CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES GUIDE

The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey’s production of

*Charles Dickens’*

*A Christmas Carol*

Adapted by Neil Bartlett
Directed by Brian B. Crowe
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One of the principal goals of The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey’s education programs is to demystify the classics, take them “off the shelf,” and re-energize them for students and teachers alike. Toward these goals, this Classroom Activities Guide, used in conjunction with our Audience Guide, provides educators with tools to both allay their own concerns and to expand the theatre-going experience for their students beyond the field trip to The Shakespeare Theatre.

The information included in this guide will help you expand your students’ understanding of classic literature in performance, as well as help you meet many of the New Jersey Common Core Standards. We encourage you to impart as much of the information included in the Classroom Activities Guide and the Audience Guide to your students as possible. The following are some suggestions from teachers on how you can best utilize elements of these guides given limited classroom time.

• **JUST THE BASICS:** Many teachers have found that distributing or reading the **Synopsis** and **Who’s Who** pages from the Audience Guide has greatly increased students’ understanding and enjoyment of the production. It provides the students with a general understanding of what they will be seeing and what they can expect. Some teachers simply take the last five minutes of a class period to do this with very positive results.

• **MINI TEAM-RESEARCH PROJECTS:** When more class time is available prior to your visit, we recommend incorporating the background information on the era in which the play is set as well the play itself. One teacher divided her class into groups and assigned each group research topics based on the divisions found in this guide as well as the Audience Guide. Using a copy of the corresponding Audience Guide page as a launch pad, the students had one week to research the topics. The students then presented their information to the class in three- to five-minute oral reports. Including the questions that evolved from the presentations, the entire project took only one class period.

• **POST-SHOW DISCUSSION:** Using the questions found in the **Topics for Discussion,** many teachers will opt to take a class period after their trip to The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey to discuss the play with their students. The questions help keep the comments focused on the production, while incorporating various thematic and social issues that are found in the play.

• **GET ON YOUR FEET:** One school spent two days working through performance-based activities (a few of which are suggested in the **Follow-up Activities** section) with a particularly “difficult and rowdy” class. They were astounded with the results.

Again, we hope you will incorporate as many portions of this guide as you are able into your classroom experience. If you have any suggestions for activities or topics not already found in the Audience Guide, please contact our Education Department. We are always interested in hearing new ways to excite young people (and teachers) about Shakespeare and live theatre.

Happy Teaching,

Brian B. Crowe,
Director of Education
The Life of Charles Dickens

Charles Dickens was born on February 7, 1812, the second child of John and Elizabeth Dickens. (His beloved older sister, Fanny, would be immortalized in *A Christmas Carol* as Scrooge’s sister, Little Fan). John Dickens was a civil servant who worked as a clerk in the Navy Pay Office at the time of Charles’ birth.

In 1817, John Dickens was assigned to the Navy shipyards in Chatham, Kent. During the family’s five years in Chatham, Charles started school, beginning his lifelong love affair with books. It was at this time that he also discovered the theatre, which he regularly attended with his uncle. Later he described this as the happiest period in his childhood, and he moved back to the vicinity of Chatham as an adult.

By 1822, however, there were six Dickens children, and the family’s finances, always stretched thin by John Dickens’ inability to live within their means, took a further blow when he was transferred back to London. The family relocated to a four-room house in the seedy neighborhood of Camden Town. By 1824, their situation was so precarious that 12-year-old Charles was pulled out of school and sent to work full-time in a factory. Eleven days after Charles began work at the factory, John Dickens was imprisoned for non-payment of debts, and the rest of the family was placed with him in the Marshalsea Debtors’ Prison. Charles was left to fend for himself on his six shillings a week (barely enough for him to eat, let alone to help support his family).

