

Intro to Dramaturgy

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Students will demonstrate an understanding of dramaturgy by selecting a script and creating a casebook of supplemental materials and research for that show.

Intermediate

Prior Experience:

Script Analysis, Design, Creating

National Standards:

Cn11.2.III.b. Present and support an opinion about the social, cultural, and historical understandings of a drama/theatre work, based on critical research.

Re9.1.III.a. Research and synthesize cultural and historical information related to a drama/theatre work to support or evaluate artistic choices.

Big Ideas:

Audience skills, communication, analysis, design, imagination, creating, writing

Essential Questions:

What gaps of knowledge exist between designers, actors, and audience members?

What happens when theatre artists allow an understanding of themselves and the world to inform perceptions about theatre and the purpose of their work?

Final Assessment:

Casebook with student's dramaturgical work of their study guide, lobby display, and actor's workshop.

Intro to Dramaturgy

Objective:

Students will demonstrate an understanding of dramaturgy work by selecting a play they will work on and writing 3 points as to why they think this will be a good show to work on.

Standards:

TH:Cn11.2.III.b. Present and support an opinion about the social, cultural, and historical understandings of a drama/theatre work, based on critical research.

Material Needed:

Intro to Dramaturgy Powerpoint

Spongebob clip

Projector

Laptop

Hook:

Begin class by watching a clip from Spongebob the Musical, watch the performance of Bikini Bottom Day (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hU9yGHBUtpY>). **Before** watching the clip ask the students to take note of the context of the performance. What details are specific to the theatrical performance and what is pulling from the tv show? What has been created that automatically pulls you into the world of the play? After watching the clip, discuss these questions with the class.

- Write "Dramaturgy" onto the board.
- Ask the students if they are familiar with the term and what they think it is about. Give students time to respond.
- If students are unfamiliar with the term, explain it. "Dramaturgy is the research side of a theatrical production. The goal is to create a unified production by ensuring that all choices are kept within the world of the play. Dramaturgs, that's what you call someone who does dramaturgy, also help audience members learn about the play. If there is a topic or choice that audience members might not be familiar with, it is the job of the dramaturg to help fill that gap with knowledge."
- "As you saw from the video, dramaturgy was used to help adapt and create this tv show into a theatrical Broadway production. We see a lot of details that tie us back to the show and choices that have been made so that it can work on stage. Dramaturgy is a tool we use to create unified productions."
- "For the next few weeks we will be exploring what it is that a dramaturg does and why they are important to a production. It's unfortunate that many people do not learn about dramaturgy, so I hope that being introduced to it here will help you as you work with, or become, a dramaturg on future productions."

- “One of the most important tasks that a dramaturg does is ask questions. These questions come up at every part of the production process. The dramaturg is always thinking of unity within the world of the play. Questions are an essential part of the process. Why do you think questions might be important when trying to create unity within the world of the play?” Give students time to answer. “While reading the play, the dramaturg will ask questions about the story, the characters, the context, and anything else on their minds. Questions give dramaturgs the opportunity to begin a conversation. Conversations with actors, designers, and directors about why they are making the choices that they are.”
- One of the most important places that dramaturgs can ask questions in are rehearsals. When a dramaturg sits in on a rehearsal, this is called a rehearsal observation. During the rehearsal the dramaturg takes notes on the things that are happening. These can be good things, things that need fixing, or just general feedback. Dramaturgs sit and take notes and then after the rehearsal will sit down with the director to discuss their observations. Why might this sit down session with the director be helpful to the production?” Allow students to answer. “These observations can be very important to a production as the dramaturg provides an outside perspective for the director and will gain a better understanding of what the audience might be understanding from the show. Let’s take a look at some examples.” Pull up PowerPoint. “Here is a screen shot from a rehearsal observation notebook on a show called Wendy & Peter Pan. Take a second to look through it.”
- Give students about a minute to read through the examples. “What are your thoughts on the example? Any questions you have about it?” Go over any questions students have.
- “Participating in the rehearsal process is an important part of being a dramaturg.”
- “Now, where I would love to start our dramaturgical process to start with a rehearsal observation, that might be a little difficult to do in the middle of the school day where no rehearsals are happening. So instead, we are going to start with our play selection. As a dramaturg, you might not get the luxury of choosing which play you work on, but in this class we do. I want you to take the rest of the class period to find a script that you can work on during this unit. This can be any show you want: a one act, a musical, an opera, anything that might catch your interest. You just need to be able to access the full text and bring it to class everyday. There are plenty of places to find full texts online or you can use one of the scripts we have in the classroom. Once you have selected the text I want you to write a short description as to why you think it will be good play to work on for this unit, what dramaturgical potential do you see in it? Make sure to write at least three points explaining this. After writing this explanation, begin reading your play. We’ve got a lot of work to do these next few weeks and it will all go much smoother if you read your play first.”
- Give students the rest of class to pick their play, write their explanation, and begin reading their scripts.

