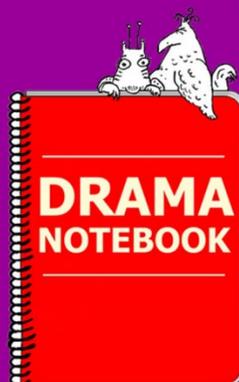
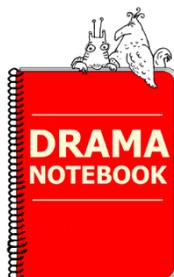


DISTANCE LEARNING DRAMA ACTIVITIES

Links to over 100 videos!



© A Drama Notebook Title



Distance Learning Drama Activities

Below is an extensive list of drama activities that can be used for distance learning, online drama classes, or with students who cannot be present in person for drama class. Additionally, many of the activities can be assigned as homework, or for extra credit.

Ideas and activities for younger students are presented first, and ones for older students follow.



Drama Notebook also has an extensive collection of ready-to-use [distance-learning lesson plans](#).



We also have a large selection of [free plays](#) for students to watch online, and a free set of [Play Report Worksheets!](#)



Lessons for Younger Students

PBS Kids Story Games

Students can hear each page of the story online, and then act out what is happening in the story before going to the next page. Have students create a list of the stories they acted out and have them decide which one they liked best and why.

Storyline Online

Famous actors read children's books. Every book has a teacher's guide with additional learning materials.

PBS Curtain Up Game

Create a short online play. This free app/game allows students to choose backgrounds, props and characters, but not much else. After students create the basics online, ask them to tell a longer story that has the settings, props and characters they chose.

Elements

Setting:

Props:

Characters:

Written story:

Play

Title:

Characters:

Dialogue:

PBS Kids-Simple Costume Game

This is a simple app/game that allows students to dress a character in a variety of costumes. Have students create a unique character based on the way he/she is dressed, and then tell a story about something that happened in that character's life.

Simple Set Design Tutorial

This is an online tool that shows students the basic elements of putting together a set.

Simple Stage and Audition Tutorial

In this interactive, students play the role of the director and select who should be cast as Romeo and Juliet for a production after watching their auditions. This game also identifies important terms used in the theater such as the names of body positions, types of stages, and acting areas.

Simple Interactive Costume Page

Students have an opportunity to explore fashion in Shakespeare's time and dress the actors portraying Romeo and Juliet in costumes.

Simple Tutorial on Playwriting

Students will understand the components that make up a script including characters, background, setting, acts, and scenes. This animated interactive job exploration experience connects schoolwork with real work and familiarizes students with some of the skills involved in playwriting. Finally, students have an opportunity to re-write the ending of a play!

Make Hand Shadow Puppets

[Easy Hand Shadow Puppets](#)

[More Easy Hand Shadow Puppets](#)

Watch Inspiring Hand Shadow Puppet Performances

[Tinivo Hand Shadow Puppet Show](#)

[Hans Davis Shadow Act](#)

Make Simple Puppets

[Make Four Types of Puppets](#)

[Make Puppets from One Sheet of Paper](#)

[Paper Bag Puppets](#)

[Easy Origami Animal Puppets](#)

[Plastic Bottle Puppets](#)

[Sock Puppets](#)

[Stick Puppets](#)

[Toilet Paper Tube Animals](#)

[Toilet Paper Tube Monsters](#)

[Eco Friendly Puppets](#)

[Easy Marionette Puppets](#)

[Puppets from Found Objects](#)

[Make Puppets from Trash](#)



Make a Cardboard Puppet Theatre

Have students watch videos on YouTube about building a puppet theatre out of a shoebox or large cardboard box. Have them create one that is a good fit for the puppets they have chosen to make.

Write a Short Play and Put on a Puppet Show

Using puppet characters they have created, ask students to write a short play and perform it for their family or friends.

Watch Shadow Puppet Performances

[Mouse and Cat Chinese Shadow Puppetry](#)

This is a pantomimed show that is really artfully done!

[The Three Little Pigs](#)

Great show performed by children.