For five long months, Charles Dickens worked long, tedious days in the rat-infested warehouse. This traumatic experience left deep emotional scars, and Dickens was so ashamed of his family’s situation that he talked about his experiences at the factory to only two people during his life. Nevertheless, those experiences would have a profound impact on his writing as well as his subsequent fierce devotion to education and social welfare, especially for children. His time in the factory ingrained in him a sense of loneliness and isolation with which he struggled throughout his life. As his fictional alter ego David Copperfield put it, “I had no advice, no counsel, no encouragement, no consolation, no assistance, no support, of any kind, from anyone…”

By June of 1824, John Dickens was released from prison and Charles was able to return to school for a few more years. As a teenager, he again found work to support himself, first as a clerk in a law office, then as a newspaper reporter. He was eventually assigned to cover sessions of Parliament, and taught himself shorthand in order to take accurate transcripts of the speeches and debates, winning a reputation as London’s fastest political reporter.

During this time, Dickens began writing magazine stories, and then novels in the new serial form. Essentially, serial novels were purchased on an installment plan, one chapter at a time. Charles Dickens became a master of this form, skillfully building suspense and inserting tantalizing details in each chapter. Though
books were still fairly expensive items in Dickens’ time, the introduction of serialization made them far more available to a wide middle and lower-middle class audience.

In 1836, shortly after publishing his first novel, *The Pickwick Papers*, Dickens married Catherine Hogarth, the daughter of a newspaper editor. They would go on to have ten children together. They eventually separated in 1858.

Between 1836 and 1865, Dickens’ work was prolific. He published several novels which met with extraordinary popular success, while also publishing and editing two magazines. He traveled to the United States, Canada, Italy, and Switzerland, and purchased a large house in Gad’s Hill, near his childhood home in Chatham. Nevertheless, maintaining this upper middle-class lifestyle with such a large family proved to be a continual challenge, and Dickens frequently worked to the point of exhaustion.

Charles Dickens was the first real “celebrity author,” and he used this status to vehemently criticize all kinds of social injustice in Victorian England, from the slum conditions in which many people lived to the maltreatment of child laborers, prisoners, and others. He is still one of the most popular and widely read English authors, and not one of his books has ever gone out of print.

In 1865, Dickens was involved in a terrible train derailment that killed 10 people and seriously injured 49 others. Dickens, whose train car had tipped but not overturned, went to the aid of the injured passengers until rescuers arrived, then clambered back into his own carriage to retrieve his half-finished manuscript for *Our Mutual Friend*. While he had seemed relatively unscathed at the time, his health was never strong following the accident. In June of 1870 he suffered a stroke and died at home. He was laid to rest in the Poets’ Corner of Westminster Abbey, in a tomb that reads: “He was a sympathizer to the poor, the suffering, and the oppressed; and by his death, one of England’s greatest writers is lost to the world.”

**CHARLES DICKENS: Selected Works**

*Sketches by Boz* (1836)

*The Pickwick Papers* (1837)

*The Adventures of Oliver Twist* (1838)

*The Life And Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby* (1839)

*Barnaby Rudge* (1841)

*Master Humphrey’s Clock* (1841)

*A Christmas Carol* (1843)

*The Life and Adventures of Martin Chuzzlewit* (1843)

*The Chimes* (1844)

*The Cricket on the Hearth* (1845)

*The Battle of Life* (1846)

*Dombey and Son* (1848)

*The Haunted Man and the Ghost’s Bargain* (1848)

*David Copperfield* (1849)

*Bleak House* (1853)

*Hard Times: For These Times* (1854)

*Little Dorrit* (1857)

*A Tale of Two Cities* (1859)

*The Uncommercial Traveller* (1860)

*Great Expectations* (1861)

*Our Mutual Friend* (1865)

*The Mystery of Edwin Drood* (1870) - incomplete

Photo of Charles Dickens in New York, circa 1867–1868.
Source: wikipedia
AN INSTALLMENT PLAN FOR LITERATURE

A serial novel is any novel that has been printed in installments. One can think of these as a limited series on television versus a full-length feature film. Most often, chapters are printed in a regularly published magazine, newspaper, or other periodical.

