



The
SHAKESPEARE
Theatre of
New Jersey



The
Misanthrope

a study guide

THE MISANTHROPE: A Study Guide

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The Misanthrope: A Synopsis

The play opens in the home of the young widow, Célimène, as two friends, Alceste and Philinte, are entering, engaged in a heated conversation about social behavior. Alceste, the titular misanthrope (a person who dislikes and avoids human society), criticizes Philinte for behaving exceedingly friendly towards people he doesn't necessarily like or barely knows. Alceste advocates for absolute honesty and frankness in all situations, and frustrated with the hypocritical customs of society, threatens to abandon it altogether. Philinte encourages his friend to be more accepting of human imperfections. He then asks how Alceste could be so in love with Célimène, who is patently guilty of the superficial tendencies that Alceste so despises. Alceste confesses that he is well aware of Célimène's faults but maintains that one cannot control whom one loves.

Just then, Oronte, one of Célimène's many suitors, enters the salon seeking Alceste. Oronte wishes to obtain Alceste's opinion on a sonnet that he has recently written. Alceste warns Oronte that he will be bluntly frank, and Oronte exclaims that that is exactly what he wants – an honest opinion. Philinte enthusiastically praises the poem, but Alceste launches into a diatribe against the sonnet and Oronte's lack of talent. Oronte leaves, offended and enraged. Soon after, Alceste finally has a moment alone with Célimène. He passionately expresses his frustration that she continues to entertain so many suitors, and implores her to choose him alone, once and for all. Célimène and Alceste argue, and just at the moment when they seem to be reconciling, two marquises - Acaste and Clitandre – also competitors for Célimène's attentions, come to call. Célimène's cousin, Philinte, and Éliante join the company in the salon. Célimène and the marquises entertain one another by gossiping and criticizing their mutual acquaintances. Eventually, Alceste's growing frustration comes to a head, and he lashes out at the company for their hypocrisy and pettiness. Éliante tries to quell the tension with an amusing speech on the nature of love's forgiving quality.

Suddenly, a guard arrives demanding Alceste's presence in court, where Oronte is suing him for slandering his poem. Philinte persuades Alceste to go, but Alceste asserts he will refuse to retract a single criticism of the poem. The marquises suddenly find themselves alone. Each is certain that he has Célimène's love, and the two agree to a pact – when either one can furnish proof that he holds Célimène's sole affections, the other will withdraw his courtship attentions.

The marquises depart when Arsinoé, who has a reputation for being cold and prudish, comes to call on Célimène. Arsinoé claims to be visiting to tell Célimène “something she needs to know”, and proceeds to tell her about the precarious “status of her reputation”. Célimène then deftly returns the favor, and the conversation quickly becomes heated. Alceste returns from court, and Célimène happily seizes the opportunity to leave the room, forcing Alceste to entertain Arsinoé. Arsinoé takes advantage of this opportunity to tell Alceste that she has proof that Célimène has betrayed him. This revelation ends the first act.

After intermission, the scene opens with Philinte recounting Alceste's behavior in court to Éliante. Éliante confesses her affection and admiration for Alceste. Undaunted, Philinte professes his own love for Éliante, saying that he would be “most

happy to be second best” for Éliante, should things not work out for her and Alceste.

The pair are interrupted by Alceste's outburst of grief over Célimène's alleged betrayal. Having procured a letter from Arsinoé that he thinks Célimène has written to Oronte, he is in despair, and appeals to Éliante to help him revenge himself on the treacherous Célimène. Éliante refuses and tries to mollify Alceste's jealous rage by assuring him that his anger will pass and he will soon forgive Célimène. Just then, Célimène enters the room, and Alceste confronts her about the letter. Célimène remains nonplussed, and, upon seeing the letter, explains to Alceste that it was written to a woman friend. She berates Alceste for his quickness to judge, and wonders aloud “why should she love a man who doesn't trust her”? In agony, Alceste reaffirms his love for her just as his servant enters in panic, demanding that they flee Paris at once because trouble is brewing. Alceste departs, lamenting that events keep preventing him from being alone with Célimène.

By the next scene, Alceste is again with Philinte, complaining about the horrendous state of humanity and threatening to abandon the society of men altogether. He laments that not only has he lost a lawsuit in which he's been lengthily engaged, but now another man has accused Alceste of circulating an offensive and libelous book and Oronte is lending credence to that slander. Philinte, however, appeals earnestly to his friend to reconsider, and to accept human imperfection as an opportunity to exercise the virtues of patience, tolerance, and forgiveness. Gloomily unmoved by Philinte's advice, Alceste sinks into a dark corner of the room, and Philinte leaves to find Éliante.

