



# *A CHRISTMAS STORY: THE PLAY* PLAY GUIDE



Your education guide to  
understanding the show



## WELCOME TO PITTSBURGH PUBLIC THEATER!

Did you know that The Public first opened in September 1975? We are celebrating our 50th season this year! We have not always been at this location. The Public Theater spent 24 years on the North Side (in what is now the New Hazlett Theater) before moving to its current home — the O'Reilly Theater — in the heart of downtown Pittsburgh's Cultural District. The new performance space, which was built by the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust, opened with the world premiere of August Wilson's *King Hedley II* in December 1999. The ground on which we currently stand, at the confluence of the Allegheny, Monongahela, and Ohio Rivers, is home to the Seneca People. More information about our land acknowledgement and why it's important to honor those who came before us can be found here: [PPT.org/Mission](https://pittsburghpublictheater.org/Mission)

The mission of Pittsburgh Public Theater is to provide artistically diverse theatrical experiences of the highest quality. We also strive to challenge and entertain our audiences through unique and captivating storytelling. We look forward to continuing to expand and diversify our audience and enrich our Pittsburgh community and beyond. Visit our website to learn more: [PPT.org](https://pittsburghpublictheater.org)

Our theater is a thrust stage, which means the audience sits on three sides of the stage. This creates a really fun and inclusive environment to experience our shows. In fact, because of this design, there isn't a bad seat in the house!

So, whether it's your first time joining us, or you have visited many times, thank you for being here. We hope you have a wonderful time!



# THEATER ETIQUETTE

Attending a student matinee at the Pittsburgh Public Theater is an exciting event. Everyone in the audience has been looking forward to seeing the performance just as much as you have, so it's very important to remember the rules of theater etiquette. Live theater, or theater seen in person, is much different from going to the movies or streaming a show at home. The one big difference is that the actors are performing for you live onstage, and they can see and hear what goes on in the audience just as you can see and hear them. Because of that, the way people behave at a play is different from when they're at the movies or at home. Here are some things to keep in mind to guarantee that everyone has a fun, safe, and enjoyable time.

- Please be on time. Do your best to arrive on time and with enough wiggle room to use the restroom before the show starts.
- Stay with your group and wait to be seated - we want to make sure everyone is in the right place.
- All cellphones and electronics must be turned off or silenced before the show starts. We will usually make an announcement before the show as a reminder. The light and motion of these devices can be distracting to the audience and performers so refrain from texting as well. If your phone rings during the performance, turn it off and don't answer. Allow yourself to fully experience the performance without any distractions.
- Be polite, attentive, and respectful. Our Student Matinee audience includes teachers and students from all areas of the city and disciplines of study. Remember, your behavior affects the experience for the entire audience as well as the actors.
- Be mindful of side conversations: don't talk during the performance, as this can disturb the audience and performers.

- However, don't be afraid to react appropriately to the performance: laugh when something is funny, cry when it's sad, or gasp if it's shocking. This is what makes live theater so much fun!
- Use the restroom before the show, after the show, or at intermission. If you get out of your seat during the performance, it is distracting to the students around you. If you need to use the restroom during the performance, please do your best to wait and exit during a break, such as between musical pieces or scene changes.
- Please keep entrance aisles clear for the performers and crew.
- Don't chew gum, drink beverages, or eat during the performance.
- Stay for the curtain call! Not everyone stays to watch movie credits roll, but in theater, applauding for the actors is a way you can show them how much you enjoyed their performance.

## Additional Tips for Educators

- Review theater etiquette with your students and chaperones and set definite guidelines before attending any performance.
- Make sure that your chaperone to student ratio makes it possible for you to enforce your instructions and that your chaperones know what is expected of them.
- Let your students know that improper behavior will not be tolerated and follow through.
- If the show is performed with an intermission, it will generally be just long enough for the audience to use the facilities and stretch their legs.
- We do not serve concessions during student matinees.



**OUR MAIN ENTRANCE!**

## STUDENTS IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Each year a handful of talented student actors from across Pittsburgh take the O'Reilly Theater stage to perform alongside some of our region's best adult actors. From learning lines and trying on costumes to performing in front of thousands of audience members, these young actors have an excellent range of reflections and advice.