Script Analysis & Glossary

Objective:

Students will demonstrate an understanding of dramaturgical work within script analysis by creating a glossary of at least 15 words, phrases, and topics from their selected play.

Standards:

TH:Re9.1.III.a. Research and synthesize cultural and historical information related to a drama/theatre work to support or evaluate artistic choices.

TH:Cn11.2.III.b. Present and support an opinion about the social, cultural, and historical understandings of a drama/theatre work, based on critical research.

Materials:

Copies of a scene from your chosen script (I used the first scene in *The Glass Menagerie*)

Dry erase markers

White board

Manilla Folders

Paper

Pencils

Hook:

Handout copies of the script. Have students read the script quietly on their own. This read is to help them take in and understand the story.

- “As a Dramaturg, reading and becoming familiar with the text is an important step. Becoming familiar with the text is essential as it is the basis of the world of the play. When I say world of the play, do you all know what I mean?” Allow students to answer. “The world of the play is the rules and context that the play takes place in. The world of the play may be the same world that we live in but sometimes there are other rules or circumstances that may be different. This is important to be aware of when clarifying a performance. These circumstances need to be clear to the audience so they understand that this is a different world than what we are used to.”
- “So, when becoming familiar with the text it is best to approach the script with a dramaturg brain and analyze the script. What are some things you might be looking for when analyzing a script as a dramaturg?” Give students the chance to answer. “When looking at a script some key things to notice are vocabulary audiences might not be familiar with, important historical context, and topics and themes that are important to the play.”

- “We are going to break up into groups of three. As a group you will read a scene from a show together. As you read make note of points that spark the interest of a dramaturg. The vocab, context, themes, and anything else you might be interested in learning more about as a dramaturg.”
- Give students 5-10 minutes to read the script and mark the parts that intrigue their dramaturg brain.
- “Now that we’ve all marked up our scripts, what things did you find in the text? With your group, discuss the points that you found would be interesting to a dramaturg. What topics do you think are important?”
- Give students 10-15 minutes to discuss as a group. Bring the class back together.
- “What is great about dramaturgy is that each dramaturg thinks a little differently. There are some things that are important to one person that someone else might not have thought of. Let us share some of the things you all have put on your lists.”
- Write down the students’ ideas on the board.
- “This list we have created is what we would call a glossary. It keeps track of all the important thoughts we have from the text. This glossary helps us have a better understanding of the world of the play. You can then use this glossary to help spark ideas when doing research or have in mind when you are watching a rehearsal. Having used script analysis makes it easier in the long run.”
- “Since you have had a chance to practice script analysis in the mindset of a dramaturg, I would like you to start creating your own glossary, for your chosen play. As you read through your script, on a separate piece of paper keep track of all items that you think will be important for you to know as a dramaturg. You will need to have at least 15 terms written in your glossary. Remember these can be vocabulary words, important historical context, and topics and themes that are important to the play.”
- “I am also going to hand out a manilla folder to everyone, on this folder write your name and the name of your play. This folder is going to be your casebook, just the place where you keep all your dramaturgical work. Make sure to keep track of this folder as you will need to turn it in at the end of the unit with all your work inside.”
- Give students the rest of class to read their scripts and create their glossaries.

