

OCTOBER 6TH • 10AM

OBSP
The Off Broad Street Players



Our Town

by Thornton Wilder



Table of Contents

	1
Theatre Etiquette	3
About the Author	4
Thornton Wilder Chronology	6
Major Characters	7
Structure and Technique	8
Historical Context	9
Literary Elements in <i>Our Town</i>	11
Vocabulary	11
Interview with the Director, Mr. Walter Webster	12
Curriculum Standards	14
Language Arts Literacy Standards	14
Anchor Standards for Reading	14
Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening	15
Anchor Standards for Language	15
Visual and Performing Arts Standards	15
Theatre/Respond Practice: Examine, Discern	15
Theatre/Respond Practice: Interpret	16
Theatre/Respond Practice: Critique	17
Theatre/Connect Practice: Incorporate	18
Theatre/Connect Practice: Affect, Expand	19
Resources	20

Theatre Etiquette

Being at a live show is not like being at a movie theater. It's quieter, and it can be harder to hear the performers because they are performing live.

There's a lot to know about the Do's and Don'ts of theatre etiquette, so we have created this guide to help you be the best theatre patron you can be!

1. Be on time.
2. Visit the restroom before the show starts.
3. Turn off your cell phones. Putting it on vibrate is not enough - turn it off!
4. On that same line of thinking, don't send text messages during the show. Keep your phone off!
5. No photography or videoing in the theatre. It can be very distracting to the actors and can cause a mishap. It could even be considered a copyright infringement!
6. Remember that the Overture (introductory music) in Musical Theatre is part of the performance, so be quiet when it begins.
7. Don't put or throw anything onto the stage.
8. Don't eat in the theatre. Any eating or drinking should be done during intermission. (If you need to unwrap a cough drop, be quiet with the wrapper!)
9. Don't talk during the performance - not even whispering. You should only speak if there is an emergency.
10. Do not put your feet up on the seats or balcony and do not kick the seat in front of you.
11. Don't obstruct the views of others by putting your head on your neighbor's shoulder, no matter how much you like them.
12. Don't sing along, no matter how tempting it is. :)
13. Stay in your seat for the entire performance. You should only leave during intermission, or an emergency.
14. Do applaud when the performance is over...this tells the performers and crew that you appreciate their work.
15. Stand and applaud if you really thought the show was great.
16. Do not whistle or scream out to the performers except for a Bravo or Brava.

About the Author

Thornton Wilder (1897–1975) was a pivotal figure in the literary history of the twentieth-century. He is the only writer to win Pulitzer Prizes for both fiction and drama. He received the Pulitzer for his novel *The Bridge of San Luis Rey* (1927) and the plays *Our Town* (1938) and *The Skin of Our Teeth* (1942). His other best-selling novels include *The Cabala*, *The Woman of Andros*, *Heaven's My Destination*, *The Ides of March*, *The Eighth Day* and *Theophilus North*. His other major dramas include *The Matchmaker* (adapted as the musical *Hello, Dolly!*) and *The Alcestiad*. *The Happy Journey to Trenton and Camden*, *Pullman Car Hiawatha* and *The Long Christmas Dinner* are among his well-known shorter plays.

Wilder's many honors include the Gold Medal for Fiction from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the National Book Committee's Medal for Literature and the Goethe-Plakette Award (Germany).

Wilder was born in Madison, Wisconsin, on April 17, 1897. He spent part of his boyhood in China and was educated principally in California, graduating from Berkeley High School in 1915. After attending Oberlin College for two years, he transferred to Yale, where he received his BA in 1920. His post-graduate studies included a year spent studying archaeology and Italian at the American Academy in Rome (1920-21) and graduate work in French at Princeton (Master's degree, 1926).

In addition to his talents as a playwright and novelist, Wilder was an accomplished essayist, translator, research scholar, teacher, lecturer, librettist and screenwriter. In 1942, he teamed up with Alfred Hitchcock on the classic psycho-thriller *Shadow of a Doubt*. Versed in foreign languages, he translated and adapted plays by Ibsen, Sartre and Obey. He read and spoke German, French and Spanish, and his scholarship included significant research on James Joyce and Lope de Vega.