Serialized fiction surged in popularity during Britain’s Victorian era. This was in part due to the rise of literacy, technological advances in printing, and the improved economics of distribution. With the price of published books still considered high, especially for the working classes, a serial format proved to be a more appealing way to reach a wider audience. Many significant majority works of the Victorian era first appeared in either monthly or weekly installments in magazines or newspapers. Charles Dickens’ *The Pickwick Papers*, first published in 1836, is credited with launching the wild success of the serial format.

DICKENS ON CHILDHOOD POVERTY

“The careless maintenance from year to year, in this, the capital city of the world, of a vast hopeless nursery of ignorance, misery and vice...is horrible to contemplate.

I know the prisons of London well...I have visited the largest of them more times than I could count; and the children in them are enough to break the heart and hope of any man. These children pass and repass through the prisons all their lives; they are never taught; the first distinctions between right and wrong are, from their cradles, perfectly confounded and perverted in their minds; they come of untaught parents, and will give birth to another untaught generation; in exact proportion to their natural abilities, is the extent and scope of their depravity; and there is no escape or chance for them in any ordinary revolution of human affairs.

The frightful neglect by the State of those whom it punishes so constantly, and whom it might, as easily and less expensively, instruct and save; together with the sight I had seen there, in the heart of London; haunted me, and finally impelled me to an endeavour to bring these Institutions under the notice of the Government.”

*The Daily News*
March 13, 1852

CAROL TRANSFORMATIONS

Audiences around the world found themselves profoundly moved by Charles Dickens’ public readings of *A Christmas Carol*. In 1857, Dickens read the story in Chicago. One of the audience members, a factory owner named Fairbanks, was so affected by the reading that he decided to “break the custom we have hitherto observed of opening the works on Christmas Day.” Not only did he close the factory for Christmas Day, he gave a turkey to each of his employees.
Terms and Phrases in the Play

avarice - greed
baleful - deadly, malicious
beguile - to deceive
bob - slang for a shilling (a coin worth 1/20 of a British pound)
cant - insincere or cliché sayings
congeal - to solidify or thicken
corroborating - confirmation
Dandini and the Princess - a reference to the composer Rossini’s version of the Cinderella story, which featured the faithful servant Dandini
deft - skillful
dirge - a funeral hymn or lament
entreaty - a plea
execrable - despicable, disgusting
farthing - a coin equal to 1/4 of the British penny
gratis - free
gruel - thin, watery oatmeal or porridge
ha’penny - a half-penny coin
infernal - of or relating to hell
intercede - to intervene
latent - dormant
liberality - generosity
loiter - to linger idly or aimlessly
morose - sullen or gloomy
munificent - very generous
odious - hateful, repellent
officious - overly dutiful or obliging
opulence - richness
peal - a loud ringing (as of bells)
(plum) pudding - a traditional Christmas dish more like a soft fruitcake than American pudding
poulterers - a butcher shop specializing in poultry (chickens, turkeys, geese, etc.)
profundity - depth
replete - full
savory - good-tasting
scanty - meager, insufficient
scuttle - a metal bucket with a conical top, used for storing coal
Social Services - in Dickens’ time, a phrase that referred mainly to workhouses and other means of essentially incarcerating the poor
sordid - filthy, foul
tacit - understood, implicit
terrestrial - of or relating to the earth
venerate - to honor or revere
workhouses - publicly-funded places where people who were unable to support themselves could live and work. The 1834 Poor Law Amendment controversially aimed to make English workhouses as harsh and degrading as possible so that only the truly destitute would choose to live there. Dickens and others criticized the squalor and sometimes abusive treatment that resulted from this law.
Who Said That?
Match the spoken line to the character who speaks it. Some characters match more than one line, some match none.