### What was your favorite part of being in *A Christmas Story*?

- My favorite part was the people, especially the crew. I loved the crew so much. They are just amazing--super nice and respectful and sometimes they give you food. I also liked covering my face with oatmeal because I am not allowed to do that. And then I'd run off stage and the crew would have wipe me down with all of the crusty oatmeal and throw me into my snow suit. *Will Chambers (2022)*
- I have a lot of things that I like about being a part of *A Christmas Story*. I would say that my favorite part of being in *A Christmas Story* is being able to spend and share the holiday season with an amazing cast and crew. I feel like I have built a huge family and created everlasting memories. *Eamonn McElfresh (2022-2024)*
- My favorite part of *A Christmas Story* was that it was so much fun to do! Every performance was different and exciting. The show was full of joy and I loved being apart of it. *Zora Rose (2022, 2023)*
- Working with the amazing actors! *Neal Wadhwa (2023, 2024)*

### What is the hardest part about acting?

- The hardest part is memorizing lines. When you memorize lines, you basically have to run it over and over and over and there is no other good way to do it. *Will Chambers (2022)*
- I think the hardest part about acting is making sure your choices are truthful and organic. *Zora Rose (2022, 2023)*
- Taking notes, memorizing lines and blocking but once you get it, it's such a good feeling and the hard work pays off. *Neal Wadhwa (2023, 2024)*





### How has your experience of the show changed over the years?

- One way my experience has changed over the years of being in the show is that I have truly matured with the cast. I was lucky and thrilled to be in the original production, and having grown up with it I now have a new view and opinion on a lot of the jokes within the show and it's really exciting to be able to experience that again this year. *Eamonn McElfresh (2022-2024)*

### If you could give a piece of advice to a new cast member, what would it be?

- Have fun, and don't be afraid to try new things. I know that's what everyone says, but honestly, try it! *Will Chambers (2022)*
- If I were to give a new cast member advice, I would tell them to take risks and make big choices. I would say not to be scared of someone not liking an acting choice and just go for it. *Zora Rose (2022, 2023)*
- Just have fun—I told that to my sister. *Neal Wadhwa (2023, 2024)*

### What is your favorite holiday tradition?

- We go to Cape Cod and see my mom's family every year for Christmas and we always make sugar cookies which are delicious. *Will Chambers (2022)*
- Spending time with my family, making gifts and sending cards, going to church, making cookies and decorating the tree. *Neal Wadhwa (2023, 2024)*

Many of the young actors in the cast of *A Christmas Story* have also participated in our annual Shakespeare Monologue and Scene competition—which just celebrated its 30th anniversary!

### What is different about performing Shakespeare compared to modern plays?

- So I like Shakespeare, it's amazing. You can do a lot of different things. Last year I did a comedy, before that I did a ragey war speech from Henry V, and I did the speech after Julius Caesar dies. I get to be crazy and I am good at that. You have to learn what the words mean first and I check in with other people to make sure I know what's going on. Modern plays you don't have to decode it first which is nice, but also less fun. I like a bit of a challenge. *Will Chambers (2022)*

### (continued)

- Working with Shakespeare takes more time interpreting the sub-text of the pieces. It's easier to figure out the sub-text in modern plays. *Zora Rose (2022, 2023)*

### What is your favorite Shakespeare Contest memory?

- The second time I did the competition I did Mark Antony's speech from *Julius Caesar* where he lets you know he is going to get revenge on the senators, and once I finished, the judges were like "wow". And that was so cool. *Will Chambers (2022)*
- My favorite Shakespeare contest memory is from 2023, I did Bottom's monologue from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and just hearing the crowd laugh and applaud at the end was so rewarding and being able to do it in the beautiful O'Reilly theater was just amazing. *Eamonn McElfresh (2022-2024)*
- My favorite memory of participating in the Shakespeare Contest is the memory of the winning first place in 4th grade. I felt super happy and excited. I will not forget that, because after that moment, I believed I could act! *Zora Rose (2022, 2023)*



**Previous page and above:** The cast of *A Christmas Story: The Play* in 2023 at Pittsburgh Public Theater. Photos by Michael Henninger.