Célimène enters with Oronte who asks her to assert her love for him. When he demands she banish Alceste from her company, Alceste reveals himself to the pair and makes the same demand of her about Oronte. The two men agree between them that whichever one she doesn't choose will immediately cease to pursue her, and they unite in demanding that Célimène make a choice between the two of them then and there. She refuses, on the pretence of being unwilling to hurt anyone's feelings. When Éliante arrives, Célimène appeals to her for support, but Éliante is a proponent of honest and forthright behavior and refuses to support her cousin in her flirtatious games. The marquises and Arsinoé burst in to also confront Célimène. Acaste and Clitandre have each received letters from Célimène professing her love and denigrating other men, including Alceste and Oronte. Upon discovering that Célimène is playing them all against each other, Acaste, Clitandre, and Arsinoé viciously chastise Célimène and depart.

Alceste, unlike the other suitors, finds himself incapable of abandoning Célimène. He still loves her, and entreats her to flee with him to a place far away from society where they can be alone together. Célimène, while willing to marry Alceste, cannot bring herself to live in isolation from the rest of the world, and so she refuses. Alceste turns to Éliante and begs her forgiveness for not offering his hand in marriage to her, asserting that he cannot accept a substitute for Célimène. Éliante gently breaks the news that she would not have accepted his proposal in any case, for she has found her true affections lie with Philinte.. The play ends with Alceste and Célimène departing separately and alone, leaving Éliante and Philinte together, who vow to “do everything they can to change the mind of this unhappy man”.

The Characters of *The Misanthrope*



John Patrick Hayden as Alceste, the misanthrope and Jon Barker as Philinte, his good friend, in The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey's 2011 Main Stage production of *The Misanthrope*. Photo © Gerry Goodstein.

ALCESTE – the misanthrope, is exasperated by the hypocrisy, corruption, and shallowness of high society. He is in love with Célimène, despite the fact that she represents all that he detests.

*This age is vile, and I've made up my mind
To have no further commerce with mankind.*

PHILINTE – Alceste's closest friend, is more patient and tolerant, and accepts the imperfections inherent in humanity. He is in love with the gentle and honest Éliante.

*Here in the world, each human frailty
Provides occasion for philosophy,
And that is virtue's noblest exercise.*

CÉLIMÈNE – in whose home the events of the play unfold, is a young high-society widow with numerous suitors.

One must receive them, and be full of charm.

ÉLIANTE – Célimène's cousin, is wise beyond her years and kind. She is in love with Alceste.

*Nothing's so stormy as an injured lover
And yet no storm so quickly passes over.*

ORONTE – one of Célimène's suitors, composes a sonnet and takes Alceste to court over his critique of it.

*Perhaps I ought to add
That it took me only a quarter-hour to write it.*

ACASTE – a boastful marquis, is one of Célimène's suitors.

*I find myself in favor everywhere,
Honored by men, and worshiped by the fair.*

CLITANDRE – a powerful marquis with influence at Court, is also one of Célimène's suitors.

'Twas love that stayed our feet.

ARSINOÉ – claims to be pious and virtuous, but has a reputation for being cold, mean and licentious.

*Lovers are no great trouble to collect
If one prefers them to one's self-respect.*

BASQUE – Célimène's manservant.

A GUARD of the Marshalsea.

DUBOIS – Alceste's manservant.

The Unities

Neoclassicism demands adherence to aesthetic ideals based on Aristotle's Three Unities of Drama:

UNITY OF TIME – all of the action of the play must take place in one day or less.

UNITY OF PLACE – all of the action of the play must take place in one singular location.

UNITY OF ACTION – all of the action of the play must be focused on one central plot or theme.

French Neoclassicism, under the guidance of Cardinal Richelieu and the French Academy, adhered to two additional unities:

UNITY OF VERISIMILITUDE – all of the action of the play must seem probable and realistic.

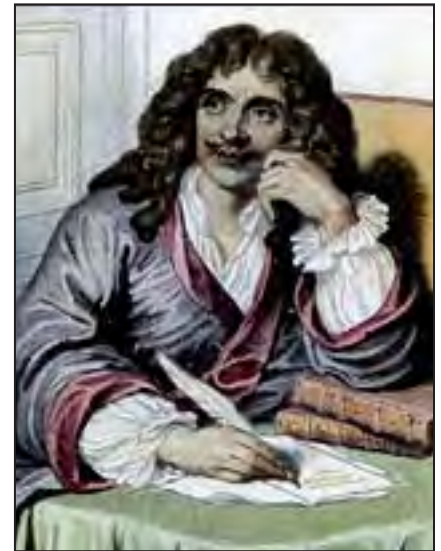
UNITY OF DECORUM – all of the action of the play must follow prescribed and expected social behavior.