[The Lion and the Mouse Shadow Theatre](#)

[Tikki Tikki Tembo Shadow Puppet Show](#)

[Where the Wild Things Are by Maurice Sendak](#)

Performed by children.

[Shadow Puppet Theatre by Richard Bradshaw](#)

Features a delightful parade of animals that walk a tightrope.

[Another Richard Bradshaw Show](#)

This one shows a lot of what is happening behind the screen.

[Beautiful Japanese Shadow Puppet Show](#)

[Smart Monkeys-Chinese Shadow Puppet Show](#)

[The Secret of Liu Tai, the Dragon Keeper Shadow Puppet Show](#)

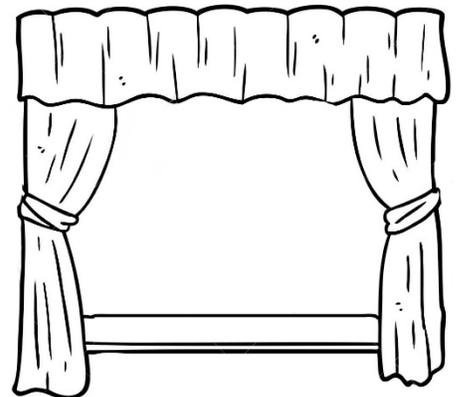
Make a Shadow Puppet Theatre

Here is a short video tutorial for how to make a shadow puppet theatre. Students can then create their own shadow puppets and put on a play that they can put on video and share. See also:

[How to Make Shadow Puppets](#)

[How to Make Shadow Puppets](#)

[How to Make Colorful Shadow Puppets](#)



Make Masks

[Hybrid Masks](#)

[Easy Animal Masks](#)

[Paper Plate Masks](#)

[Felt Animal Masks](#)

[Easy Bugs, Birds and Animals Masks](#)

[12 Easy Masks for Kids](#)

[Fun, Easy Masks Using Plain Plastic Masks](#)

Costume Drawing

Have students choose a character from a fairy tale or play and design a costume for that character. For advanced students, have them design costumes for the entire cast, paying close attention to color (how it relates to the theme of the show and the relationships between the characters.)

Use any royalty-free play in the [Drama Notebook Script Library](#). Most plays are \$1 each and teachers are welcome to share them with students. (They cannot be shared with other teachers or posted online for the public.)



Set Drawing

Have students choose a play or a fairy tale and design a set. For advanced students, have them design a set that includes at least three set changes, or ask them to create a stage model.

Here is a simple tutorial for [making a light-up shoebox theatre](#).

Use any royalty-free play in the [Drama Notebook Script Library](#). Most plays are \$1 each and teachers are welcome to share them with students. (They cannot be shared with other teachers or posted online for the public.)

Create Show Posters

Have students look at show posters online, and then choose a play and design a show poster for that play. For advanced students, ask them to study the basics about graphic design and write a one-page report on what they learned, and how they incorporated what they learned into the poster.

Use any royalty-free play in the [Drama Notebook Script Library](#). Most plays are \$1 each and teachers are welcome to share them with students. (They cannot be shared with other teachers or posted online for the public.)

Explore Elements of Drama

Ten-minute video presentation of the basic elements of drama, including characters, situations, dramatic action, tension and climax.

Pixar Storytelling Videos

Great series of videos in which Pixar writers and artists detail the process of crafting compelling stories. Includes activities!

Watch Videos on Different Styles of Theatre

PBS has produced a series of videos called, "Crash Course Theatre."

Here is the first video: [What is Theatre?](#)

Here is the entire collection: [Crash Course Theatre](#)

Write Mini Plays Based on Fairy Tales

Have students write a three-minute version of a well-known fairy tale.

Or try this!

Have students create a [mixed-up fairy tale](#) play.



Write New Tongue Twisters

Have students write out a list of ten tongue twisters that have never been invented before. Circulate the list among all students and have them vote for their favorite!