# ABOUT THE PLAY

## SYNOPSIS

Based on the movie of the same name, a young boy, Ralphie Parker, attempts to convince his parents, his teacher, and Santa that a Red Ryder B.B. gun is the perfect Christmas gift. We are guided through the memories by Ralphie's adult self, as a satirical tale of a middle-class family negotiating the challenges of Christmas unfolds.

## SETTING

Hohman, Indiana. Christmas time both past and present.

## CHARACTERS

**Ralph Parker:** A storyteller

**Ralphie Parker:** Ralph at 9 years old

**Randy Parker:** His little brother

**Mother:** His mother

**The Old Man:** His father

**Miss Shields:** His teacher

**Flick:** His friend and classmate

**Schwartz:** His friend and classmate

**Esther Jane Alberry:** A classmate

**Helen Weathers:** A classmate

**Scut Farkas:** A bully

[Find the cast and other info about the production in the digital program.](#)

## CONTENT RATING

This show is **rated PG** and is suitable for most audiences with guidance urged for pre-teens.

Details from the play are below (*\*warning, may contain spoilers*):

- **Implied profanity:** A character uses gibberish words in place of explicit language
- **Violence:** Brief and mild violence on stage and themes of bullying
- **Weapons:** Reference to and use of a toy gun
- **Romance:** Brief romantic innuendo





**A MAJOR AWARD!****A HISTORY OF *A CHRISTMAS STORY***

c 1950's: Radio performer Jean Shepard begins sharing humorous stories inspired by his childhood in Hammond, Indiana.

1964: At the encouragement of poet Shel Silverstein, Shepard begins transcribing his stories and publishing them in magazines.

1966: Shepard publishes a collection of his short stories titled *In God We Trust: All Others Pay Cash*.

1971: Shepard publishes a second collection titled, *Wanda Hickey's Night of Golden Memories and Other Disasters*.

1976: *The Phantom of the Open Hearth*, marks the first film appearance of the fictionalized Parker Family, as a made for TV movie.

1983: *A Christmas Story* the movie premieres. Jean Shepherd, the original author, features as the voice of adult Ralphie narrating the story.

2000: The stage adaptation *A Christmas Story: The Play* by Philip Grecian premieres.

2012: A musical version, *A Christmas Story: The Musical*, premieres on Broadway.

2022: *A Christmas Story: The Play*, opens for the first time at Pittsburgh Public Theater. The show would go on also be produced in December, 2023.

2024: *A Christmas Story: The Play* opens at Pittsburgh Public Theater, directed by Michael Berresse.

Cover of *In God we Trust: All Others Pay Cash*



A Christmas Story movie poster



A Christmas Story at Pittsburgh Public Theater  
December 2022  
Photo by Michael Henninger



# REMEMBER WHEN: THE GENRE OF MEMORY PLAYS

*"I put up my tree last week. Had to assemble it first. Then I threw an artificial Yule log on the propane-augmented fire and began to reminisce. The holidays tend to do that. I found myself remembering another Christmas in another time ... another place."*

*\*RECORD SCRATCH\* \*FREEZE FRAME\* Yep, that's me... I bet you're wondering how I got here...*

A memory play is a play in where the lead character narrates the events of the story, which they are recalling from memory. The term was originally coined by playwright Tennessee Williams when he described his 1944 play *The Glass Menagerie*. In the **stage directions**, or the description of setting provided by the playwright, Williams says:

*"The scene is memory and is therefore non-realistic. Memory takes a lot of poetic license. It omits some details; others are exaggerated, according to the emotional value of the articles it touches, for memory is seated predominantly in the heart."*