About the Playwright: Molière

Molière, born Jean-Baptiste Poquelin in 1622, was raised and bred in the midst of the wealthy aristocracy of Paris. The son of the court upholsterer, Molière was on a path for success and affluence when, at the age of 21, he abandoned the pursuit of law to become an actor. In 1643, he and a few friends, including his longtime love interest Madeleine Béjart, founded the traveling theatre troupe L'illustre Théâtre. The troupe went briefly bankrupt in 1645, for which Molière served 24 hours in debtor's prison. It was around this time that he took the name Molière – perhaps in an attempt to dissociate from his family for the sake of his father's reputation.

L'illustre Théâtre continued to tour the country with great success until 1658. In this year the troupe performed in Paris, and won the support and patronage of the King's brother, who arranged for a performance for King Louis XIV himself. The King was so impressed that he made the troupe the official "troupe du roi", and awarded them a permanent playing space at the Palais Royal. This established a long-standing friendship between Molière and

Louis XIV – the King was even the godfather and namesake for Molière's first son. In Molière's later satirical works, no matter how harshly he criticized French society, he was careful never to criticize the monarchy. Thus, he always enjoyed protection from the King, no matter how severely his work and his lifestyle came under fire.



In 1662, Molière married Armande Béjart, the younger sister of Madeleine. Armande was 20 years his junior, and vicious rumors circulated that she was not only the illegitimate daughter of Madeleine, but that Molière was her father. The two had a tumultuous marriage, and Molière suffered much public criticism because of the relationship.

Molière was a consummate theatre artist – actor, director, manager – but it is his work as a playwright that has immortalized him. He wrote in many styles and genres, but it is his farcical comedies that have had the most profound influence on Western literature. Molière, a contemporary of the French dramatists Corneille and Racine, was unique in his approach to comedy in that he attempted to highlight the foibles and vices of realistically-drawn characters. Although he worked within the confines of French Neoclassicism, many of his plays aroused much criticism and public outcry. *The Misanthrope* was written in 1666, directly after his most provocative plays, *Tartuffe* and *Don Juan*, had been banned. *The Misanthrope* is a more subtle, but no less biting comedy, and is widely recognized as Molière's most refined masterpiece with the deepest moral content and most moving and real dilemmas.

Molière became seriously ill in 1673. During a performance of *The Imaginary Invalid*, he suffered an attack of tuberculosis and a hemorrhage, and died a few hours later at the age of 51. At the time, actors were not permitted Christian burials, so Molière was buried at night in the section of the cemetery reserved for unbaptised children.

John Patrick Hayden as Alceste, the misanthrope and Elizabeth A. Davis as his love interest Célimène in The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey's 2011 Main Stage production of *The Misanthrope*. Photo © Gerry Goodstein.



About the Adapter: Richard Wilbur

Richard Wilbur (1921 -) is an American poet, literary translator, and scholar. Wilbur wrote his first poem at the age of 8, and has won the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry twice – in 1957 and in 1989. As a translator, Wilbur specializes in 17th century French drama. His adaptations of Molière's major plays have become the standard English translations. Wilbur began translating *The Misanthrope* in 1952, and it received its first performance by The Poets' Theatre in Cambridge, MA in 1955. Three decades later, Wilbur was awarded the Drama Desk Special Award in 1983 for this adaptation.

A Misanthropic Anniversary!

The Misanthrope first opened on June 4, 1666. The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey's production of *The Misanthrope* opened exactly 345 years later on June 4, 2011.

When *The Misanthrope* was originally produced, Molière himself played Alceste, his actual wife played Célimène, his long-time mistress played Éliante, and the role of Arsinoé was played by Mademoiselle du Parc – an actress who had repulsed Molière's advances.



Arsinoé (Louisa Braden Johnson) and Elizabeth A. Davis as his love interest Célimène in The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey's 2011 Main Stage production of *The Misanthrope*. Photo © Gerry Goodstein.

