



Wethersfield Public Schools

WHS Curriculum: Theater and Performing Arts

Grade(s)	10-12
Unit Title and Purpose	Introduction to Acting Ongoing Unit: Research on Acting Methods The purpose of this unit is for students to research and present an in-depth exploration of an acting method. Early in the semester, each student will choose a method from a teacher-provided list, each of which is attached to a fixed presentation date. Enduring Understandings: - Theatre artists critically inquire into the ways others have thought about and created drama processes and productions to inform their own work. - There are many approaches to acting, and actors use a variety of methods and techniques to refine their work.
Timeframe	Ongoing
Vision of the Graduate	
Communicator: Students teach the basics of a specific acting method to their peers.	
Unit Priority Standards	
NCAS Anchor Standard 11: Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding a. Research how other theatre artists apply creative processes to tell stories in a devised or scripted drama/theatre work, using theatre research methods. b. Use basic theatre research methods to better understand the social and cultural background of a drama/theatre work. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.7 Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.4 Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range of formal and informal tasks. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.5 Make strategic use of digital media (e.g. textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understandings of findings, reasoning, and evidence to add interest.	
Unit Supporting Standards	
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.6 Acquire and use accurately 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 considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.7 Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g. visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.8 Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the strengths and limitations of each source in terms of the task, purpose, and audience; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and overreliance on any one source and following a standard format for citation.	



Wethersfield Public Schools

WHS Curriculum: Theater and Performing Arts

Essential Questions	
In what ways can research into theatre histories, theories, literature, and performances alter the way a drama or production is understood? What are the major methods used by actors?	
Performance Expectations: Skills	Performance Expectations: Essential Knowledge/Concepts
1. Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively. 2. Assess the strengths and limitations of a source in terms of the task, purpose, and audience. 3. Integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and overreliance on any one source. 4. Follow a standard format for citation. 5. Make strategic use of digital media (e.g. textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence to add interest.	1. Understand the who, what, where, when, how, and why of a selected acting teacher and method. <u>Key Methods/Figures</u> ● Pre-modern: Quintilian, Aaron Hill, Delsarte ● Konstantin Stanislavsky and The System ● Chekhov, Vakhtangov, Meyerhold, and the Moscow Art Theater ● The Group Theater ● Lee Strasberg and The Method ● Stella Adler ● Uta Hagen ● Sanford Meisner ● Viola Spolin and the Theater of Games ● Bertold Brecht and the Theater of Politics ● Jerzy Grotowski and the Holy Actor ● Tadashi Suzuki and the Theater of Grandeur ● Anne Bogart and Viewpoints
Student Learning Tasks & Resources	Suggested Teacher Materials & Resources
● Research, write about, and produce a multimedia presentation on an acting method to introduce fellow students to an important concept.	● Research Presentations Overview & Sign-Up ● <i>The Great Acting Teachers and Their Methods</i> by Richard Brestoff ● Acting Approaches Chart



Wethersfield Public Schools

WHS Curriculum: Theater and Performing Arts

Grade(s)	10-12
Unit Title and Purpose	Introduction to Acting Unit 1: The Play’s the Thing — Getting Comfortable The purpose of this unit is to acquaint students with each other, the theater as a space, and the foundational concepts of acting as a dramatic art form. Enduring Understandings: ● Theatre artists share and present stories, ideas, and envisioned worlds to explore the human experience. ● Theatre artists make strong choices to effectively convey meaning.
Timeframe	2 Weeks
Vision of the Graduate	
Communicator and Collaborator : Students are introduced to the foundational concepts of theater and “play” with each other using theater and improv games as a way to become more comfortable and to learn the terminology.	
Unit Priority Standards	
NCAS Anchor Standard 4: Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation. a. Examine how character relationships assist in telling the story of a drama/theatre work. NCAS Anchor Standard 5: Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation. a. Practice various acting techniques to expand skills in a rehearsal or drama/theatre performance. b. Use researched technical elements to increase the impact of design for a drama/theatre production.	
Unit Supporting Standards	
Essential Questions	
Why are strong choices essential to interpreting a drama or theatre piece? What can I do to fully prepare a performance or technical design?	
Performance Expectations: Skills	Performance Expectations: Essential Knowledge/Concepts
1. Take risks to engage in creative exercises or try new approaches. 2. Physicalize stage directions. 3. Perform: communicate an improvised character distinct from the actor’s self through both voice and physicality. 4. Respond to other actors’ character choices in real time to create relationships between characters. 5. Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led).	1. Acting is about more than just reading lines, it is about thinking, feeling and moving in character. 2. The theater is both a physical space and an art form. 3. Theater is a collaborative effort with many different roles that draw upon broad skill sets. 4. Understand the basic stage directions of up, down, left and right.