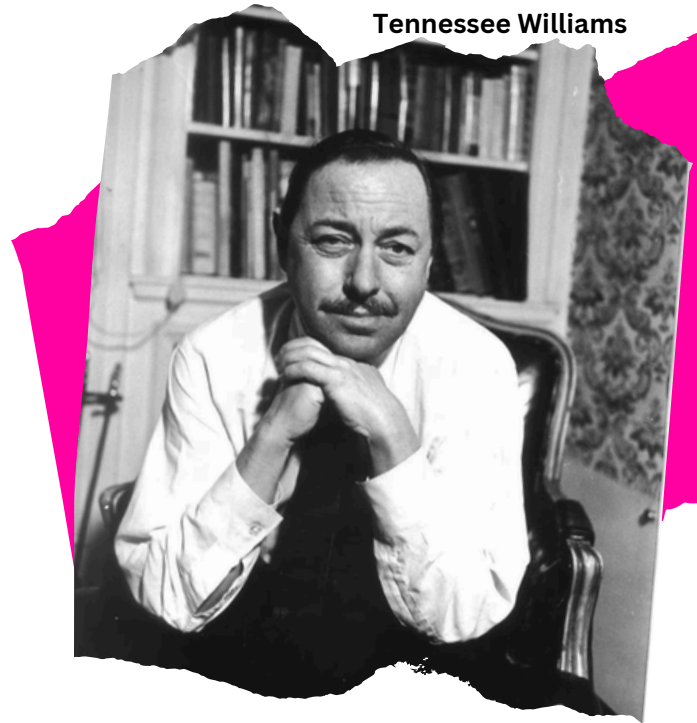
In *A Christmas Story* we relive all of the events from Ralphie's perspective, as an adult remembering his childhood. He retells the story of his childhood Christmases with a lot of **nostalgia**. Nostalgia describes a longing for the past that includes good or formative memories.



Sebastian Madoni portraying young Ralphie in 2023 at Pittsburgh Public Theater.

Photo by Michael Henninger  
edu@PPT.org

Tennessee Williams



There are many examples of memory stories in film, television, and books. Some examples include the films: *The Emperor's New Groove*, and *Ratatouille*; the books *The Catcher in the Rye*, *13 Reasons Why*, and *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

When retelling an event of the past, we naturally focus on the most emotional details. Sometimes that leads us to exaggerate them, or misremember them.

## Memory Genre Elements

NARRATION

COMING OF AGE

NOSTALGIA

EXAGGERATION

HEIGHTENED REALITY



## ADAPTING MEMORY

*"Never let the truth get in the way of a good story."*

-Mark Twain

Nostalgia can sometimes cloud our memory, and confuse details, or remember things better or worse than they were. Bob Clark, the director of the 1983 movie adaptation of *A Christmas Story*, stated that both he and the original author Jean Shepherd wished for the film to be seen as "amorphously late-'30s, early-'40s".

The story is never set in a specific year. If you look closely at the details in the film, many props and pop culture references are from different years, or sometimes decades! Some examples include:

- The two songs by Bing Crosby and the Andrews Sisters used in the film, "Jingle Bells" and "Santa Claus Is Comin' To Town" were recorded in **1943**, but the Crosby version of "It's Beginning To Look A Lot Like Christmas" is from **1951**.
- *Look* magazine that Ralphie hides the Red Ryder ad in, is the December **1937** cover with Shirley Temple and Santa.
- Ralphie's Little Orphan Annie Secret Society Decoder Pin bears the date **1940** (and is the real-life decoder pin released to society members that year, though by that time Ovaltine had ceased its sponsorship and Quaker was the primary sponsor of the series)
- the parade in front of Higbee's features characters from MGM's version of *The Wizard of Oz*, which was released in **1939**.
- The "Old Man's" treasured Oldsmobile 6 is a **1937** Oldsmobile F-Series Touring Sedan.



# ACTIVITIES

## Create your own: Decoder Wheel

*For ages 7+*

Ready to try your own hand at a spy decoder? Print out the following page, grab a friend and see if you can crack the code. Happy sleuthing!

## MATERIALS

Cardstock

Scissors

Brad

Pen

Markers/crayons (optional)



Brad



## LEARN MORE ABOUT DECODERS

A secret decoder is a device that allows one to decode or encrypt a message by working in the opposite direction.