Wilder enjoyed acting and played major roles in several of his plays in summer theater productions. He also possessed a life-long love of music and wrote librettos for two operas, one based on *The Long Christmas Dinner* (composer Paul Hindemith) and the other based on *The Alcestiad* (composer Louis Talma).

One of Wilder's deepest passions was teaching. He began this career in 1921 as an instructor in French at The Lawrenceville School in New Jersey. During the 1930's he taught courses in Classics in Translation and Composition at the University of Chicago. In 1950–51, he served as the Charles Eliot Norton Professor of Poetry at Harvard.

During WWII, Wilder served in the Army Air Force Intelligence. He was awarded the Legion of Merit Bronze Star, the Legion d'honneur and the Order of the British Empire.

In 1930, with the royalties received from *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*, Wilder built a home for himself and his family in Hamden, Connecticut. Although often away from home, restlessly seeking quiet places in which to write, he always returned to “The House The Bridge Built.” He died here on December 7, 1975.

More information on Thornton Wilder and his family is available in Penelope Niven’s definitive biography, *Thornton Wilder: A Life* (2013) as well as on the Wilder Family website, www.thorntonwilder.com

Thornton Wilder Chronology

1897	Born in Madison, Wisconsin (April 17)
1906	Moves to Hong Kong in May and to Berkeley, California in October
1906-10	Emerson Public School in Berkeley
1910-11	China Inland Mission School, Chefoo, China (one year)
1912-13	Thacher School, Ojai, California (one year). First play known to be produced: <i>The Russian Princess</i>
1915	Graduates from Berkeley High School; active in school dramatics
1915-17	Oberlin College; published regularly
1920	B.A. Yale College (3-month service in 1918 with U.S. Army in 1918); many publications
1920-21	American Academy in Rome (8-month residency)
1920s	French teacher at Lawrenceville School, Lawrenceville, New Jersey ('21-'25 & '27-'28)
1924	First visit to the MacDowell Colony, Peterborough, New Hampshire
1926	M.A. in French literature, Princeton University <i>The Trumpet Shall Sound</i> produced off-Broadway (American Laboratory Theatre) <i>The Cabala</i> (first novel)
1927	<i>The Bridge of San Luis Rey</i> (novel- Pulitzer Prize)
1928	<i>The Angel That Troubled The Waters</i> (first published collection of drama—playlets)
1930s	Part-time faculty, University of Chicago (comparative literature and composition); lectures across the country; first Hollywood screen-writing assignment (1934); extensive foreign travel
1930	<i>The Woman of Andros</i> (novel) Completion of home for his family and himself in Hamden, Connecticut
1931	<i>The Long Christmas Dinner and Other Plays</i> (six one-act plays)
1932	<i>Lucrece</i> opens on Broadway starring Katharine Cornell (translation of André Obey's <i>Le Viol de Lucrece</i>)
1935	<i>Heaven's My Destination</i> (novel)
1937	<i>A Doll's House</i> (adaptation/ trans.) opens on Broadway with Ruth Gordon
1938	<i>Our Town</i> (Pulitzer Prize) and <i>The Merchant of Yonkers</i> open on Broadway
1942	<i>The Skin of Our Teeth</i> opens on Broadway (Pulitzer Prize) Screenplay for Alfred Hitchcock's <i>The Shadow of a Doubt</i>
1942-45	Service with Army Air Force in North Africa and Italy (Lieut. Col. at discharge—Bronze Star and O.B.E.)
1948	<i>The Ides of March</i> (novel); performing in his plays in summer stock in this period <i>The Victors</i> opens off-Broadway (translation of Sartre's <i>Morts sans sépulture</i>)
1949	Major role in Goethe Convocation in Aspen; lectures widely.
1951-52	Charles Eliot Norton Professor of Poetry at Harvard
1952	Gold Medal for Fiction, American Academy of Arts and Letters
1953	Cover of <i>Time</i> Magazine (January 12)
1955	<i>The Matchmaker</i> opens on Broadway starring Ruth Gordon <i>The Alcestiad</i> produced at Edinburgh Festival with Irene Worth (as <i>A Life in the Sun</i>)
1957	German Peace Prize
1961	Libretto for <i>The Long Christmas Dinner</i> (music by Paul Hindemith—premieres in Mannheim, West Germany)
1962	"Plays for Bleecker Street" (<i>Someone from Assisi</i> , <i>Infancy</i> , and <i>Childhood</i>) premiere at NYC's Circle in the Square Libretto for <i>The Alcestiad</i> (music by Louise Talma—premieres in Frankfurt, West Germany)
1963	Presidential Medal of Freedom
1964	<i>Hello, Dolly!</i> starring Carol Channing opens on Broadway
1965	National Book Committee's Medal for Literature
1967	<i>The Eighth Day</i> (National Book Award for Fiction)
1973	<i>Theophilus North</i> (novel)
1975	Dies in sleep in Hamden, CT on December 7. Buried at Mt. Carmel Cemetery, Hamden, Connecticut