Ask:

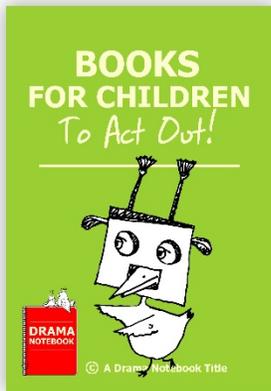
What is the value of tongue twisters?

How does practicing tongue twisters help us as actors?

Write Monologues

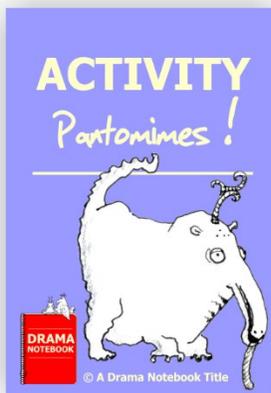
Have students write an original monologue, and then rehearse and perform it on video. Drama Notebook holds a monthly monologue contest. [Submit](#) your student's best work to the site! Find the [Ultimate Monologue Lesson Plan here](#).





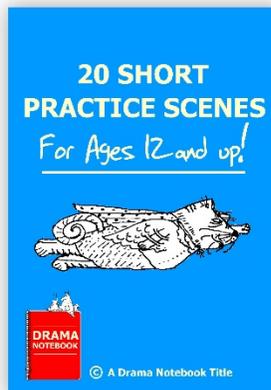
List of 75 children's books to use in drama class. 29 pages long. Includes extra information on each title!

If you are teaching drama to children ages 2-8, you simply must have this list! We polled hundreds of drama teachers and consolidated their favorite titles into one massive collection. It's organized by age, with the titles for younger children listed first. To use this title for online teaching, read each book aloud, and have students act out all the parts as you go.



30 easy action-oriented pantomimes for younger students and 36 more difficult pantomimes for older students.

Have young actors practice these pantomimes at home. They can also make them into a game of 'activity charades' with friends or family members.



Twenty, one-page scenes that can be acted out immediately!

Here are enough short practice scenes for up to 40 students with no repeats!

Young actors often focus on line delivery rather than listening to their scene partner. These original one-page scripts are designed to help your older students learn to focus on their fellow actor and practice using natural-sounding dialogue. The scenes are self-contained (no play analysis needed), and there is plenty of room for interpretation and individual character development.

More Distance Learning Resources

Lessons for Older Students

Read Plays and Write Analyses

Drama Notebook has over [500 royalty-free plays for kids and teens](#). Most are \$1 each and can be shared freely with your students (not with other teachers, or posted online on a public website).

Write Monologues

Have students write an original monologue, and then rehearse and perform it on video. Drama Notebook holds a monthly monologue contest. [Submit](#) your student's best work to the site! Find the [Ultimate Monologue Lesson Plan here](#).



Write Scenes

Give students a prompt or a theme, and a set of parameters such as: number of pages; number of characters; etc.

For example!

Write a two-page scene in which three characters argue over which movie to go see. Give one character a strange quirk, such as 'afraid to leave the house.'

More Ideas!

Write a scene adapted from your favorite book.

Write a scene based on a news headline.

Write a scene based on a problem you've had with social media.

Write a scene based on a challenge you've faced.

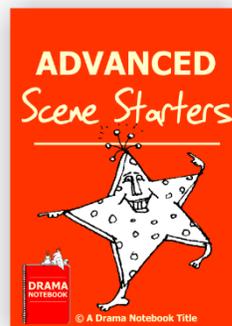
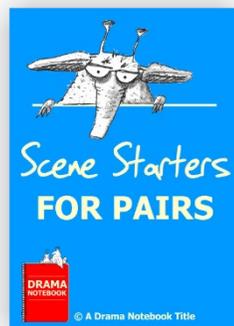
Write a scene about a first date that goes all wrong.

Write a scene about two very different strangers trapped in an elevator.

Write a scene in which a boss must fire an employee, but has trouble doing it.

Here are 58 more [Scene Starters for Pairs](#).

Here are 28 [Advanced Scene Starters](#).