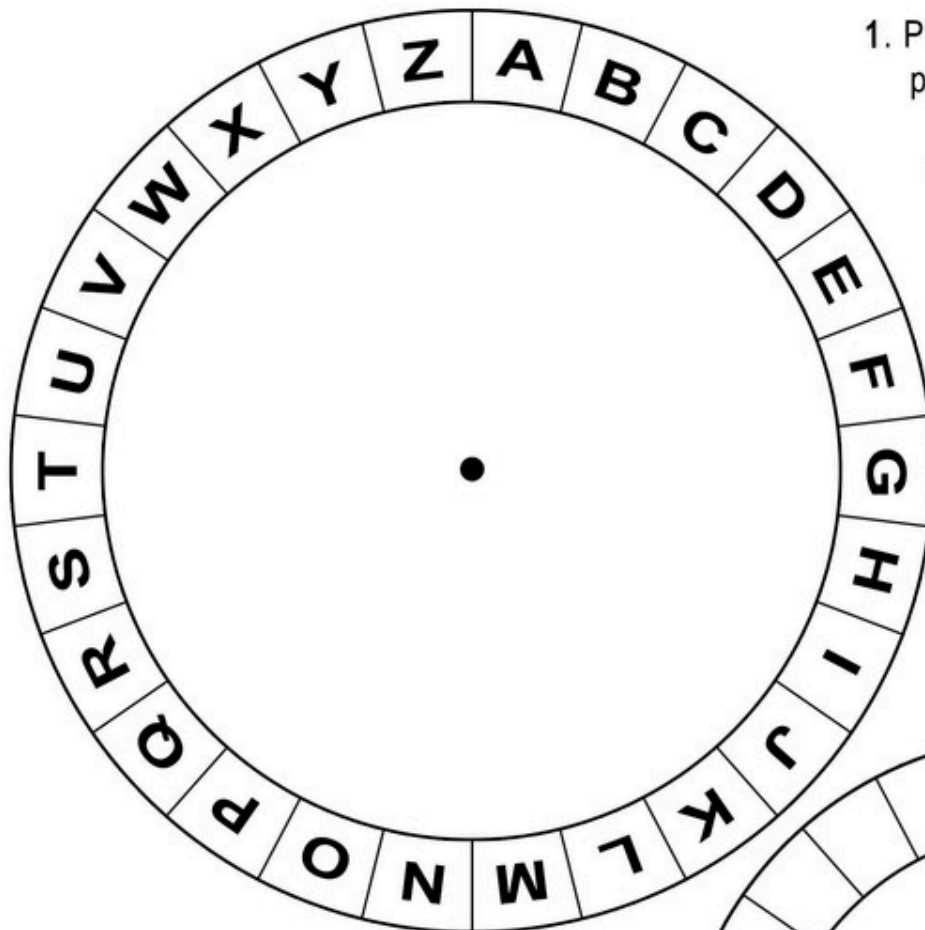
As inexpensive toys, secret decoders have often been used as promotional items by retailers, as well as radio and television programs, from the 1930s through to the current day. Decoders, whether badges, rings, or pins, are an entertaining way for children to tap into a common fascination with encryption, ciphers, and secret codes, and are used to send hidden messages back and forth to one another.



# ACTIVITIES

## Decoder Wheel Activity: Custom Code Version

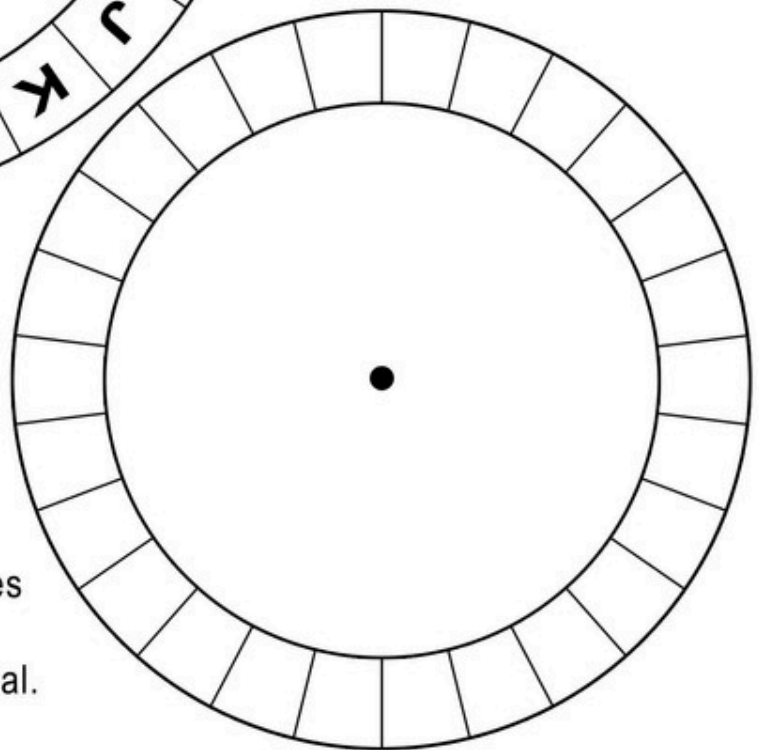
Create and decipher secret codes with your friends!