A Chronology of Molière's Life

- 1622 – Jean-Baptiste Poquelin (later called Molière) is born
- 1636 – Cardinal Richelieu establishes the French Academy
- 1641 – opening the first permanent proscenium-arch theater in France - the Palais Cardinal (later renamed the Palais Royal)
- 1642 – Cardinal Richelieu dies
- 1643 – Molière abandons law and founds the Théâtre Illustre with the Béjart family
- 1643 – Louis XIV, known as the “Sun King”, takes the throne at the age of 4
- 1644 – The Théâtre Illustre goes bankrupt, and Molière is briefly imprisoned for debt. Jean-Baptiste Poquelin begins going by the name of Molière.
- 1658 – Molière's troupe performs in Paris and gains royal patronage
- 1660 – Molière's troupe is given permanent playing space in the Palais Royal
- 1662 – Molière marries Armande Béjart, the younger sister of his long-time mistress Madeleine Béjart
- 1665 – Molière's troupe becomes the King's Men, the official troupe for court entertainment
- 1666 – Molière writes *The Misanthrope*
- 1672 – Madeleine Béjart dies
- 1673 – Molière dies from an attack of tuberculosis
- 1680 – Molière's troupe is combined with the Marais and Bourgogne companies to create the Comédie Française, the first national theatre.

On the Genius of *The Misanthrope*

“...this is truly a masterpiece; almost nothing in the classic comedic canon rivals it - from any century. It certainly stands alone amongst [Molière’s] many works - only *Tartuffe* and *Don Juan* come close - and even they lack what *The Misanthrope* contains. He manages to meld farce, biting wit, sublime verse, philosophic debate, emotional and character complexity, infinitely-layered irony, tragic overtones, comedic genius and social commentary into one shimmering, hilarious bitter, affectionate burst of brilliance. For in the end, Molière’s own misanthropy is tempered ultimately, I think, by an abiding, deep affection for the human race despite its terrible shortcomings.

“It is not a tidy comedy. It does not tie up any but one “bow” neatly at the end, and even that one is “frayed” by a continuing anxiety. The hero or anti-hero (depending on one’s point of view) is not welcomed back into society by the playwright; he is self-exiled, and whether that exile is permanent or not, no one can tell. The social ills are not rectified, the misanthropy persists, the characters all find themselves isolated and alone still spinning about in the swirls of a shallow and treacherous society. The larger social ills loom outside the realm of the play, silent, but somehow making their presence felt. And yet, we laugh uproariously and we feel deep affection for these people that remind of us of characters in our own lives, and in our most self-examining moments, of ourselves.”

– Bonnie J. Monte, director of *The Misanthrope* and Artistic Director of The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey.

“In no other play does [Molière] reveal such variety and complexity of feelings, but in no other does he show such reluctance to judge the individual or so marked a tendency to call in question all accepted standards and formulas. It is a masterly exploration of the motives behind social behavior; feelings are tracked down [. . .] to the moment of their formation; but judgment on them is suspended. There is in truth no formal ending to the play. The catharsis lies in the clarifying of our feelings, in the perception that social adjustment is a personal matter where in the last resort no facile slogan or philosophical system can help us; and the “message,” if we must have one, is that we must have the courage to create our own “order,” whatever the cost, instead of yielding to the temptation of an easy escape.”

– Martin Turnell

The History of *The Misanthrope*

17th century France was late to join the explosion of art and creativity that was already sweeping England and other parts of Europe, known as the Renaissance. France had endured tumultuous civil and religious strife in the preceding decades, which was settled by the Edict of Nantes in 1594 which prohibited the persecution of Protestants (or Huguenots).

Italian culture came to have a profound impact on the French arts in the 17th century. Italian commedia dell’arte troupes were an extremely popular form of entertainment. Molière himself based much of his work on the structure and archetypal characters of commedia.

In 1636, Cardinal Richelieu established the French Academy, based on the Italian tradition. The Academy was made up of a finite number of specially invited artists and scholars in a variety of fields. They determined the unified aesthetic of the French arts, and Richelieu could defer to them for rulings in matters of theater and style. For example, when Molière’s *Tartuffe* scandalized the Roman Catholic Church and other members of society, Richelieu appealed to the Academy for an official statement on the play’s content. Richelieu and the Academy supported Neoclassicism, an aesthetic style based on classical Greek and Roman traditions.

Molière’s plays frequently adhere to these traditions, but he was also critical of the rules of the Academy, and his work is unique from what was traditional at the time. For one thing, Molière’s plays tend to focus more on character development than on plot. Additionally, his flawed characters are not reintegrated into society at the end of the plays.