For more information, please visit www.thorntonwilder.com and www.thorntonwildersociety.org.

Major Characters

Stage Manager - Play's narrator; he directs the play and also addresses the audience.

Webb Family

Emily Webb- one of the main characters. She is a bright girl and has great dreams for her life. In Act II she marries George Gibbs.

Charles Webb - Emily's father, publisher and editor of the *Grover's Corners Sentinel*

Wally Webb - the youngest of the Webb family. He dies while on a Boy Scout camping trip, when his appendix bursts.

Myrtle Webb - Charles' wife and Emily and Wally's mother. She is portrayed as a "typical" housewife and mother.

Gibbs Family

Frank Gibbs- the town doctor; father to Frank and Julia

Julia (Hersey) Gibbs- Frank's wife; she dies from pneumonia.

George Gibbs- Frank's son. He wants to be a farmer and to marry Emily Webb.

Rebecca Gibbs- George's older sister. She marries and leaves Grover's Corner.

Other Townspeople

Joe and Si Crowell- Local paperboys. Joe later gets a scholarship to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Simon Stimson- Church organist who is known to drink too much

Howie Newsome- The milkman

Structure and Technique

The play is comprised of three acts:

1. Daily Life (1901)
2. Love and Marriage (1903), and
3. [Unnamed] Death and After Life (1913)

Our Town is considered a metatheatrical play. Such a play might use devices where a theatre is self-aware or self-referential; that is, it comments on itself in some way. Metatheatricality has been seen in theatre as far back as classical Greece, over 2500 years ago. It was present in works like *Antony and Cleopatra*; and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* by Shakespeare.

The famed theatre educator, Richard Hornby*, proposed five devices found in metatheatricality: ceremony within a play, role-playing within a role, reference to reality, self-reference of the drama, and a play within a play.

Wilder employs several of these metatheatrical devices in *Our Town*.

The Stage Manager controls the narrative of the story, as a self-reference to the drama. He relays the story with bits and pieces, rather than grand theatrical scenes. This creates a unique rhythm to the story-telling.

In theatre, there is often a sense that the play takes place with an invisible wall between the audience and the actors. The actors do not speak to the audience, and the story is told entirely on the stage. In *Our Town*, a theatrical device called "breaking the fourth wall" is employed. It is done by means of the Stage Manager, and on occasion other actors as well. The Stage Manager acknowledges the audience, and talks to the audience, throughout the play. His narration functions as a sort of Greek chorus. He provides background information to the audience to help them understand what is happening, and expresses thoughts and dreams and fears that the main characters might not express outright in the play.

The Stage Manager is not the only actor who breaks the fourth wall. Mr. Webb, in Act I, speaks to the audience as well. Both the Stage Manager and Mr. Webb speak as though they are residents, but also as if they realize that they are actors in a play. By doing so, Wilder blurs the line between play and the audience (real world).

At the time of the writing of *Our Town*, stages were generally full of scenery - sometimes at the expense of the story itself. The bare stage often includes but a couple of chairs and a couple of ladders. The actors use very few props, often miming their actions. Wilder stripped away the scenery, and focused on the story itself: that is, the story of everyday life in small-town Americana.

*Hornby, Richard. *Drama, Metadrama, and Perception*. Bucknell University Press, 1986.

Historical Context

The play spans the years 1901-1913.

