 Create original works as a means of personal or group expression.
- 8.1.12.C.1 Interact, collaborate, and publish with peers, experts, or others by employing a variety of digital environments and media.
- 8.1.12.C.2 Communicate information and ideas to multiple audiences using a variety of media and formats.
- 8.1.12.C.4 Contribute to project teams to produce original works or solve problems.
- 8.1.12.D.1 Advocate and practice safe, legal, and responsible use of information and technology.
- 8.1.12.D. 2 Demonstrate personal responsibility for lifelong learning.
- 8.1.12.D.5 Exhibit leadership for digital citizenship.
- 8.1.12.E.1 Plan strategies to guide inquiry.
- 8.1.12.E.2 Locate, organize, analyze, evaluate, synthesize, and ethically use information from a variety of sources and media.
- 8.1.12.E.3 Evaluate and select information sources and digital tools based on the appropriateness for specific tasks.
- 8.1.12.F.1 Identify and define authentic problems and significant questions for investigation.
- 8.1.12.F.2 Plan and manage activities to develop a solution or complete a project.
- 8.1.12.F.3 Collect and analyze data to identify solutions and/or make informed decisions.

CROSS CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

- Philosophy/Psychology - Exploration of what makes something funny
- Physical Education - Awareness of the body and its role in performance
- Costume Design - Evaluation of how production choices enhance characterization and comedy
- Music - Fitting the meter and rhythm of music, exploration of historical musical icons

ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

<p>Students will understand that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parodies use incongruity to distance themselves from the original text, but still apply textual patterns of the source material to draw attention to that incongruity. • It doesn't matter how musically talented a person is: singing together can be a great team-building and collaborative enterprise. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do parodies create something new through comedic incongruity? Why is it important for parodies to retain the shell of its source material? • How can collaborative artistic enterprises build community?
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UNIT LEARNING TARGETS (Students will know how to...)

- Identify discrete components of a piece of music, including rhythm, meter, tone, chorus, and verse
- Evaluate exemplar texts
- Create an original work based on previously published material
- Use incongruity to create comedy

LEARNING ACTIVITIES: (Students will be able to...)

- Design their own parody song
- Evaluate the choices made in professional and amateur parodies
- Analyze how performance choices (production-based and human-based) enhance comedy
- Sing with confidence for and with one another

EVIDENCE OF LEARNING:

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENTS	SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENTS	ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parody seeds • Evaluation of professional parodies • Parody drafts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parody presentations • Collaboration reflection/celebration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parody music video

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS/RESOURCES	TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES
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	Student selected parodies Weird Al Parodies
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DIFFERENTIATION:

[Sparta Twp. Public Schools Differentiation Strategies](#)

TEACHER NOTES:

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