Study Guides: Day 1

Objective:

Students will demonstrate an understanding of dramaturgical study guides by creating and writing 3 study guide articles for their play.

Standards:

TH:Cr3.1.III.b. Synthesize ideas from research, script analysis, and context to create a performance that is believable, authentic, and relevant in a drama/theatre work.

TH:Cn11.2.III.b. Present and support an opinion about the social, cultural, and historical understandings of a drama/theatre work, based on critical research.

Materials:

American Revolution Worksheet

Intro to Dramaturgy Powerpoint

Projector

Laptop

Individual Devices for students (Laptops, iPads, etc.)

Study Guide Database Link: <https://tma.byu.edu/archives/2015-2019/>

Paper

Pencils

Hook:

Print a copy of the American Revolution Worksheet for every student. Give them the beginning of class to complete it.

- Write "Study Guides" on the board. Have students explain their understanding of the term.
- Ask students, "How would a study guide, something used all the time in school, relate to theatre?" Give students time to answer.
- "A study guide is a resource dramaturgs can use to help fill that gap of knowledge the audience needs to fully understand the play. It can be used as an extra source of information that audience members can look at and read through to get that extra background information. This information can be shared with the audience through articles or fun activity pages. These activity pages can look something like the worksheet we just completed, a fun activity that includes some good information. Depending on the theatre the study guide may be posted online or included with the program. Together

let's look at a few pages from the study guide for a show called Wendy & Peter Pan." Pull up PowerPoint. "In pairs, discuss what things you observe in the study guide."

- Give students 8 minutes to talk about what they observe. Bring class back together. As a class share their thoughts and observations.
- "The study guide includes some good writing about topics regarding the play and a fun activity that revolves around the theme of the play. The study guide is helpful in teaching information but it also helps in bringing the audience into the world of the play."
- "Let's look at another study guide from a different play, La Llorona. Who is familiar with who La Llorona is?" If students are not familiar, fill them in on the story. "With your same partner, discuss: How does this study guide compare to the one we looked at previously? What things do you notice about this one?"
- Give students 8 minutes to talk about what they observe. Bring class back together. As a class share their thoughts and observations.
- "Look at the detail, the design matches the feel of the play. It is very different from the one we saw previously, but still achieves the same goals as the last one. Study guides can have similar structure but are specifically designed to match the feel of the show."
- "Now that you've seen two examples of study guides, I would like you all to look at some study guides on your own. On your chromebooks log into canvas, there you'll find a link to a page that holds an archive of study guides. I want you to take some time to look through them. Notice what you like about them and what you think can look better. Afterwards we'll have a discussion on what you've observed."
- Give students time to look at study guides and discuss as a class what they observed.
- "You'll see each study guide has its own feel. Matching it to the dramaturg and the show which then draws the audience into the storyline. Each page also has its own article of research teaching audiences more about the show. It takes a lot of work to put together a cohesive study guide that is both educational and intriguing."
- "As we are trying our hand at dramaturgical work. We are going to start working on creating a study guide for your play. You are going to create three different articles, 2 informational and 1 activity/fun/your choice page. This is when your glossary from last class is going to come in handy. You have already chosen topics that would be interesting to research, and now you can choose things from that list to research and create a study guide with."
- "Today we are going to start the rough draft process. Begin researching your topic so you can write an article on it for your study guide. Each article should be about 300 words long. Also start looking into what you want to put on your fun page. As you are writing notes or begin a rough draft you can keep all that work in your manilla folder, so you don't lose it. Next class we will continue this and start working on creating and designing the study guide."
- Give students the rest of the class period to work on their study guides.

Study Guides: Day 2

Objective:

Students will demonstrate an understanding of dramaturgical study guides by creating and writing 3 study guide articles for their play.

Standards:

TH:Cr3.1.III.b. Synthesize ideas from research, script analysis, and context to create a performance that is believable, authentic, and relevant in a drama/theatre work.

TH:Cn11.2.III.b. Present and support an opinion about the social, cultural, and historical understandings of a drama/theatre work, based on critical research.

Materials:

Individual Devices for students (Laptops, iPads, etc.)