1901	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Panic of 1901: The NY Stock Exchange crashed -President William McKinley was assassinated by anarchist Leon Czolgosz. Teddy Roosevelt becomes President of the United States. -The Período Azul, or the Blue Period, of Picasso's works commences and lasts through 1904 -The average life span for men was 46 years old; 48 years old for women. 	1908	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The first "ball" drop at Times Square on New Years Eve takes place -Henry Ford begins production of the Model T automobile. -Willi -Dr. Frederick Cook claims to reach the North Pole -The U.S. Navy's Great White Fleet sailed around the world.
1902	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The first movie theater in the United States opens, in Los Angeles, California -Cuba gains independence from the United States -Stuffed teddy bears are introduced, named after President Teddy Roosevelt, who refused to shoot a tethered black bear. -Scott Joplin publishes <i>The Entertainer</i> 	1909	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The "Lincoln Head" penny is introduced. -The NAACP was founded. -Sigmund Freud delivers his only lectures in the United States.
1903	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The first silent film debuts, <i>The Great Train Robbery</i> -The Wright brothers fly an airplane at Kitty Hawk, NC -The first box of Crayola crayons, containing 8 colors, was sold for five cents. 	1910	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Boy Scouts of America are first incorporated. -The first public radio broadcast takes place, operas from the Metropolitan Opera House -The ballet <i>The Firebird</i> by Igor Stravinsky is premiered in Paris. -African American boxer Jack Johnson defeats white American boxer James Jeffries in a heavyweight boxing match. The defeat sparked race riots across the U.S.
1904	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Cy Young pitches the first perfect game of modern baseball -The ice cream cone is invented -The first underground line of the NYC subway opens -New Year's Eve celebration is hosted in Times Square for the first time -The United States gains control of the Panama Canal Zone for \$10 million. -Isadora Duncan established the first school of modern dance in Berlin. 	1911	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The first Indianapolis 500 race took place -Main branch of the NY Public Library opens

1905	-Albert Einstein completes his doctoral dissertation and also submits papers on photoelectric effect, special relativity, and mass-energy equivalence -Las Vegas is founded	1912	-Arizona became the 48th State. -The Titanic sunk, claiming more than 1500 lives. -President Theodore survives an assassination attempt -Alaska becomes a territory
1906	-Upton Sinclair publishes <i>The Jungle</i> -President Theodore Roosevelt is awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his role in negotiating peace in the Russo-Japanese War -The first audio recording was broadcast over radio -The first Victor Victrola phonographic record player was manufactured	1913	-Ford introduced the assembly line -Woodrow Wilson becomes president -Women's Suffrage March takes place in Washington, D.C.
1907	-Financial Panic of 1907 -Picasso introduces Cubism -Oklahoma became the 46th state		

Our Town was written in 1938, twenty-five years after the setting of the final act of the play. Those twenty-five years saw many influences and set a context for the play:

The Depression (1929-1939)

- The stock market crashed; many lost everything.
- Unemployment spiked from 1/2 million in 1929 to 12 million in 1932
- National income fell 52% by 1932
- Exports dropped 70%

Efforts to Address the Depression

- President F.D. Roosevelt instituted a number of federally funding programs in an attempt to curb the crisis:
 - The FDIC (Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation) program was created, which protects the monies that people entrust to their bank (currently up to \$250,000).
 - Minimum wages and maximum work week laws
 - Wagner National Labor Relations Act which guarantees the right for private sector employees to organize into trade unions and take collective action such as strikes

Labor Unrest

- Labor unrest was high due to unemployment. Strikes became more frequent, along with bargaining for better hours, wages, and working conditions. Meanwhile, industries would hire thugs to create violent unrest at strikes.

World War II Looming

- Adolph Hitler became dictator over the German state and instituted pro-Aryan, anti-Jewish policies. World War II would begin in 1939.