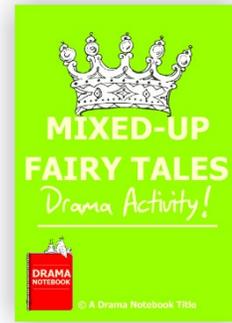


Write Mini Plays Based on Fairy Tales

Have students write a three-minute version of a well-known fairy tale.

Or try this!

Have students create a [mixed-up fairy tale](#) play.



Write New Tongue Twisters

Have students write out a list of ten tongue twisters that have never been invented before. Circulate the list among all students and have them vote for their favorite!

Ask:

What is the value of tongue twisters?

How does practicing tongue twisters help us as actors?

Create Drama Related PowerPoints

Give students a page-range, a topic, and a simple set of instructions. (Must be visually engaging. Must be informative, yet interesting. Must have an image on every slide.)

Sample topics include!

Biography of a famous playwright.

Biography of a famous actor.

Parts of the stage.

How to make a flat.

Rules of improv.

How to audition.

Theatre superstitions.

Theatre jobs.

Research Different Styles of Theatre

Have students research different theatre styles and pick their favorite (musical, melodrama, comedy, tragedy, farce, improvisational, etc.). Have them devise and create a short video to teach others about this style or demonstrate it.

Storyboard It!

Have students find an article or photograph from the news and use it to create a story board for a play based on the event.

Costume Drawing

Have students choose a character from a fairy tale or play and design a costume for that character. For advanced students, have them design costumes for the entire cast, paying close attention to color (how it relates to the theme of the show and the relationships between the characters.)

Or try this!

Have students build a costume or costume piece using duct tape, fabric, and/or other found items. Have them use themselves or a family member for measurements.

Use any royalty-free play in the [Drama Notebook Script Library](#). Most plays are \$1 each and teachers are welcome to share them with students. (They cannot be shared with other teachers or posted online for the public.)

Set Drawing

Have students choose a play or a fairy tale and design a set. For advanced students, have them design a set that includes at least three set changes, or ask them to create a stage model.

Here is a simple tutorial for [making a light-up shoebox theatre](#).

Here is an [Introduction to Scale And Model Making](#).

Use any royalty-free play in the [Drama Notebook Script Library](#). Most plays are \$1 each and teachers are welcome to share them with students. (They cannot be shared with other teachers or posted online for the public.)

Create Show Posters

Have students look at show posters online, and then choose a play and design a show poster for that play. For advanced students, ask them to study the basics about graphic design and write a one-page report on what they learned, and how they incorporated what they learned into the poster.

Use any royalty-free play in the [Drama Notebook Script Library](#). Most plays are \$1 each and teachers are welcome to share them with students. (They cannot be shared with other teachers or posted online for the public.)



Show Marketing

Ask students to produce the following: a poster (hand-drawn or using free downloadable software (no points taken off of hand-drawn)); a one-page press release; and an idea/plan for a fundraiser related to the show.

Use any royalty-free play in the [Drama Notebook Script Library](#). Most plays are \$1 each and teachers are welcome to share them with students. (They cannot be shared with other teachers or posted online for the public.)

Lighting Design

Have students use these online lighting simulators to better understand color and positioning of lights and their effect on the actors/stage.

[Lighting Design Simulator](#)
[Light Lab for Dance](#)
[Gobo Lab](#)

Short Film Project

Have students create a short film on their phone.

1. Give a specific time range (1-5 minutes)
2. Choose one or two genres.
3. Give them resources on screenwriting/short filmmaking.
4. Ask them to have a written script.
5. Ask them to upload their film on YouTube and have an online short film festival.

They will have to use what's around them (siblings as actors, backyard as location, etc.)

Watch Videos on Different Styles of Theatre

PBS has produced a series of videos called, "Crash Course Theatre."

Here is the first video: [What is Theatre?](#)

Here is the entire collection: [Crash Course Theatre](#)

Watch Informative Videos on Theatre and Write Reports

INSPIRATIONAL VIDEOS

[What is Theatre Capable of? \(This is a Stage\)](#)

Ten-minute video narrated by Simon Stone, that shows how situations can change on the stage, given a new stage position or context.