A. “There are many things from which I might have derived good, by which I have not profited, I dare say, Christmas among the rest.”
   Ebenezer Scrooge

B. “What’s Christmas to you but a time for paying bills without money, a time for finding yourself a year older and not a dollar richer, a time for balancing your books and having every item...dead against you?”
   Tiny Tim

C. “It is required of every man that the spirit within him should walk abroad among his fellow men, and travel far and wide; and if that spirit goes not forth in life, it is condemned to do so after death.”
   Jacob Marley

D. “No more work tonight boys – Christmas Eve!”
   Fred

E. “Happiness need not cost us a fortune.”
   Mr. Fezziwig

F. “Another idol has replaced me: Gold.”
   Dick Wilkins

G. “It should be Christmas day, I am sure, for me to drink the health of such an odious, stingy, hard, unfeeling man as Mr. Scrooge.”
   Belle

H. “If these shadows remained unaltered by the Future, the boy will die.”
   Belinda Cratchit

I. “God bless us – every one.”
   Martha Cratchit

J. “A poor excuse for picking a man’s pocket every twenty- fifth of December.”
   Marry Cratchit

K. “At this festive season of the year, it is more than usually desirable that we should make some slight provision for the poor and destitute...”
   Peter Cratchit

L. “Business?! Mankind was my business. Charity and mercy were my business. The common welfare was my business.”
   The Portly Gentlemen

M. “He told me, coming home, that he hoped people saw him, because they might remember the stories of who made the beggars walk and the blind man see. I am quite sure his is growing stronger and hearty.”
   Fan

N. “I don’t make myself merry at Christmas, and I can’t afford to make idle people merry.”
   Mrs. Dilber

O. “Father is so much kinder than he used to be, and we’re all to be together all Christmas long. At home. Home. Home!”
   Old Joe

P. “A small matter, to make folks so full of happiness. He has spent but three, or perhaps four, pounds on his Christmas.”
   Answers available on pg. 11
Test Your Understanding

Circle the letter that BEST answers the question.

1. What is Scrooge’s attitude toward Christmas at the beginning of the story?
   a) It’s a day wasted when work could be done.    b) It’s a chance to get some sleep.
   c) It’s a wonderful holiday.         d) It’s the reason so many people in London are poor.

2. The author states that it is essential to know that “Jacob Marley was as dead...
   a) ...as a coffin-nail.”  b) ...as a dormouse.”  c) ...as a door-nail.”  d) ...as a humbug.”

3. Scrooge scolds his employee for wanting...
   a) ...to place another piece of coal on the fire.  b) ...to stay home with his family on Christmas Day.
   c) both a & b  d) none of the above

4. Who is the young man that comes to Scrooge’s counting house in hopes of spreading Christmas cheer and inviting Scrooge to Christmas dinner?
   a) Bob Cratchit  b) Jacob Marley  c) Peter, Cratchit’s son  d) Fred, Scrooge’s nephew

5. How does the author portray the Christmas holiday in A Christmas Carol?
   a) as a solemn religious holiday  b) as a time to experience family dysfunction
   c) as a time to get lots of presents  d) as a joyous time to spend with family and friends

6. What significant character flaw does Scrooge exhibit at the beginning of the story?
   a) bad temper  b) selfishness  c) greed  d) all of the above

7. How does Jacob Marley’s ghost first appear to Scrooge?
   a) in his door knocker  b) as a human phantom  c) in his dinner plate  d) as a disembodied voice

8. How many ghosts visit Scrooge in A Christmas Carol?
   a) one  b) two  c) three  d) four

9. Where does the Ghost of Christmas Past take Scrooge first?
   a) the Fezziwigs  b) Scrooge’s school  c) Belle’s home  d) a ship on the sea

CONTINUED >>
Test Your Understanding CONTINUED

10. Scrooge makes many grand statements in the story. From the list below, which of them does the Ghost of Christmas Present repeat back to him?
   a) “Bah! Humbug!”          b) “Are there no prisons? Are there no workhouses?”
   c) “I wish to be left alone.”          d) “Show me no more!”