Wethersfield Public Schools

WHS Curriculum: Theater and Performing Arts

Student Learning Tasks & Resources	Suggested Teacher Materials & Resources
● Play theater games in order to expose students to creative play and deepen their understanding of what performers do. ● Improvise scenes based on suggested theme/plot point to practice using space, voice, and physicality to tell a story while remaining “in the moment” and responsive to scene partner(s). ● Discuss what the theater games “do” for them as performers and readers. ● Write journal responses commenting on, self assessing, and evaluating the game experience for themselves as individuals and for the group as a whole.	● Viola Spolin, <i>A Director’s Handbook</i> and <i>Theater Games for Rehearsal</i> ● Theatre games resources, which may include but are not limited to: ○ Drama Notebook ○ Surf Office ○ Improv Scene Generator ● Trust falls ● Yoga exercises



Wethersfield Public Schools

WHS Curriculum: Theater and Performing Arts

Grade(s)	10-12
Unit Title and Purpose	Introduction to Acting Unit 2: Performance Analysis — Viewing and Reviewing Plays The purpose of this unit is for students to learn how to be a critical audience member. Prior to the first field trip, we will discuss acting look-fors when watching a live performance. The class will then attend a play and students will write a well-crafted review of it, focusing on a singular acting performance. We will also discuss and practice proper theater etiquette. Enduring Understandings: • Theatre artists reflect to understand the impact of drama processes and theatre experiences. • Theatre artists' interpretations of drama/theatre work are influenced by personal experiences and aesthetics. • Theatre artists apply criteria to investigate, explore, and assess drama and theatre work.
Timeframe	1 Week (surrounding first performance field trip)
Vision of the Graduate	
Communicator: Students write reviews to communicate thinking about an acting performance.	
Unit Priority Standards	
NCAS Anchor Standard 7: Perceive and analyze artistic work. a. Respond to what is seen, felt, and heard in a drama/theatre work to develop criteria for artistic choices. NCAS Anchor Standard 8: Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work. a. Analyze and compare artistic choices developed from personal experiences in multiple drama/theatre works. b. Identify and compare cultural perspectives and contexts that may influence the evaluation of a drama/theatre work. c. Justify personal aesthetics, preferences, and beliefs through participation in and observation of a drama/theatre work. NCAS Anchor Standard 9: Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work. a. Examine a drama/ theatre work using supporting evidence and criteria, while considering art forms, history, culture, and other disciplines	
Unit Supporting Standards	
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.1 Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.5 Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g. the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.1 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.	



Wethersfield Public Schools

WHS Curriculum: Theater and Performing Arts

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.2 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

Essential Questions

How do theatre artists comprehend the essence of drama processes and theatre experiences?

How can the same work of art communicate different messages to different people?

How are the theatre artist's processes and the audience's perspectives impacted by analysis and synthesis?

Performance Expectations: Skills

1. Watch attentively and demonstrate appropriate etiquette during theatrical performances.
2. Discern the vision of the production and evaluate the execution of that vision (including a differentiation on the level of production and the type of performance - play, musical, etc.).
3. Analyze a production in relation to multiple elements of performance, and in terms other than like/dislike.
4. Evaluate a production's value and/or appeal despite one's subjective response.
5. Support a position with relevant and compelling examples.
6. Acknowledge audience reaction, particularly if it differs from one's own reaction.

Performance Expectations: Essential Knowledge/Concepts

1. Evaluating dramatic productions involves analyzing the elements of performance (text, direction, acting, and design) both discretely and as a cohesive whole.
2. The audience for reviews includes those deciding whether or not to see the production, those looking to make sense of the production, and (in the future) those seeking information about a past production.

Student Learning Tasks & Resources

- Small group discussion of each performance.
- Drafts of 2-3 page reviews for each performance.
- Final drafts of 2 of 3 performances.