[The Life Changing Power of Theatre](#)

Inspirational video about a young man's entry into theatre.

[Improv Everywhere Founder](#)

Improv Everywhere is a comedic performance art group based in New York City, formed in 2001 by Charlie Todd. Its slogan is "We Cause Scenes". The group carries out pranks, which they call "missions", in public places. The stated goal of these missions is to cause scenes of "chaos and joy." This is a talk given by the founder. It does contain mature themes, but gives students a new way of looking at "theatre."

[Frida, The Lion King, and Life on the Edge](#)

Film director Julie Taymor describes a life spent immersed in theater and the movies. Filmed right as controversy over her Broadway production of Spider-Man: Turn Off the Dark was at its peak, she candidly describes the tensions inherent within her creative process, as she strives both to capture the essence of a story--and produce images and experiences unlike anything else.

[The Lion King, Circle of Life—in 360 degree](#)

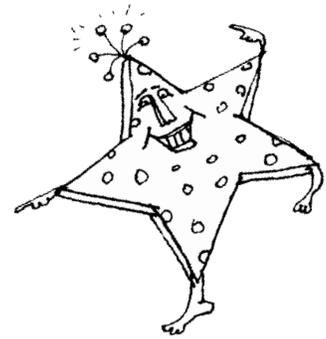
Students can click and drag to experience every angle from backstage to the top of Pride Rock.

[The Power of Awe](#)

Use this as an intro to talking about the suspension of disbelief. Rob Legato has created movie effects for movies like Apollo 13, Titanic, Hugo and more. He goes through an explanation of what he does to make it appear to the audience that things they are seeing are real.

[On Writing and Creating](#)

Lin-Manuel Miranda is an award-winning actor, performer and writer known for his groundbreaking Broadway musicals 'In the Heights' and 'Hamilton.' In this three-minute video, he describes his creative process.



PLAYWRITING

Tutorial on Formatting a Play Script

Have students watch the tutorial and then create a few pages of their own script, using proper formatting.

One Woman Show about a Social Justice Issue

For Anna Deavere Smith, actress and path-breaking performance artist, Baltimore is home. After the arrest and death of Freddie Gray, the city became a sadly appropriate setting for Smith to tackle her latest project: a one-woman show about the "school to prison pipeline," which funnels children who get into trouble at school into the criminal justice system. Use this as a springboard for students to develop an idea for a one-person show about an issue they care about.

STAGE AREAS, SPACES AND TERMS

Ancient Greek Theatre Stage

The Ancient Greeks built an acoustically perfect theatre in Epidaurus that is still used to this day, over two thousand years later. This five-minute video gives history and details of the stage. Have students write a one-page report on what they learned.

The Four Spaces in a Traditional Theatre

Stage, House, Backstage, Front of House are explained in this seven-minute video.

Stage Terms

Various stage terms are discussed and illustrated in this eight-minute video made by a drama teacher. Have students write down all terms discussed in the video and write the definition in their own words.

The Proscenium Arch

Eight-minute video giving detailed information about this traditional element of theatre.

The Thrust Space

Seven-minute video giving detailed information about this style of theatre space.

The Arena Space

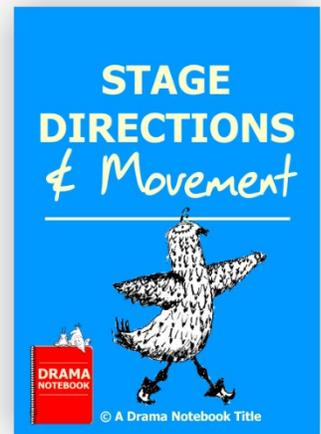
Seven-minute video giving detailed information about this style of theatre space.

Areas of the Stage

Crudely animated, but effective video that identifies the areas of the stage (upstage, downstage, etc.) Have students watch the video and then draw a stage diagram.