Literary Elements in *Our Town*

- Allegory
- Flashback
- Foreshadowing
- Imagery
- Juxtaposition
- Magical Realism
- Metatheatre
- Setting
- Symbolism

References & Resources for Teaching Literary Elements in *Our Town*: [Prestwick House](#) and [Shoop English](#)

Vocabulary

affront – An action that causes offense

alacrity – liveliness and eagerness

anthropology – science of the origins and social relationships of humans

barren – completely wanting or lacking

belligerent – characteristic of an enemy or one eager to fight

bereaved – a person who has suffered the death of someone they loved

contrive – make or work out a plan for; devise

crestfallen – brought low in spirit

diligent – quietly and steadily persevering in detail or exactness

drenched – abundantly covered or supplied with

farce – a comedy characterized by broad satire

gingham – a woven cotton fabric, typically with a checked pattern

heliotrope – a fragrant plant with blue or purple flowers

highboy – a tall chest of drawers divided into two sections and supported on four legs

laden – filled with a great quantity

legacy – a gift of personal property by will

lugubriousness – excessively mournful, dismal, and gloomy

omniscient – knowing, seeing, or understanding everything

parlor – a room in a house where people can sit, relax, and talk

phosphate soda – a tangy or sour beverage that was popular in the 1870s through the early 1900s. Often served in soda fountains.

pince-nez – a style of glasses popular in the early 20th century clipped to the nose

placid – not easily upset or excited

proscenium – the part of a stage between the curtain and the orchestra

radiant – emanating or as if emanating light

relations – mutual dealings or connections or communications among persons or groups

savant – a learned person

seize – take hold of; grab

sentimentality – excessive tenderness, sadness, or nostalgia

spectacles – eyeglasses
tableau – any vivid, dramatic scene
torrent – an overwhelming number or amount
traipse – walk or tramp about
trellis – latticework used to support climbing plants
unobtrusively – in an unobtrusive manner
vestige – an indication that something has been present

An Interview with the Director of *Our Town*, Mr. Walter Webster

Q. How would you compare the Stage Manager in *Our Town* to a Stage Manager in a production?

Mr. Webster: In a production, the Stage Manager runs everything - essentially, they become the Director at final rehearsal. The Stage Manager is in charge of the productions; the Director's job is essentially finished once the performances begin.

In *Our Town*, The Stage Manager is an all-knowing figure. He's like God so to speak. He knows everything before it happens. He is also running the production in some sense, from the stage.

Q. Why is there so little scenery in *Our Town*?

Mr. Webster: It isn't necessary. *Our Town* is any universal town, telling the story of what happens in life. Act 1 is a run of the mill day; Act 2 is a marriage, or rebirth; and Act 3, of course, is death, or after life. There is no need of a set to represent things, because it is all representative of our own lives. You place these characters as you view them into your own life.

Q. How does the author tell the story with no props?

Mr. Webster: There are no physical props to speak of. Everything is pantomimed, so blocking has an unusual take in *Our Town*. In theatre, blocking is staging the details of an actor or actress' moves to tell the story. Since there are no props, actions are mimed. There are no stoves, or dishes, no cups, no newspapers, for example., so the miming facilitates that storytelling.

Q. *Our Town* is often referred to as metatheatrical theatre. One of the most obvious devices of metatheatrical theatre in *Our Town* is the breaking of the fourth wall, where the Stage Manager, and occasionally other actors, speak directly to the audience. What are some of your favorite devices in this play?

Mr. Webster: Some of my favorite devices are the use of mime, and the prime device of listening, and acting and reacting since there is no set. The lighting is important, too. It reflects the mood. We can do that with things like fog or haze, for example.

Q. So who is the Stage Manager, really?

Mr. Webster: He's all the many characters! Mrs. So and So, etc. When George and Emily begin to court, he is the soda fountain guy. Later he is the minister at the wedding. He's the narrator, the stage manager, and many characters. He, along with other characters, "break the fourth wall" at times, which of course is a metatheatrical device.

Q. How is this different to direct this versus other directing you have done with fully staged plays and musicals?

Mr. Webster: I'll get back to you on that one!

Curriculum Standards

Depending upon the activities you undertake with your students, the following standards may apply:

Language Arts Literacy Standards

Anchor Standards for Reading

Key Ideas and Details

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.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.

Craft and Structure

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.

Progress Indicators for Reading Literature

Key Ideas and Details

RL.11-12.1. Cite strong and thorough textual evidence and make relevant connections to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

RL.11-12.2. Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.

RL.11-12.3. Analyze the impact of the author’s choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).

Craft and Structure

RL.11-12.4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. (e.g., Shakespeare as well as other authors.)