1. Print this page on heavy stock paper (& another for a friend)!
2. Create matching symbols or letters in the blanks of each of your small wheels.
3. Cut out the two circles.
4. Center the small circle on top of the larger circle & secure through the center with a paper fastener or small nut & bolt.

## How it Works

Select a key combination by lining up any letter on the larger dial with a symbol of your choice on the inner dial. Tell your friend which two you lined up & once their dial is set to match you can write & decipher messages by using the symbols on the inner dial in place of the real letters on the outer dial. (more detailed instructions in the post)



# ACTIVITIES

## Give acting a try!

For ages 9+

Pick one of the scenes on the following pages.

First, read through the scene once and see if you can discover answers to the following questions.

### An Actor's Checklist:

- **Who:** Who is a part of this scene and what is their relationship with each other?
  - Friends? Enemies? Strangers?
- **What:** What is happening in the scene?
  - What is the conflict?
- **When:** When does this scene take place?
  - Time of day? Season?
- **Where:** Where does the scene take place?
  - Inside? Outside? In a crowd? Part of a private conversation?
- **Why:** Why is this scene happening?
  - Does somebody want or need something?
- **How:** How will the characters get what they want or need?
  - And what are they doing in this scene to get what they want? Are they successful?

Were there any context clues or moments in the script that led you to your answers?

Take your acting to the next level! Sign up for our Shakespeare Monologue and Scene Contest today:  
[PPT.org/Shakespeare](https://PPT.org/Shakespeare)



Molly Frontz in the 2024 Shakespeare Contest Final  
Photo by: Michael Henninger





# A CHRISTMAS STORY: THE PLAY

By: Philip Grecian



## Scene option #1

### Characters:

**Mother:** *The stable, subtle voice of reason in the family. Kind, resourceful and endlessly patient, Mother is also a secret font of knowledge who never stops working. Agreeable but no pushover.*

**Ester Jane:** *One of Ralphie's classmates. Sweet, friendly and a little flirtatious with Ralphie, whom she has a crush on.*

**Synopsis:** *Ralphie just got in a fight with the school bully and lost his glasses. Esther Jane brings the glasses to his house.*

*(We are in the home of Mother and Ralphie. There is a knock at the door. MOTHER crosses and opens it. It is ESTHER JANE.)*

**ESTHER JANE.** Mrs. Parker, may I come in?

**MOTHER.** We're getting ready for dinner, Esther Jane, maybe you could come b ...

**ESTHER JANE.** It'll just take a minute.

**MOTHER.** Of course. Come in.

**ESTHER JANE** *(entering, she holds out RALPHIE's glasses).* I thought Ralph might need these. He dropped them when he ... when they were ...

**MOTHER** *(accepting glasses).* Thank you, Esther Jane. Would you like to speak to him? He ...

**ESTHER JANE.** No, that's all right. Oh, did you see the spider he gave me? He drew my name for the gift exchange.

**MOTHER.** It's a very nice spider.

**ESTHER JANE.** Usually, I don't like spiders. *(Pause.)* Well, I'd better go. Merry Christmas, Mrs. Parker!

## Scene option #2

### Characters:

**Flick:** One of Ralphie's classmates and best buddies. Good-natured, curious and game for anything, Flick is the class guinea pig in the infamous "flag-pole licking" experiment. Flick is also the unfortunate target of the bulk of Scut Farkas' bullying.

**Schwartz:** One of Ralphie's classmates and best buddies. A gutsy, unapologetic tomboy, Schwartz is a generation ahead of her time. Confident, independent and mischievous.

**Ester Jane:** One of Ralphie's classmates. Sweet, friendly and a little flirtatious with Ralphie, whom she has a crush on.

**Helen:** One of Ralphie's classmates. Exceptionally intelligent and a bit of a know-it-all, Helen is also light years ahead of her classmates (and her teacher) in her world view.

**Ralphie:** Bright, energetic and clever, Ralphie is an all-around good kid with an exceptionally vivid imagination. This Christmas, he is consumed with the desire for a Red Ryder BB gun like the one his favorite comic book character has.