Suggested Teacher Materials & Resources

- Lindsay Price article/teaching resource
- Planned field trips to two plays



Wethersfield Public Schools

WHS Curriculum: Theater and Performing Arts

Grade(s)	10-12
Unit Title and Purpose	Craft and Technique Unit 3: Improvisation, Physicalization, and Storytelling The purpose of this unit is to delve into fundamental acting techniques that empower students to create spontaneous, expressive, and engaging performances. We will explore improvisation to foster quick thinking and adaptability, physicalization to embody characters through movement, and storytelling to craft compelling narratives. Enduring Understandings: ● Theatre artists rely on intuition, curiosity, and critical inquiry ● Theatre artists share and present stories, ideas, and envisioned worlds to explore the human experience. ● Theatre artists make strong choices to effectively convey meaning. ● Theatre artists share and present stories, ideas, and envisioned worlds to explore the human experience.
Timeframe	3 Weeks
Vision of the Graduate	
Communicator, Problem Solver, and Collaborator. Students communicate ideas and concepts through a play they write and perform, solving the problems of composition and production together, as they collaborate in small groups.	
Unit Priority Standards	
NCAS Anchor Standard 1: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work. a. Apply basic research to construct ideas about the visual composition of a drama/theatre work. NNCAS Anchor Standard 5: Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation. a. Practice various acting techniques to expand skills in a rehearsal or drama/theatre performance. b. Use researched technical elements to increase the impact of design for a drama/theatre production.	
Unit Supporting Standards	
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11-12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.6 Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating a command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.	
Essential Questions	
What happens when theatre artists use their imaginations and/or learned theatre skills while engaging in creative exploration and inquiry? Why are strong choices essential to interpreting a drama or theatre piece? What can I do to fully prepare a performance or technical design?	



Wethersfield Public Schools

WHS Curriculum: Theater and Performing Arts

Performance Expectations: Skills	Performance Expectations: Essential Knowledge/Concepts
1. Perform through improvisation and rehearsed techniques: communicate through both voice and physicality, with or without advanced preparation. 2. Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led).	1. Understand the rules and protocols of improv. 2. Performance demands a willingness to make mistakes and be vulnerable in front of other people. 3. It is essential that actors keep their focus on telling the story.
4. Student Learning Tasks & Resources	Suggested Teacher Materials & Resources
● Engage with a variety of theatre games and exercises geared towards improv and other types of narrative performance. ● Write and perform a personal story. ● As a group, students apply their learning about improv to a 10-minute improvised play. ● Students give and receive constructive feedback from each other.	● Viola Spolin, <i>A Director's Handbook</i> and <i>Theater Games for Rehearsal</i> ● Six acting exercises ● Theatre games resources, which may include but are not limited to: ○ Drama Notebook ○ Surf Office ○ Improv Scene Generator ● Yoga exercises ● Walking work / animal work / mask work ● Vocal and breathing exercises ● Tongue twisters ● Mirror exercises ● Commedia Exercises ● Watching videos professional improv comedians (Second Story, Upright Citizens Brigade) ● Improv Glossary



Wethersfield Public Schools

WHS Curriculum: Theater and Performing Arts

Grade(s)	10-12
Unit Title and Purpose	Craft and Technique Unit 4: Character and Scene Work The purpose of this unit is to focus on developing the actor's ability to embody characters authentically and effectively interpret scripted material. Students will explore techniques that foster deep understanding of character psychology, relationships, and narrative context, ultimately leading to compelling and nuanced performances. Enduring Understandings: • Theatre artists share and present stories, ideas, and envisioned worlds to explore the human experience. • Theatre artists make strong choices to effectively convey meaning. • Theatre artists' interpretations of drama/theatre work are influenced by personal experiences and aesthetics. • Theatre artists work to discover different ways of communicating meaning.
Timeframe	5 Weeks
Vision of the Graduate	
Collaborator, Communicator, and Problem Solver: Students work in groups to plan, produce, and perform a short scene.	
Unit Priority Standards	
NCAS Anchor Standard 1: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work. a. Apply basic research to construct ideas about the visual composition of a drama/theatre work. b. Use script analysis to generate ideas about a character that is believable and authentic in a drama/theatre work. NCAS Anchor Standard 3: Refine and complete artistic work a. Practice and revise a devised or scripted drama/theatre work using theatrical staging conventions b. Use research and script analysis to revise physical, vocal, and physiological choices impacting the believability and relevance of a drama/ theatre work. NCAS Anchor Standard 5: Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation. a. Practice various acting techniques to expand skills in a rehearsal or drama/theatre performance. b. Use researched technical elements to increase the impact of design for a drama/theatre production. NCAS Anchor Standard 8: Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work. a. Analyze and compare artistic choices developed from personal experiences in multiple drama/theatre works. b. Identify and compare cultural perspectives and contexts that may influence the evaluation of a drama/theatre work. c. Justify personal aesthetics, preferences, and beliefs through participation in and observation of a drama/theatre work.	
Unit Supporting Standards	
NCAS Anchor Standard 1: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work. c. Use script analysis to generate ideas about a character that is believable and authentic in a drama/theatre work. Use personal experiences and knowledge to develop a character that is believable and authentic in a drama/theatre work. NCAS Anchor Standard 4: Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation.	