Stage Directions

Various theatre basics, including stage areas, stage directions, and blocking terms are discussed and illustrated in this video made by a drama teacher. Accompanying crossword can be found at www.kristaprice.com.



DIRECTING

Stage Directions-The Directing Process

Basic description of the process of putting together a show (read-through, blocking, dress rehearsal, etc.) Have students create their own timeline for putting on a play.

Directing for the Stage-An Interview with Anne Bogart

Anne Bogart, a well-known theatrical director discusses her approach and process. Have students watch the video, and then find a play or scene that they would like to direct.

Ask:

Why did you choose this play?

What is the theme, or central question?

What message would you like to convey to the audience?

Interview with Luis Valdez, Founder of El Teatro Campesino

El Teatro Campesino is a Chicano theatre company in California. Performing in both English and Spanish, El Teatro Campesino was founded in 1965 as the cultural arm of the United Farm Workers and the Chicano Movement with the "full support of César Chávez."

Why Theatre is Essential to Democracy

In this powerful thirteen-minute talk, theatrical director Oskar Eustis outlines his plan to reach (and listen to) people in places across the US where the theater, like many other institutions, has turned its back -- like the deindustrialized Rust Belt. "Our job is to try to hold up a vision to America that shows not only who all of us are individually, but that welds us back into the commonality that we need to be," Eustis says. "That's what the theater is supposed to do."

Ask:

What stood out to you while listening to this talk? Why?

What does democracy mean to you?

Do you think that theatre is essential to democracy? Why? Why not?

ACTING METHODS/TEACHERS

Have students learn about each of these prominent theatre practitioners, and choose the method that appeals most to them. Have them write a one-page report on what they learned, and why they chose the method they did. Or, have them write a biography of the practitioner.

Stanislavski Method

An academic review of the historical development of the Stanislavski method.

Stella Adler School of Acting-An Inside Look

Overview of this famous acting studio. Since 1949, the Stella Adler Studio of Acting has trained some of the most important American actors in New York City, including: Marlon Brando; Robert DeNiro; Elaine Stritch; and Warren Beatty.

What is Meisner?

(People are still trying to figure it out...) But here is an eight-minute overview and examples of the Meisner technique.

Viola Spolin Documentary

This documentary short explores the influential work of Viola Spolin, who was known as the "Mother of Modern Improvisation."

Short Profile of Viola Spolin

NPR audio/visual overview of Spolin's life and work.

Lee Strasberg Exercises

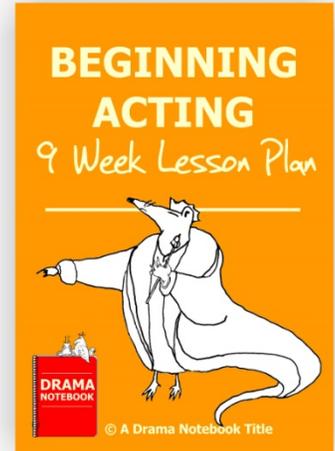
In this fifty-minute video, acting coach Anthony Montes takes you through one of the main Lee Strasberg exercises (method acting) on relaxation and emotional preparation, that was taught at the Actors Studio.

Antonin Artaud Documentary

Hour and a half, subtitled documentary of the pioneer Antonin Artaud. Compromised entirely of interviews from those who knew him. Artaud's ideas about creating a new type of language for expression transcended mediums and his yearn to challenge an audience outside of their comfort zone remains a huge inspiration to many theatre practitioners today.

An Introduction to Brechtian Theatre

This six-minute film looks at the theoretical work of Brecht, featuring archive footage from the 2008 production and interviews with this production's creative team including translator Tony Kushner and director Deborah Warner.



ACTING-TALKS BY FAMOUS ACTORS

Have students watch the talks, and write a brief overview of each one they watched.

Michael Cain Teaches Acting in Film

One-hour long tutorial on film acting by one of the world's best actors. Have students write a one-page report about what they learned.