Study Guide Articles printed out

Paper

Pencils

Crayons

Hook:

Print out different study guide pages for students to look at. Invite the students to look through them before taking a seat.

- Have students pull out their manilla folders with their work from last time.
- “Today we are going to continue working on our study guides. You will finish up your research and drafts from last time, but now I would also like you to completely design and create your study guide. In the back I have provided paper and crayons so you can color and design your study guide. Keep in mind what kinds of things we saw in the examples and how you want to create your study guide to look.”
- Give students the rest of the period to create their study guides. As students work, rove around the class and check in on the students and make sure they are staying on task.

Lobby Display: Day 1

Objective:

Students will demonstrate an understanding of dramaturgical lobby displays by designing and creating a display with at least 5 specific details from their chosen production.

Standards:

TH:Re9.1.III.a. Research and synthesize cultural and historical information related to a drama/theatre work to support or evaluate artistic choices.

TH:Cn11.2.III.b. Present and support an opinion about the social, cultural, and historical understandings of a drama/theatre work, based on critical research.

Materials:

Buzz Lightyear Ride Video

Intro to Dramaturgy Powerpoint

Computer

Projector

Paper

Pencils

Hook:

Begin class by watching the Buzz Lightyear Ride Video from 0:00-1:45 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2tT6ZZPbuHQ>). Ask students why they think Disney creates these experiences before the people even get on the ride.

- “Today we are going to start looking at my favorite part of being a dramaturg, lobby displays. Who is familiar with what a lobby display is?” Let students answer.
- “A lobby display might look a little bit different on the intention of the person who put it up, but they all hold the same purpose, to draw the audience into the play before it even begins. It includes details and information about the play so the audience can begin learning about the show. It is also a really fun way to interact with the show. This is exactly what they are doing at Disneyland, in the video we just watched. As you stand in line there is so much happening around you and sometimes it's just as fun as the ride. This is your chance to make something just as fun as the play.”
- “Let's look at an example of a lobby display from Little Shop of Horrors.”
- Pull up PowerPoint.
- “What are some things you notice from this display? How does it relate to the story?”

- “This display clearly has a focus on skidrow. Let’s look at another example of a lobby display for Little Shop.”
- Move to the next slide.
- “How does it compare to this other display? How do they both relate to the story?”
- “Fun fact about this display, these displays were actually designed by the same dramaturg for the same production of Little Shop of Horrors. With that knowledge, is there anything else you notice about the lobby displays that join them together?”
- “There are lots of fun details you can play with when creating a lobby display. To get some practice at creating one I would like to brainstorm with a partner some things you could do to create a lobby display for. Together pick a show and create a list of props, designs, and other ideas you can use to create a lobby display for the show you picked.”
- Give students 10-15 minutes to create a list of ideas for their lobby display.
- Bring the class together.
- Invite the students to share their shows and ideas with the rest of the class.
- “Lobby Displays are really where our creativity gets to run wild as we think of how to engage our audience the moment they walk through the theatre doors.”
- “We are going to design a lobby display for your production. Today we will start brainstorming. Pull out your glossary and research and find what aspects of the play can you pull to create a lobby display for your show. There is paper in the back that you can use to sketch or create a list of ideas of what you want the display to look like. You will need to make sure there are at least 5 specific details that refer back to the play. Next time we will be putting the displays up to see what they would actually look like. There are tons of props that you can use here but you can also bring things from home if you would like.”
- “Make sure to spend your time efficiently today so you can put up and create your lobby display next time. I will be going around checking in on progress, if anyone needs help getting started let me know and I will be happy to brainstorm with you.”
- Give students the rest of the time to brainstorm their lobby displays. Rove around the class and help as needed.

Lobby Display: Day 2

Objective:

Students will demonstrate an understanding of dramaturgical lobby displays by designing and creating a display for their chosen production and writing a paragraph explanation about their choices.

Standards:

TH:Re9.1.III.a. Research and synthesize cultural and historical information related to a drama/theatre work to support or evaluate artistic choices.

TH:Cn11.2.III.b. Present and support an opinion about the social, cultural, and historical understandings of a drama/theatre work, based on critical research.