Many of the theatres in Molière’s time were fashioned from old tennis courts. They were long halls, with a platform stage at one end which eventually developed a proscenium arch, and were fitted with complex machinery needed to create the elaborate and spectacular scenery that was popular in Italy. Spectators stood on the ground in front of the stage, or were seated in the galleries along the sides. Some particularly wealthy and vain patrons – probably quite similar to the character of Acaste – were even seated directly on the stage.

Alexandrine Verse

Before Shakespeare popularized iambic pentameter in English poetry, a common verse form was the Alexandrine. Most common in French baroque poetry, the Alexandrine line has 12 syllables and is divided into two parts by a caesura, or a brief pause in the language.

*Morbleu! c'est une chose indigne, lâche, infâme,
De s'abaisser ainsi jusqu'à trahir son âme;
Et si, par un malheur, j'en avais fait autant,
Je m'irais, de regret, pendre tout à l'instant.*

Although Alexandrine rhythm perfectly emphasizes the elegant cadence of the French language, it does not have the same effect in English. Therefore, Richard Wilbur translated *The Misanthrope* into iambic pentameter, a verse form that is particularly conducive to English speech patterns. Each line of iambic pentameter verse has ten syllables which divide into five “feet” of unstressed-stressed emphasis.

*By God, I say it's base and scandalous
To falsify the heart's affections thus;
If I caught myself behaving in such a way,
I'd hang myself for shame, without delay.*

Le Grand Siècle

The 17th-century in France, under the rule of Louis XIV, was known as the grand siècle (or the splendid century). This was an era of extravagance, decorum, and wit. A common pastime for the upper-classes was attendance at “salons” – where an inspiring host would gather people to engage in entertaining and stimulating conversation. This was often an opportunity for individuals to show off their wit, philosophies, and poetic skills.



Arsinoe (Louisa Braden Johnson) flirts with the misanthrope, Alceste (John Patrick Hayden) in The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey's 2011 Main Stage production of *The Misanthrope*. Photo © Gerry Goodstein.

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Meeting the Common Core Standards

Recently, the New Jersey State Board of Education adopted the Common Core Standards, joining many other states that are attempting to create a more cohesive framework for K-12 education nationwide. We were delighted to see that, among other things, the Common Core explicitly specifies that Shakespeare is an indispensable component of English Language Arts curricula. The reading standards' Note on Range and Content of Student Reading is particularly applicable to our own educational mission:

“To build a foundation for college and career readiness, students must read widely and deeply from among a broad range of high-quality, increasingly challenging literary and informational texts. Through extensive reading of stories, dramas, poems, and myths from diverse cultures and different time periods, students gain literary and cultural knowledge as well as familiarity with various text structures and elements.”

Each year, The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey produces exciting stage productions of several classic texts “from diverse cultures and different time periods,” each of which presents students with the opportunity to experience and negotiate rich and challenging text through reading, writing, speaking and listening.

The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey remains committed to supporting teachers as they transition to these new standards. Viewing a performance at The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey, participating in the post-performance discussion, and completing activities in this study guide can serve as a powerful springboard for higher-order thinking. On these pages you will find some suggestions for ways to align your study of our production to each standard. Given the clarity of these standards, many will likely be self-evident, but we invite you to contact us for further help.

ELA ANCHOR STANDARDS: READING

STANDARD 1: Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

STANDARD 2: Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

STANDARD 3: Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

STANDARD 4: 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.

STANDARD 5: Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text relate to each other and the whole.

STANDARD 6: Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

STANDARD 7: Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words. *Analyze how visual and multimedia elements contribute to the stage performance of the text; compare and contrast the printed and staged version.*

STANDARD 8: Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the variety of reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.

STANDARD 9: Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take. *Compare and contrast the playtext with another text adapted from it or based upon it; compare and contrast the playtext's fictional portrayal of a past time/place with historical accounts of the same period.*

STANDARD 10: Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

ELA ANCHOR STANDARDS: WRITING

STANDARD 1: Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

STANDARD 2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization and analysis of content.