11. What are the names of Mankind’s children, according to the Ghost of Christmas Present?
   a) Apathy and Greed          b) Ignorance and Want          c) Sadness and Sloth          d) Indolence and War

12. What is the final image the Ghosts show Scrooge before he awakes back in his bedroom?
   a) his boyhood home          b) the family he might have had if he weren’t selfish
   c) his own grave          d) Tiny Tim running

13. How long does Scrooge’s transformation by the ghosts take?
   a) three nights          b) one night          c) one year          d) twelve days

14. What surprise does Fred receive on Christmas Day?
   a) a new tie from his wife          b) a visit from three ghosts
   c) a raise from his employer          d) a visit from his uncle

15. Who receives the prize Christmas turkey at the end of the story?
   a) Scrooge          b) Fred          c) the Cratchits          d) Belle

16. In what era does the story of A Christmas Carol take place?
   a) Victorian          b) Elizabethan          c) Present          d) Jacobean

CALLING ALL TEACHERS!

Do you have activities or exercises to suggest for this play? We are always looking for new ideas to inspire students (and teachers). Send your suggestions to Education@ShakespeareNJ.org and we will share them with other teachers, and maybe even include them in future study guides.

Answers available on pg. 11
Topics for Discussion

ABOUT THE PLAY:

1. *A Christmas Carol* is, in part, a novel about personal transformation. Ebenezer Scrooge is a very different person as a man than he was as a boy, and changes still further as a result of his ghostly encounters on Christmas Eve. Does Dickens provide any explanation for Scrooge's initial transformation into a cold-hearted and antisocial old man? What specific tactics do the three spirits use to reverse this? How do these tactics combine to change Scrooge’s outlook on life? Is this transformation plausible? Compare the events of the novel/play to experiences you may have had that have drastically changed your beliefs and behaviors.

2. Scrooge's relationship with Belle changes irrevocably when he becomes obsessed with money, success, and material gain. What do you think is the novel's attitude towards making money? How does Dickens’ depiction of attitudes towards business and making money compare with the attitudes in our own modern society? Discuss the relative value of money and material possessions in your own life.

3. Dickens, like many other writers and thinkers in the Victorian era, was deeply interested in the concept of childhood. Victorian society came to emphasize childhood as a critical, formative period which determined what kind of adult a person would become. How are children depicted in *A Christmas Carol*? What do you think Dickens was trying to say about the importance of childhood, and how children should be treated? Why do you think Want and Ignorance are depicted as children, and why specifically as “Man’s children?” Support your answer.

4. Though frequently spooky tales are associated with Halloween, the telling of ghost stories at Christmas-time is a longstanding English tradition. Have you ever told ghost stories at Christmas with your family? Why do you think this tradition exists in much of the United Kingdom? In many ways *A Christmas Carol* can be viewed as an English ghost story. Why do you think Dickens chose this format to tell his tale? The “Christmas Yet to Come” sequence is often quite dark and scary. How does this influence your view of the redemption that follows?

ABOUT THIS PRODUCTION:

1. In this stage adaptation of *A Christmas Carol* by Neil Bartlett, a small group of actors play all the roles, create most of the sound effects and, as Bartlett puts it, “even, on occasion, impersonate props.” Why do you think Bartlett chose this style of telling this holiday classic? Did you like this approach? Why? How do these choices affect you as an audience member?

2. In this production, Dickens’ words are interspersed with several traditional Christmas carols that are sung by the actors. How does the addition of this music affect the telling of the story? Why do you think particular songs were chosen to be sung during particular scenes? How did they influence the scene? Be specific. Do you think the play would have been less effective if the music had been omitted?

3. Have you read Dickens’ original *A Christmas Carol*? If so, how did this production differ from how you envisioned the story when you read it? What was the most impactful moment in the story when you read it? What was the most impactful moment as you watched the story live on stage? Were any characters different than you imagined? How so? Name one element from the play that you did not remember from your reading. Be specific.