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.

RL.11-12.6. Analyze a case in which grasping a point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement).

Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening

Comprehension and Collaboration

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

Anchor Standards for Language

Conventions of Standard English

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.

Vocabulary Acquisition and Use

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.

Visual and Performing Arts Standards

Theatre/Respond Practice: Examine, Discern

Anchor Standard: 7. Perceiving and analyzing products.

Enduring Understanding: Theatre artists reflect to understand the impact of drama processes and theatre experiences.

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

Grade 8th

1.4.8.Re7a - Describe and record personal reactions to artistic choices in a theatrical work.

1.4.8.Re7b - Compare recorded personal and peer reactions to artistic choices in a theatrical work.

Grade 12th - Proficient

1.4.12prof.Re7a - Utilize personal reactions and reflections to artistic choices in a theatrical work for a formal theatre critique.

1.4.12prof.Re7b - Collaboratively analyze how artistic choices in a theatrical work affect personal and peer reactions.

Grade 12th - Accomplished

1.4.12acc.Re7a - Respond to what is seen, felt, and heard in devised or scripted theatre work to develop criteria for artistic choices.

1.4.12acc.Re7b - Apply theatre elements and production values to formal and informal evaluations or artistic choices in a theatrical work.

Grade 12th - Advanced

1.4.12adv.Re7a - Demonstrate an understanding of multiple interpretations of artistic criteria and how each might be used to influence future artistic choices of devised or scripted theatre work.

1.4.12adv.Re7b - Use historical and cultural context to structure and justify personal responses to devised or scripted theatre work.

Theatre/[Respond](#) Practice: Interpret

Anchor Standard: 8. Interpreting intent and meaning.

Enduring Understanding: Theatre artists' interpretations of drama/theatre work are influenced by personal experiences and aesthetics.

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

Grade 8th

1.4.8.Re8a - Investigate various critique methodologies and apply the knowledge to respond to a theatrical work.

1.4.8.Re8b - Justify the aesthetic choices created through the use of production elements in a theatrical work.

1.4.8.Re8c - Assess the impact of a theatrical work on a specific audience.

Grade 12th - Proficient

1.4.12prof.Re8a - Examine a devised or scripted theatre work and identify the supporting evidence/criteria for its effectiveness to communicate the central message considering plays' history, culture, and political context.

1.4.12prof.Re8b - Evaluate the aesthetics of the production elements in a devised or scripted theatre work and their ability to support or extend the storyline.

1.4.12prof.Re8c - Formulate a deeper understanding and appreciation of a devised or scripted theatre work by considering its specific purpose or intended audience.

Grade 12th - Accomplished

1.4.12acc.Re8a - Analyze and assess a devised or scripted theatre work by connecting it to art forms, history, culture, and other disciplines using supporting evidence and criteria.

1.4.12acc.Re8b - Construct meaning in a devised or scripted theatre work, considering personal aesthetics and knowledge of production elements while respecting others' interpretations.

1.4.12acc.Re8c - Verify and articulate how a devised or scripted theatre work communicates for a specific purpose and audience.

Grade 12th - Advanced

1.4.12adv.Re8a - Research and synthesize cultural and historical information related to a devised or scripted theatre work to support or evaluate artistic choices.

1.4.12adv.Re8b - Analyze and evaluate varied aesthetic interpretations of production elements for the same devised or scripted theatre work.

1.4.12adv.Re8c - Compare and debate the connection between devised or scripted theatre work and contemporary issues that may impact audiences.

Theatre/Respond Practice: Critique

Anchor Standard: 9. Applying criteria to evaluate products.

Enduring Understanding: Theatre artists apply criteria to investigate, explore, and assess drama and theatre work.

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

Grade 8th

1.4.8.Re9a - Analyze how personal experiences affect artistic choices in a theatrical work.

1.4.8.Re9b - Identify and interpret how different cultural perspectives influence the evaluation of theatrical work.

1.4.8.Re9c - Examine how the use of personal aesthetics, preferences, and beliefs can be used to discuss a theatrical work.

Grade 12th - Proficient

1.4.12prof.Re9a - Analyze and compare artistic choices developed from personal experiences in multiple devised or scripted theatre works.