Wethersfield Public Schools

WHS Curriculum: Theater and Performing Arts

a. Examine how character relationships assist in telling the story of a drama/theatre work. Discover how unique choices shape believable and sustainable drama/theatre work.

b. Shape character choices using given circumstances in a drama/theatre work.

NCAS Anchor Standard 6: Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.

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

NCAS Anchor Standard 7: Perceive and analyze artistic work

a. Respond to what is seen, felt, and heard in a drama/theatre work to develop criteria for artistic choices.

NCAS Anchor Standard 9 : Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work.

a. Examine a drama/ theatre work using supporting evidence and criteria, while considering art forms, history, culture, and other disciplines.

b. Consider the aesthetics of the production elements in a drama/theatre work.

c. Formulate a deeper understanding and appreciation of a drama/ theatre work by considering its specific purpose or intended audience.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11-12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.6 Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating a command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

Essential Questions

How, when, and why do theatre artists' choices change?

What happens when theatre artists use their imaginations and/or learned theatre skills while engaging in creative exploration and inquiry?

Why are strong choices essential to interpreting a drama or theatre piece?

Performance Expectations: Skills	Performance Expectations: Essential Knowledge/Concepts
1. Perform: communicate a scripted character and a rehearsed scene through both voice and physicality, with an emphasis on authentic response to scene partner(s). 2. Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led). 3. Use the language of actors to analyze characters and scenes. 4. Memorize and perform a 10-minute scene.	1. Repetition in rehearsal is essential to a good performance. Don't rehearse until it's right; rehearse until you can't get it wrong. 2. Interpret the phrase, "Dying is easy; comedy's hard," to develop an appreciation of comedic skills. 3. Good acting demands enormous energy. 4. Actors must physically and vocally command the stage. 5. Acting is about <i>action</i>, not emotion. 6. Understand how actors use silence to their advantage.
Student Learning Tasks & Resources	Suggested Teacher Materials & Resources
• Read <i>A Practical Handbook for the Actor</i> and apply concepts to scene analysis and performance • Engage in a scene and character analysis for a short scene from a longer play.	Anchor Text: <i>A Practical Handbook for the Actor</i> • Character-driven sketch comedy performances (e.g., "Saturday Night Live") • Scenes performed by professional actors vs.



Wethersfield Public Schools

WHS Curriculum: Theater and Performing Arts

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">● With a partner, rehearse and perform a short scene from a longer play.● Engage in a scene and character analysis for a 10-minute play.● With a small group, rehearse and perform a 10-minute play.● Watch classmates' performances and provide constructive responses, highlighting strengths and areas of growth.● Watch video recordings of performed scenes and self-reflect and evaluate performances, noting areas of strength and growth. | <p>amateur actors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Building trust with scene partner(s): NYT's 36 questions that lead to love● <i>The Best New Ten-Minute Plays 2021</i>● <i>How to Read a Play</i> (Hayman)● <i>Essential Acting</i>● <i>Scenes for Teens</i>● WHS collection of hard-copy plays● Digital collection of plays |
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Wethersfield Public Schools

