



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
1995 Volume II: Film and Literature

Literary, Theatrical and Cinematic Approaches to Drama

Guide for Curriculum Unit 95.02.10
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After hours of television viewing, teenagers are attuned to the visual and acoustic elements of whatever it is that they are watching: students usually produce answers to a play's basic who, what, where and when questions. But few respond critically and many fail to answer the more important questions of how and why. Such shortcomings produce the absence of proper thematic understanding of the artist's work.

This course, through a number of projects, will strengthen students' powers of observation so that, in time, they will think more critically about many things they see and hear. It will be a fun way to learn about the worlds of theater, literature, acting and film, and will help young people develop a sense of personal growth along the way. It will attempt to reach young peoples' desires to know more about themselves and learn about new, interesting things in the theater and film world that they couldn't learn in any other class at school.

The course offers three approaches to drama: the literary work of the playwright, the theatrical work of the actor, and the cinematic work of the director. It will delve into the reasons why a play is written by spending time understanding the writer's personal experiences and beliefs. It will explore the work of the actor, challenged to portray a character from the play, and finally, it will give students insight into how a director interprets and presents the drama as a living theatrical or film event.

(Recommended for Acting for the Theater, grades 9-11; Drama, Acting and Film, grades 11-12)

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