**Synopsis:** This scene takes place in Ralphie's imagination as he dreams about saving the day. It is over the top and greatly exaggerated.

(The fantasy comes to life. The air is torn with the scream of a baboon. Kookaburras call to one another in the treetops. FLICK, SCHWARTZ, ESTHER JANE and HELEN enter through a fringe of jungle plants. ALL are dressed in tropical gear.)

**ESTHER JANE.** We should have found the trading post by now.

**SCHWARTZ.** I'm afraid we're lost, Esther Jane. (Adventure movie musical sting.)

**HELEN.** All the other classes got to go to the park or the steel mill on their field trips ... but they send our class to the swamps.

**FLICK.** The Indiana swamps are unforgiving.

**SCHWARTZ.** Where's Miss Shields?

**FLICK.** Gator got her. About a mile back.

**SCHWARTZ.** Oh, man!

**FLICK.** Indiana gators are unforgiving.

**ESTHER JANE** (hysterical). We'll never get out alive! We're going to die!

**RALPHIE** (entering on a musical cue). I wouldn't count on that if I was you, little missy. (He wears an Australian bush hat, a bush jacket and knee-high boots)

**HELEN.** It's Ralphie Parker, Soldier of Fortune!

**ESTHER JANE.** Save us, Ralphie!

**RALPHIE.** Nothin' to it, Esther Jane ... thanks t'my legendary official Red Ryder carbine action 200-shot Range Model air rifle with a compass and this thing which tells time built right into the stock. Look out! (Musical sting. He cocks and fires. A python drops out of the trees. SCHWARTZ runs to pick it up.)

**ESTHER JANE.** You saved my life!

**SCHWARTZ.** Got him right between the eyes!

**FLICK.** Good thing, too; Indiana pythons are unforgiving.

**RALPHIE.** We'd best get out of here before the rest of the herd shows up.





# ACTIVITIES

## COLLABORATIVE GAMES

In honor of the winter setting of this story, what's more fun than games where you have to FREEZE! Work on self expression and self control by diving into the following activities:

### Tableaus and Frozen Storytelling

**What is a tableau?** A tableau is a freeze-frame or snapshot of a scene or moment in a story. Instead of actors moving, they must freeze in specific poses together that depict what is happening in that specific moment.

**Skills used:** teamwork, collaboration, focus, patience, creative expression, control, physical expression, group work

**Tip:** In order for a tableau to be successful, instruct students first on what makes an exciting and engaging tableau. Then teach students how to use their bodies and faces to express thoughts, feelings, location, season, etc...

### What makes a frozen tableau engaging?

- Remain still/frozen (breathing and blinking are allowed)
- Remain silent
- Stay focused and committed
- Choose poses that are at different levels
- Choose poses that contain energy and expression
- Choose poses that are relevant to the story and are interesting

Let's Get Started! Practice silent expression with a game of:

### EMOTIONAL STATUES (Best suited for ages 6+)

#### Instructions:

- Have the class either stand in a circle, or stand as a group facing you.
- This is a silent activity that each student will be doing independently (they will be broken into teams later for Tableaus).
- Inform your students that you will shout out a random word, activity, or feeling. By the time you say "3-2-1 FREEZE" students must get into a frozen pose they think represents that word, activity, or feeling.
  - Examples of words/activities/feelings to use:
    - Happy, sad, jealous, scared, surprised, angry, tired, embarrassed
    - Abstract ideas: the color orange, wind, rain
    - A CHRISTMAS STORY Themed: You just opened a present you love, you just opened a present you do not like, you just got your tongue stuck to a frozen light pole, your teacher has given you a huge assignment over break, you are being chased by the bumpus hounds, you just put a bar of soap in your mouth, etc.