4. How did the design choices (lighting, costumes, scenery, and sound) influence your interpretation of the play? How did the set establish the tone for the production as you entered the theatre? The story spans the majority of Ebenezer’s life. How do the costumes help to convey this story? What colors have the designers chosen to establish the mood and character of the piece? What do you think was the most effective element of the design? Why? Be specific.
Follow-Up Activities

CRITIC’S CORNER — Write a review of this production of *A Christmas Carol*. Be sure to include specific information and your own reactions to both the acting and the design elements (lights, set, costumes and sound). Explain what you liked about the production, and what you disliked, and support your opinions. Then submit your review to The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey’s Education Department, or see if it can be published in your school newspaper.

FRED’S PARTY — Scrooge’s fun-loving nephew, Fred, is planning a Christmas party in the novel. Using print and online sources, research what kind of party he would be throwing. Would there be music? If so, what kind? Remember, there weren’t any ipads, radio stations, or the internet at that time. What kind of food would be served? How would people have dressed? How would their etiquette be different than ours? What games would they have played? There were no television or video-game distractions in Dickens’ era, so how did they entertain themselves? Research actual Victorian party games and, for extra credit, teach them to the class and incorporate them into a classroom celebration.

TEN YEARS LATER... — Dickens famously wraps up *A Christmas Carol* with just a few sentences that hint at the future lives of Scrooge, the Cratchits, and many of the other characters. Using Dickens words as a starting point, write your own sequel with additional details about what becomes of the iconic characters. How do the lives of the characters change as a result of Scrooge’s transformative experience? Do you think his change has an effect on the community as a whole? If so, how? Be as creative and specific as you can be, and be sure to use references from the novel.

TRADITION EXCHANGE — Survey your class about their holiday traditions, and discuss what these traditions have in common as well as how they are different. Discuss the role that tradition plays in our lives. Then hold a classroom celebration in which each person shares an aspect of their holiday traditions with the group: a food, a song, a story, and so on.

GHOST STORY — The four ghosts in *A Christmas Carol* provide the design team for any production of the play with an array of possibilities. Though Dickens does describe each of them in his novel, he leaves much room for interpretation. Imagine yourself as the director or designer focusing on one ghost. How does it look, sound, smell, and move? What color is it? Does it glow? Does it ever laugh? What about it is magical or supernatural? Be sure to start with Dickens’ description of the ghost. Create a collage with all the ghosts created by the class and display it in the classroom.

ADAPTATIONS — Neil Bartlett used Charles Dickens’ words to create a particular kind of adaptation for the stage. *A Christmas Carol* has also been adapted into films, cartoons, television shows and comic books. Using Dickens’ original novel as a basis, create a visual or literary adaptation of *A Christmas Carol* that can be presented to the class. Your adaptation could be a mural on craft paper or the storyboard for a film. It might take the story into a new context, such as modern-day New Jersey. Afterwards, discuss both the process of adaptation and how your adaptation (and others) communicated the story and themes of the original.

YOUR FELLOW MAN — Charles Dickens wrote this book, in part, to “strike a sledgehammer blow on behalf of the Poor Man’s child.” Discuss some other ways in which people advocate for social causes in which they believe. Working individually or in small groups, design a campaign that will “strike a sledgehammer blow” for a cause that you think is important. Try to use the full range of media available to you: pictures, words, music, etc. If possible, implement your campaign in your classroom or school, and assess its impact.

**TEST YOUR UNDERSTANDING Answer Key**


**WHO SAID THAT? Answer Key**

A. Fred  B. Scrooge  C. Mrs. Cratchit  D. Marley  E. Belle

Meeting the Common Core Standards

In 1996, the New Jersey State Board of Education adopted the Core Curriculum Content Standards that set out to clearly define what every New Jersey student should know and be able to do at the end of their schooling. The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey is committed to supporting teachers by ensuring that our educational programs are relevant to the evolving standards of modern education.