Materials:

Intro to Dramaturgy Powerpoint

Computer

Projector

Paper

Pencils

Crayons

Access to the prop shop

Hook:

Have the pictures of the Little Shop of Horrors lobby display up as class gets started.

- “How did everyone’s brainstorm sessions go last time?”
- “Lobby displays are a creative process, use today to get more ideas, but I want to see everyone’s display built by the last 10 minutes of class. We will then take a chance to go around and look at everyone’s.”
- “Remember we have plenty of stuff here in the class that you can use for your displays. Get creative and have fun with it.”
- Give students until the last 10 minutes of class to work.
- At the 10 minute mark, walk around with the class to look at everyone’s displays. Have the students observe what’s on them.
- After the walk through have students write a brief explanation of their lobby display design. What did they include and why? This explanation will be included in their casebooks. Encourage the students to take pictures of their displays before taking them down!!

Actor's Workshop

Objective:

Students will demonstrate an understanding of an actor's workshop by creating a 15 minute activity that actors can participate in to bring unity to the world of the play.

Standards:

TH:Re9.1.III.a. Research and synthesize cultural and historical information related to a drama/theatre work to support or evaluate artistic choices.

TH:Cn11.2.III.b. Present and support an opinion about the social, cultural, and historical understandings of a drama/theatre work, based on critical research.

Materials:

Sword Fighting Video

Video in Intro to Dramaturgy Powerpoint

Computer

Projector

Paper

Pencils

Hook:

Begin class by having them join in and participate with the video

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dvu-XUu2ytY>). USE IMAGINARY SWORDS!!!! Ask students their experience with it, how would it help them in a show that includes sword fighting.

- "Today we are going to hit on one last aspect of dramaturgical work, that may be a little more up your alley if you have felt uncomfortable so far. We are going to talk about actor's workshops. Based on the word alone, what do you actor's workshops are and how are they helpful to a production?"
- "An actor's workshop is basically a planned activity that can be used to help the actors have a better understanding of a part of the play. This can relate to a specific moment, a theme, an activity, anything that is important to the director and would help the actors get a better understanding of the world of the play."
- "I have two examples for us to discuss today. The first one is for Little Shop of Horrors. For this production the dramaturg decided to have a workshop for the actors on how to build flower arrangements. How might this be helpful to the actors for the show? What kind of background knowledge does it build for the actors? What characterization can it build for the actors?"

- “With Little Shop, the workshop was mostly used to build background information in a fun way for the characters. Now let’s look at an example for Wendy & Peter Pan.”
- “In this show, having a child like nature and attitude was important to the director. She wanted her actors to have a child-like behavior throughout the show in order to make sure they are having fun and help add to the light hearted spirit of the show. Here I have a short video of what the dramaturgs decided to do for the workshop. As you watch keep in mind how this activity might help the production.”
- Pull up video of the actor's workshop video.
- “What did you see happening in the workshop? How might this have been helpful to the actors?”
- “For the dramaturg, the best way to learn to be a child was by actually working with a child. The actors could see how the child held energy and how he just followed every impulse. There was no reason to be tired, he just had the time of his life. Children have no cares in the world and the actors got to watch this first hand.”
- “As you finish off your work as a dramaturg, I would like you to plan and create an activity that you could do with your actors to help them have a better understanding of the world of the play. It could be something like the flower arrangements to help gather background knowledge or it can be like the Wendy & Peter Pan workshop to help with characterization. You are the dramaturg, what do you think your actors would most benefit from?”
- “On a piece of paper write out an outline of your activity, or a description of what it would be. This activity needs to be at least 15 minutes long to ensure that your actors are having enough time to get the experience you are presenting to them. Also be sure to include why you think it would be useful to the actors. When you are done put it in your manilla folder and make you also have all your other work in there. We will be presenting our casebooks to one another next time.”
- Give students the rest of the class period to write their actor’s workshops. Rove around the classroom to ensure students are working and to answer questions.

Casebook Presentations

Objective:

Students will demonstrate an understanding of dramaturgy by presenting their casebooks and writing about their experience and thought process as a dramaturg.

