

Introduction to Theatre

Neoclassical Playwriting & Shakespeare's Rule-Breaking

Overview:

The lesson will explain the Neoclassical rules of playwriting and provide opportunities for students to discuss what defines “good” playwriting. We will also discuss how Shakespeare broke the rules and the purpose of rules in theatre and other creative arts.

Potential Co-Teaching Strategies:

This is a good opportunity to do station teaching with a different part of the lesson at each location since it would provide an opportunity for more in-depth analysis and discussion of the content.

Objectives:

- The students will know the rules of Neoclassical playwriting.
- The students will believe in the power of good storytelling with or without rules to guide that story.
- The students will understand the purpose of rules in theatre and other creative art forms.

Standards Addressed:

- **HS Accomplished TH:Cr1.1.II.a.** – Investigate historical and cultural conventions and their impact on the visual composition of a theatrical work.
- **HS Advanced TH:Re7.1.III.a.** – Use historical and cultural context to structure and justify personal responses to a theatrical work.
- **HS Proficient TH:Re9.1.I.a** – Examine a theatrical work using supporting evidence and criteria, while considering other art forms, history, culture, and other disciplines.

Procedures:

- **Journal Question and Discussion of Student Responses (~10 min.)**
 - **Should playwriting have rules?**
 - Allow the students 5 minutes to write and then bring the group back together to discuss their responses and follow-up questions
 - What makes a good play?
 - How does theatre through history impact theatre today?
- **Presentation of the Rules of Neoclassical Playwriting (~10 min.)**
 - What are they?
 - What do they mean?
 - What is the history of the rules?

- **“Shakespeare the Rebel” (~10 min.)**
 - **Discuss: Did Shakespeare follow the rules?**
 - Use A Midsummer Night’s Dream to talk through how Shakespeare broke almost all of the rules
- **Movie Analysis Activity (~10 min.)**
 - Break into groups of 2 and analyze your favorite movie based on the Neoclassical rules of playwriting
 - Allow students to work for about 7 minutes and then bring them back to discuss what the students discovered in their analysis.
- **Conclusion (~5 min.)**
 - **What is the purpose of rules in theatre?**
 - **What makes a good play?**

Resources/Materials:

- Neoclassical Rules of Playwriting Prezi
(<https://prezi.com/view/HNoa43YpN1i4UpDURGp2/>)

Assessment/Evaluation:

Formative Assessments

- Movie Analysis Activity
- Concluding Discussion Questions