Actors on Acting-Famous Actors Give Advice

Various famous actors and actresses tell us what inspires and drives them when taking on new roles. Keira Knightley, Tom Hanks, Anne Hathaway, Ben Stiller, Judi Dench, Michael Fassbender, Natalie Portman, Leonardo DiCaprio, Saoirse Ronan, Andrew Garfield, Olivia Colman, Jason Flemyng, Olga Kurylenko, Tom Hiddleston, Jesse Eisenberg, Brie Larson, Zoe Saldana, Kristin Scott Thomas and Tom Cruise.

Ask:

What piece of advice stood out to you? Why?
Who is your favorite actor/actress? Why?

My Journey from Marine to Actor-Adam Driver

Adam Driver details his wayward journey that eventually led to his acting career.

Jennifer Lawrence on Anxiety, Auditioning, and Diversity

Honest interview in which Lawrence reveals truths about her experience, illustrating that acting is not always glamorous.

Tom Hanks & Viola Davis - Actors on Actors

Tom Hanks and Viola Davis chatted during a taping of Variety's "Actors on Actors" on a range of topics, including sex scenes and diversity on TV vs film.

ACTING LESSONS ONLINE

Mastering the Monologue

American School of Acting presents a helpful video for choosing, preparing, learning and rehearsing a monologue, the icebreaker for all actors. Presented by Bryan Bounds, Principal teacher of the school.

Amy Jo Berman's Acting Channel

Amy Jo Berman has been a powerful influence and tastemaker in the entertainment industry for nearly two decades. As Vice President of Casting at HBO for 14+ years, Amy oversaw and facilitated the casting of more than 150 films, mini-series and series, and her casts have won countless Emmy and Golden Globe awards. Her YouTube channel has over 100 videos packed with audition tips, acting tips, and more.

Students who aspire to become actors can learn more about the business, and whether it is truly a good fit for them by watching her free series of videos.

How to Prepare for an Audition

Lisa Hamilton gives tips and techniques for auditioning.

WORKING IN THE THEATRE

Next are 20 free videos that focus on different jobs in the theatre.

Have students answer these questions:

1. What was the job described in the video?
2. What did you learn about being a prop master, set designer, costumer, etc.?
3. What surprised you?
4. What about this job appealed to you?
5. Was there a part of the job that made you not want to do it? If so, what?
6. What did you find most interesting about this job in the theatre?



Scenic Design by American Theatre Wing

Lighting Design by American Theatre Wing

Lighting Design for Wicked

Projection Design by American Theatre Wing

Special Effects Design by American Theatre Wing

Prop Masters by American Theatre Wing

Specialty Props by American Theatre Wing

Stage Manager by American Theatre Wing

Stage Manager by Center Theatre Group

Stage Manager for Wicked

Sound and Light Board Operators

Costumes by American Theatre Wing

Costume and Set Design-An American in Paris

Costume Design for Wicked

Makeup by American Theatre Wing

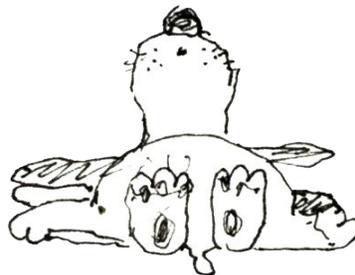
Wigs by American Theatre Wing

Choreography by American Theatre Wing

Box Office Manager by Center Theatre Group

House Manager by Center Theatre Group

Virtual Tours of 11 Famous Theatres



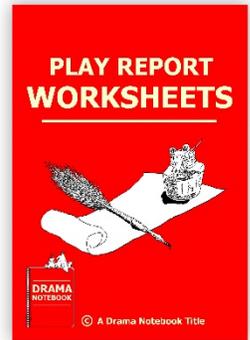
Watch Videos about Shakespeare Online

Have students learn about Shakespeare by watching educational videos online. Have them write a one-page report on what they watched and what they learned.

Here is an excellent free video: [PBS-Experience Shakespeare](#) (One Hour)

Watch A Play Online and Write a Report

Drama Notebook has a collection of [free plays for students to watch online](#), and a fantastic set of [Play Report Worksheets](#).



More Distance Learning Resources