Standards:

TH:Cn11.2.III.b. Present and support an opinion about the social, cultural, and historical understandings of a drama/theatre work, based on critical research.

Materials:

Waitress Article

White board

Dry erase markers

Rubric

Hook:

Print out copies of the Waitress Article

(<https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.nytimes.com/2016/04/27/theater/fresh-baked-pie-has-a-romaticrole-in-waitress-musical.amp.html>) have students read the article. After reading, discuss how is dramaturgy being applied here?

- “Is everyone ready for their presentations today? When you come up you will bring up your manilla folder casebook and share with us the contents of your casebook, sharing specific details on your glossary, study guides, lobby display, and actor’s workshop. What choices did you make and why do you think they would be helpful to an audience and actors?”
- Have each student come up one by one to present their casebooks.
- Write dramaturgy on the board.
- Have students come up to the board and write their thoughts about what Dramaturgy means, textbook definitions and personal definitions.
- As a class read and take in what people wrote.
- “Does anything on the board really resonate with you? Overall, do you think dramaturgy is a useful tool for a production? Did you enjoy the work of a dramaturg? Is this something you might be interested in pursuing?”
- Share my own personal experience with Dramaturgy.
- “The most important thing I wanted was for you to experience dramaturgy. It is an aspect theatre that is not often talked about, but I feel that it can add so much to a production. Now that you’ve had this chance to interact with it, I would like you to write a short reflection on your experience with this work. This will be the final addition to your casebook that I like to call, the Dramaturg’s Note. Write about your experience, how well

you did on your projects, what you would change if you did it all over again. Make sure this reflection is at least 5 sentences long. This is your chance to be honest about your experience. Once you have finished your note, put it in your casebook and turn it in to me.”

- Give students the rest of class to think, reflect, and write about their experience.

Supplemental Materials

Intro to Dramaturgy PowerPoint:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1qh48_davX3nvXf5kcflz-KbzDQKOI15P/view?usp=sharing

Glass Menagerie Script:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1RB7WvUcP5PicbUiuoFyZF1nWQLFdiHZy/view?usp=sharing>

American Revolution Worksheet:

<https://www.studenthandouts.com/00/200804/war.pdf>

Rubric:

CATEGORY	4	3	2	1
Reflections	At least a 5 sentence long reflection on their experience with dramaturgy.	A 4 sentence long reflection on their experience with dramaturgy.	A 3-2 sentence long reflection on their experience with dramaturgy..	A 1 sentence long reflection on their experience with dramaturgy.
Glossary	Glossary contains a minimum of 15 terms pulled from the play.	Glossary contains 10-14 terms pulled from the play.	Glossary contains 5-9 terms pulled from the play.	Glossary contains 1-4 terms pulled from the play.
Lobby Display	Design and create a lobby display that includes 5 specific details from the play. Includes a paragraph explanation on the choices you made.	Design and create a lobby display that includes 3-4 specific details from the play. Includes a paragraph explanation on the choices you made.	Design and create a lobby display that includes 1-2 specific details from the play. Includes a paragraph explanation on the choices you made..	Design and create a lobby display that includes no specific details from the play. No paragraph explanation on the choices you made is included.

Study Guide	Create 3 study guide articles: 2 informational and 1 fun page. Each page is stylized in the manner of the dramaturg. The articles are approximately 300 words in length.	Create 2 study guide articles: 1 informational and 1 fun page. Each page is stylized in the manner of the dramaturg. The articles are approximately 200 words in length.	Create 1 study guide article: 1 fun page. Each page is stylized in the manner of the dramaturg. The articles are approximately 100 words in length.	Create 1 study guide articles: 1 fun page. Very little styling in the manner of the dramaturg. The articles are approximately 100 words in length.
Actor's Workshop	Create an outline of a 15 minute activity for the actors in your play with an explanation as to why it is useful.	Create an outline of a 10-14 minute activity for the actors in your play with an explanation as to why it is useful.	Create an outline of a 5-9 minute activity for the actors in your play with an explanation as to why it is useful.	Create an outline of a 0-4 minute activity for the actors in your play with no explanation as to why it is useful.