WHS Curriculum: Theater and Performing Arts

Grade(s)	10-12
Unit Title and Purpose	Unit 5: The Audition This culminating unit provides students with the practical skills and confidence necessary to navigate the audition process. We will focus on refining audition techniques, selecting appropriate material, and presenting a professional and compelling audition. This unit prepares students for the transition from the classroom to professional performance opportunities. Enduring Understandings: • Theatre artists refine their work and practice their craft through rehearsal. • Theatre artists allow awareness of interrelationships between self and others to influence and inform their work. • Theatre artists understand and can communicate their creative process as they analyze the way the world may be understood. • Theatre artists critically inquire into the ways others have thought about and created drama processes and productions to inform their own work.
Timeframe	3 Weeks
Vision of the Graduate	
Communicator, Collaborator, and Problem Solver: Students discuss design vision with classmates, problem-solve through challenges, and present a professional and compelling vision.	
Unit Priority Standards	
NCAS Anchor Standard 3: Refine and complete artistic work. a. Practice and revise a devised or scripted drama/theatre work using theatrical staging conventions b. Explore physical, vocal and physiological choices to develop a performance that is believable, authentic, and relevant to a drama/theatre work. c. Refine technical design choices to support the story and emotional impact of a devised or scripted drama/ theatre work. NCAS Anchor Standard 9 : Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work. a. Examine a drama/ theatre work using supporting evidence and criteria, while considering art forms, history, culture, and other disciplines. b. Consider the aesthetics of the production elements in a drama/theatre work. c. Formulate a deeper understanding and appreciation of a drama/ theatre work by considering its specific purpose or intended audience. NCAS Anchor Standard 11: Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding. a. Research how other theatre artists apply creative processes to tell stories in a devised or scripted drama/theatre work, using theatre research methods. b. Use basic theatre research methods to better understand the social and cultural background of a drama/theatre work.	
Unit Supporting Standards	
NCAS Anchor Standard 1: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work. c. Apply basic research to construct ideas about the visual composition of a drama/theatre work. d. Use script analysis to generate ideas about a character that is believable and authentic in a drama/theatre work.	



Wethersfield Public Schools

WHS Curriculum: Theater and Performing Arts

NCAS Anchor Standard 2: Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.

- Explore the function of history and culture in the development of a dramatic concept through a critical analysis of original ideas in a drama/theatre work.
- Investigate the collaborative nature of the actor, director, playwright, and designers and explore their interdependent roles in a drama/theatre work.

NCAS Anchor Standard 4: Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation.

- Examine how character relationships assist in telling the story of a drama/theatre work.
- Shape character choices using given circumstances in a drama/theatre work.

NCAS Anchor Standard 5: Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation.

- Practice various acting techniques to expand skills in a rehearsal or drama/theatre performance.
- Use researched technical elements to increase the impact of design for a drama/theatre production.

NCAS Anchor Standard 6: Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.

Perform a scripted drama/theatre work for a specific audience.

NCAS Anchor Standard 7: Perceive and analyze artistic work

- Respond to what is seen, felt, and heard in a drama/theatre work to develop criteria for artistic choices.

NCAS Anchor Standard 8: Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.

- Analyze and compare artistic choices developed from personal experiences in multiple drama/theatre works.
- Identify and compare cultural perspectives and contexts that may influence the evaluation of a drama/theatre work.
- Justify personal aesthetics, preferences, and beliefs through participation in and observation of a drama/theatre work.

Essential Questions

How do theatre artists transform and edit their initial ideas?

What happens when theatre artists foster understanding between self and others through critical awareness, social responsibility, and the exploration of empathy?

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

In what ways can research into theatre histories, theories, literature, and performances alter the way a drama process or production is understood?

Performance Expectations: Skills	Performance Expectations: Essential Knowledge/Concepts
- Perform: communicate a character through both voice and physicality in a monologue, with emphasis on telling the story while alone onstage. - Complete a professional mock audition.	Expectations and requirements for collegiate or professional auditions.
Student Learning Tasks & Resources	Suggested Teacher Materials & Resources
Select a monologue to perform, using Monologue Resources and the American Musical and Drama Academy's "How to Select a Monologue".	Audition rubrics



Wethersfield Public Schools

WHS Curriculum: Theater and Performing Arts

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read the entirety of the plays from which students have selected their monologues to understand context.• Prepare for monologue performance using “Stage Milk Monologue Guide”.• Review and analyze BFA Acting Audition Requirements from schools including Hartt, UConn, NYU, and Juilliard.• Create an acting resume using an industry template.• Practice the “slate,” or the actor’s introduction to an audition.• Select and rehearse two contrasting monologues to perform for a mock audition.• Reflect on learning over the course of the semester, including a reflection on perceived performance during the “audition.” | |
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