Viewing a performance at The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey and participating in the post-performance discussion can serve as a powerful springboard for discussion, writing, and other outlets for higher-order thinking. On this page, you will find suggestions for ways to align your study of our production to each standard.

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY STANDARDS
As a theatre dedicated to the classics, we are continually engaged in exploring some of the world’s greatest literature and the relationship between the written text and performance. Our philosophy and practice follow the underlying assumptions of the Language Arts Literacy CCSS: That “language is an active process for constructing meaning”; that “language develops in a social context”; that language ability increases as learners “engage in texts that are rich in ideas and increasingly complex in language”; that learners achieve mastery not by practicing isolated skills but by “using and exploring language in its many dimensions.”

In the practice of theatre, we merge all areas of the language arts, as the standards suggest “in an integrated act of rehearsal, reflection, and learning.” Below, you will find just a few of the possibilities for aligning your study of our productions to each of these standards.

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.

Read a scene from the play as a class and use context clues to interpret new words and expand vocabulary.

NJSLSA.R9 Analyze and reflect on how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

Compare this production to another Shakespeare play or to a piece you are reading in class.

NJSLSA.R10 Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently with scaffolding as needed.

Analyze a portion of the text, isolate specific imagery, meanings, references, and then compare those instances to other passages in the play.

W.3.6 With guidance and support from adults, use technology to produce and publish writing as well as to interact and collaborate with others.

Compare and Contrast the printed text with the staged version viewed online.

Maintain a journal or blog that classmates can comment on using specific prompts about the play.

SL.3.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher led) with diverse partners on grade 3 topics and texts, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly.

Participate in a post-show Discussion.

L.6.3 Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.

Write a new ending for the play in modern prose.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS STANDARDS
Both the CCSS and the Every Student Succeeds Act promote the inclusion of “programs and activities that use music and the arts as tools to support student success through the promotion of constructive student engagement, problem solving, and conflict resolution” (ESSA 2015). Performances, workshops, and study guide exercises developed by The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey strive to address the Visual and Performing Arts Standards.

Below, you will find a few possibilities for aligning your study of our production to each standard.

Standard 1.1 The Creative Process: All students will demonstrate an understanding of the elements and principles that govern the creation of works of art in dance, music, theatre, and visual art.

Write a review of the production using domain-appropriate terminology; develop a class rubric for effect theatrical presentations

Standard 1.2 History of the Arts and Culture: All students will understand the role, development, and influence of the arts throughout history and across cultures.

Discuss the representation of social issues (class, politics, etc.) in the play; research how the historical period affected the writer’s work; compare the play to work from other historical periods.

Standard 1.3 Performing: All students will synthesize skills, media, methods, and technologies that are appropriate to creating, performing, and/or presenting works of art in dance, music, theatre, and visual art.

Perform a monologue or scene from the play; participate in a classroom workshop that develops the physical and technical skills required to create and present theatre.

Standard 1.4 Aesthetic Responses & Critique Methodologies: All students will demonstrate and apply an understanding of arts philosophies, judgment, and analysis to works of art in dance, music, theatre, and visual art.

Participate in a post-show discussion of elements such as physicality and creating motivated action; discuss the relationship between play text and production design.
About The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey

The acclaimed Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey is one of the leading Shakespeare theatres in the nation. Serving tens of thousands adults and young people annually, it is New Jersey’s largest professional theatre company dedicated to Shakespeare’s canon and other classic masterworks. With its distinguished productions and education programs, the company strives to illuminate the universal and lasting relevance of the classics for contemporary audiences. The longest-running Shakespeare theatre on the East Coast and the seventh largest in the nation, The Shakespeare Theatre celebrates its 57th anniversary in 2019.