1.4.12prof.Re9b - Identify and compare cultural perspectives and contexts that may influence the evaluation of a devised or scripted theatre work.

1.4.12prof.Re9c - Justify personal aesthetics, preferences, and beliefs through participation in and observation of devised or scripted theatre work.

Grade 12th - Accomplished

1.4.12acc.Re9a - Develop detailed supporting evidence and criteria to reinforce artistic choices, when participating in or observing devised or scripted theatre work.

1.4.12acc.Re9b - Apply concepts from devised or scripted theatre work for personal realization about cultural perspectives and understanding.

1.4.12acc.Re9c - Debate and distinguish multiple aesthetics, preferences, and beliefs through participation in and observation of devised or scripted theatre work.

Grade 12th - Advanced

1.4.12adv.Re9a - Use detailed supporting evidence and appropriate criteria to revise personal work and interpret the work of others when participating in or observing devised or scripted theatre work.

1.4.12adv.Re9b - Use understandings of cultures and contexts to shape personal responses to devised or scripted theatre work.

1.4.12adv.Re9c - Support and explain aesthetics, preferences, and beliefs to create a context for critical research that informs artistic decisions in devised or scripted theatre work.

Theatre/[Connect](#) Practice: Incorporate

Anchor Standard: 10. Synthesizing and relating knowledge and personal experiences to create products.

Enduring Understanding: Theatre artists allow awareness of interrelationships between self and others to influence and inform their work.

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

Grade 8th

1.4.8.Cn10a - Examine a community issue through multiple perspectives in a theatrical work.

Grade 12th - Proficient

a. Investigate how cultural perspectives, community ideas, and personal beliefs impact a devised or scripted theatre work.

Grade 12th - Accomplished

1.4.12acc.Cn10a - Choose, interpret and perform devised or scripted theatre work to reflect or question personal beliefs.

Grade 12th - Advanced

1.4.12adv.Cn10a - Collaborate on devised or scripted theatre work that examines a critical global issue using multiple personal, community, and cultural perspectives.

Theatre/**Connect Practice:** Affect, Expand

Anchor Standard: 11. Relating artistic ideas and works within societal, cultural, and historical contexts to deepen understanding.

Enduring Understanding: As theatre is created and experienced, personal experiences and knowledge are synthesized to interpret meaning and analyze the way in which the world may be understood.

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

Grade 8th

1.4.8.Cn11a - Research the story elements of a staged drama/theatre work about global issues, including change, and discuss how a playwright might have intended a theatrical work to be produced.

1.4.8.Cn11b - Identify and examine artifacts from a time period and geographic location to better understand performance and design choices in a theatrical work.

Grade 12th - Proficient

1.4.12prof.Cn11a - Integrate knowledge of cultural, global, and historic belief systems into creative choices in a devised or scripted theatre work.

1.4.12prof.Cn11b - Use basic research methods to better understand the social and cultural background of devised or scripted theatre work.

Grade 12th - Accomplished

1.4.12acc.Cn11a - Integrate conventions and knowledge from different art forms and other disciplines to examine cross-cultural devised or scripted theatre works.

1.4.12acc.Cn11b - Explore how personal beliefs and biases can affect the interpretation of research data applied in devised or scripted theatre work.

Grade 12th - Advanced

1.4.12adv.Cn11a - Develops devised or scripted theatre work that identifies and questions cultural, global, and historic belief systems.

1.4.12adv.Cn11b - Justify the creative choices made in a devised or scripted theatre work, based on a critical interpretation of specific data from theatre research.

Resources

Looking for worksheets or activities? Check out the following resources available at the Thornton Wilder Society website:

<http://www.twildersociety.org/education/teaching-materials/>

Penelope Niven's Guide to *Our Town*. Penelope Niven is the author of *Thornton Wilder: a Life*, published in 2012 by HarperCollins.

http://www.twildersociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/teachingGuide_penelopeNiven_ourTown.pdf

The Levoy Theatre offers numerous educational opportunities, including our Daytime Series (like *Our Town* production); 8-week educational classes for students; Teen Arts program; Summer Camp programs, and more.

To learn more about the Levoy Theatre, visit us at <https://levoy.net/> or reach out to us at education@levoy.net.