STANDARD 3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences. *Write a new ending or sequel for the play; write letters in the voice/s of character/s from the play*

STANDARD 4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization and style are appropriate to task, purpose and audience. *Write a review of the performance which is geared to a certain audience (peers, younger students, etc.); create teaching materials which can be used by future classes (summaries, character webs, etc.)*

STANDARD 5: Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach. *Create and workshop poems using vocabulary and/or themes drawn from the playtext*

STANDARD 6: Use technology, including the internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others. *Create a webinar on the playtext for younger students at the local middle or elementary school; design a website to collect student reflection and analysis of the play.*

STANDARD 7: Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation. *Research the production history or the historical circumstances of the play.*

STANDARD 8: Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism. *Use the sources cited in the study guide to write new explanatory or narrative text.*

STANDARD 9: Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

STANDARD 10: Write routinely over extended time frames and shorter time frames for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

ELA ANCHOR STANDARDS: SPEAKING AND LISTENING

STANDARD 1: 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. *Participate in a postshow discussion; stage a classroom debate between the characters of the play.*

STANDARD 2: Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally. *View, compare, and contrast stage and film versions of the playtext.*

STANDARD 3: Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.

STANDARD 4: Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

STANDARD 5: Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.

STANDARD 6: Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

ELA ANCHOR STANDARDS: LANGUAGE

STANDARD 1: Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking .

STANDARD 2: Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation and spelling when writing.

STANDARD 3: Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

STANDARD 4: 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.

STANDARD 5: Demonstrate understanding of word relationships and nuances in word meanings.

STANDARD 6: Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

About The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey

The acclaimed Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey (formerly called “New Jersey Shakespeare Festival”) is one of the leading Shakespeare theatres in the nation. Serving nearly 100,000 adults and children annually, it is New Jersey’s only professional theatre company dedicated to Shakespeare’s canon and other classic masterworks. Through 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, The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey marks its 49th season in 2011.



In addition to producing and presenting classic theatre, the Theatre’s mission places an equal focus on education— both for young artists and audiences of all ages. The Theatre nurtures emerging new talent for the American stage and cultivates future audiences by providing extensive student outreach opportunities. Through our work, we endeavor to promote literacy, civilization, community, cultural awareness, the theatrical tradition, and a more enlightened view of the world in which we live and the people with whom we share it.

The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey is one of 20 professional theatres in the state of New Jersey. The company’s dedication to the classics and commitment to excellence sets critical standards for the field. Nationwide, the Theatre has emerged as one of the most exciting “new” theatres under the leadership of Artistic Director Bonnie J. Monte 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 Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey is a member of ArtPride NJ, The Shakespeare Theatre Association, Theatre Communications Group, and is a founding member of the New Jersey Theatre Alliance.



Acaste (Roger Casey) and Clitandre (Matt Bradford Sullivan) compete for the romantic attentions of Célimène in The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey’s 2011 Main Stage production of *The Misanthrope*. Photo © Gerry Goodstein.

Other Opportunities for Students... and Teachers

SHAKESPEARE LIVE! EDUCATIONAL TOURING COMPANY

Shakespeare LIVE! is the educational touring company of The Shakespeare Theatre. This dynamic troupe of actors brings exciting, artistically-exceptional abridged productions of Shakespeare's plays and other world classics directly into schools each spring.

THE JUNIOR AND SENIOR CORPS

Two- and three-week summer acting intensives, geared for students in grades 6 through 12, these programs offer professional-caliber instruction and performance opportunities for young people who have developed a serious interest in theatre. Admission to this program is through audition and/or interview.

SUMMER PROFESSIONAL TRAINING PROGRAM

For graduating high school seniors and university students, the 11-week Summer Professional Training Program offers acting apprenticeships and professional internships, providing academic training and hands-on experience in acting, technical, artistic and arts management areas.

SHAKEFEST: SUMMER SHAKESPEARE INSTITUTE FOR TEACHERS

Designed for elementary and secondary teachers of Shakespeare, *ShakeFest* is an weeklong professional development intensive filled with myriad practical ways to conquer "ShakesFear" and excite students about the Bard. In hands-on sessions, experienced teaching artists model active and exciting performance-oriented techniques to get students on their feet and "speaking the speech."

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 classes the opportunity to spend a day at the Theatre experiencing Shakespeare together as both actors and audience. The *Shakespeare: NJ* Festival celebrates the power of performance as a teaching tool on a statewide scale.

PAGES TO PLAYERS: IN-SCHOOL RESIDENCIES

Pages to Players places the Theatre's skilled teaching artists in an English classroom for an extended period, using the performance-based study of Shakespeare to develop students' skills in reading comprehension, vocabulary and critical thinking while also evoking collaboration, self-confidence and creativity.

For more information about these and other educational programs
at The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey,
log onto our website,
www.ShakespeareNJ.org
or call **(973) 408-3278**

The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey is an independent, professional theatre located on the Drew University campus.

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