The Company’s dedication to the classics and commitment to artistic excellence helps set high standards for the field. Nationwide, the Theatre has emerged as one of America’s most exciting companies under the leadership of Artistic Director Bonnie J. Monte, who has been with the company since 1990. It is one of only a handful of Shakespeare Theatres on the East Coast, and in recent years has drawn larger and larger audiences and unprecedented critical acclaim. The opening of the intimate 308-seat F.M. Kirby Shakespeare Theatre in 1998, provided the Theatre with a state-of-the-art venue with excellent sightlines, and increased access for patrons and artists with disabilities.

The company’s 2019 Main Stage Season features five productions presented in the F.M. Kirby Shakespeare Theatre from May through December. Each summer, an Outdoor Stage production is also presented at an open-air amphitheatre nestled in a hillside on the campus of the College of Saint Elizabeth in nearby Florham Park. The Theatre is proud to have launched into its second half-century with a brand new support facility housing all its administrative and technical shops, as well as a new rehearsal hall, classroom spaces, and extensive costume, property and scenic inventory in the nearby town of Florham Park.

In addition to being a celebrated producer of classic plays and operating Shakespeare LIVE! (one of the largest educational Shakespeare touring programs in the North East region), The Shakespeare Theatre is also deeply committed to nurturing new talent for the American stage. By providing an outstanding training ground for students of the theatre, and cultivating audiences for the future by providing extensive outreach opportunities for students across New Jersey and beyond, The Shakespeare Theatre is a leader in arts education and professional training. For additional information, visit our website at www.ShakespeareNJ.org.

The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey is a member of ArtPride, The Shakespeare Theatre Association, Madison Cultural & Arts Alliance, and is a founding member of the New Jersey Theatre Alliance.
Additional Opportunities for Students and Teachers

THE SHAKESPEARE THEATRE ACADEMY

The Shakespeare Theatre now offers youth and adult classes in a wide range of disciplines connected with the classics and the art of theatre. Each series of classes meets once a week in one of the Theatre’s beautiful facilities, and gives participants the opportunity to work under the instruction of The Shakespeare Theatre’s artistic and educational staff as well as guest teaching artists. Spring and Fall classes available.

BACKSTAGE AND THEATRE FACTORY TOURS

See what goes into making the magic on stage with a backstage tour at The F.M. Kirby Shakespeare Theatre! Groups can also tour the 50,000 square foot Thomas H. Kean “Theatre Factory” in nearby Florham Park. This facility houses our costume, scenic, and properties shops, as well as rehearsal spaces, classrooms, and much, much more.

SHAKESPEARE LIVE! TOURS AND WORKSHOPS

This acclaimed touring program brings dynamic and visually engaging one-hour productions of Shakespeare’s classics directly into the schools. Each performance includes a comprehensive study guide and a post-performance discussion with the actors. Fun and interactive workshops give students a chance to explore the actor’s approach to bringing Shakespeare’s language to life. In 2018 we will be offering productions of The Comedy of Errors and Macbeth!

PAGES TO PLAYERS: IN-SCHOOL RESIDENCIES

Residencies provide an opportunity for classroom English teachers in grades 4–8 to partner with the Theatre’s skilled teaching artists to explore Shakespeare’s text in-depth, in an exciting, performance-based technique that promotes collaboration, self-confidence, and creativity, while always strengthening Language Arts skills.

SHAKESPERIENCE: NJ STUDENT SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL

This annual spring festival, developed in partnership with the Folger Shakespeare Library and Rider University, gives middle and high school students the opportunity to spend a day at the Theatre experiencing Shakespeare as both actors and audience members. The Shakesperience:NJ Festival celebrates the power of performance as a teaching tool on a statewide scale.

THE JUNIOR & SENIOR SHAKESPEARE CORPS AND THE YOUNG SHAKESPEAREANS

Young actors are given the opportunity to participate in the excitement of the Theatre’s summer season through this program, which offers classes, a final presentation, as well as behind-the-scenes and front-of-house experience. Geared for students ages 10 to 18. Admission to the Senior Corps and Young Shakespeareans is through an audition and/or interview. Admission to the Junior Corps is done on a first-come, first-served basis.

www.ShakespeareNJ.org/Education