### Tips for Emotional Statues

- Remind students to use their entire body for this game, and to keep in mind the above tips for making an engaging statue (levels, expression, interesting choices, etc.)
- Allow them to stay frozen in that pose for a moment. Use the word "RELAX" to unfreeze them and have them return to their normal stance.
- If your space does not allow for all students to go at one time, you can break it up into groups and have an "audience" observe the "performers" then flip-flop so everyone gets a chance to participate

# ACTIVITIES

## COLLABORATIVE GAMES

### (continued) Tableau: Frozen Story-telling

Once you and your students have explored creative expression through **EMOTIONAL STATUES** now you are ready to move onto **TABLEAUS**

#### Instructions:

- Separate your class into small groups.
  - Best results occur if groups are around 6-8 people.
- Remind the class about the elements that make an engaging tableau (list can found on previous page).
- Tell them that each group will be secretly assigned a theme. They must keep these themes a secret so that at the end of the activity the other groups can try to guess what they were assigned.
- Instruct the groups that they will have 5 minutes to work together to create a frozen tableau that represents their specific moment.
  - If needed, talk through best practices of working as a team and how everyone's idea might not be chosen. Discuss how teamwork is super important as there will only be 5 minutes to come up with their tableau.
- Then go around and secretly assign each group a theme.
  - Theme ideas: Riding a roller-coaster, attending a wedding, yoga class, trick-or-treating, shopping at a grocery store
    - Ready for Level 2?
      - Have students pick their own theme.
    - Ready for Level 3?
      - After seeing the performance of A CHRISTMAS STORY: THE PLAY, have students recreate moments from the show.
- Once all groups have their assigned theme, start the clock!
- Once time is up, select one group to go first. Have the students freeze in their tableau while the other students observe
  - Have the other groups see if they can guess what moment they are portraying and what role each of them are playing in the moment.



#### Tips:

- Students do not need to portray humans in their tableaux. Sometimes objects are needed to be portrayed to help tell the story. Encourage their creativity and thinking outside the box
- This activity is wonderful to hold a 'lessons learned' discussion afterwards. Here are possible post-activity questions to ask your class:
  - What do you think makes a good team?
  - What skills did you need to be successful at this activity?
  - Are there any lessons learned or things that you would do differently next time?

**Skills Used:** Listening skills, teamwork, collaboration, creative expression, comprehension, critical thinking, problem solving, respect, acceptance, tolerance, movement, discipline, empathy



# ACTIVITIES

## CREATIVE WRITING

*For ages 6+*

- ✦ What is the name of your holiday?
- ✦ What date do we celebrate your holiday?
- ✦ What in particular does your holiday celebrate?
- ✦ What traditions or festivities do people do during this holiday?
- ✦ Are there any rules during your holiday?
- ✦ Are there any special foods prepared during your holiday?
- ✦ Are there any special decorations used to celebrate your holiday?
- ✦ Are there any particular outfits that are worn during your holiday?
- ✦ Draw a picture that represents your holiday.



# ACTIVITIES

## INTERVIEW SKILLS

Interview a grownup about their holiday traditions

What is one of your favorite holiday memories?

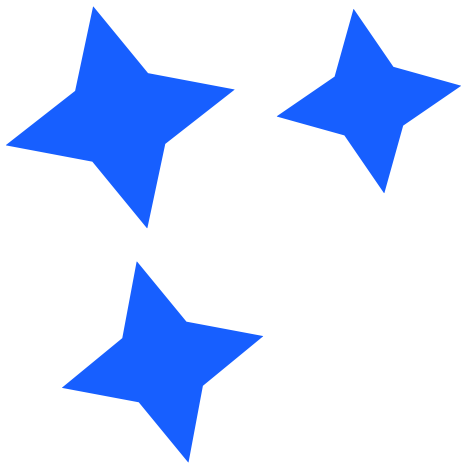
What are some of your favorite things to eat during the holidays?

Do you have a favorite holiday?

How have holiday traditions changed since you were my age?

Do you have any favorite holiday traditions?

What is one things you are thankful for this year?



# A CHRISTMAS STORY: THE PLAY - GLOSSARY

**Adriana Cailotti:** was an American actress and singer and was the voice of the title character of the first Walt Disney animated feature, Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs (1937), for which she was named a Disney Legend in 1994, making her the first female voice-over artist to achieve this.

**Airlock:** a compartment with controlled pressure and parallel sets of doors, to permit movement between areas at different pressures.

**Allowance:** to give (someone) a sum of money regularly as an allowance.

**American Legion halls:** The American Legion was chartered by Congress in 1919 as a patriotic veterans organization that focused on service to veterans, servicemembers and communities. A legion hall is a building associated with the American Legion.

**A&P:** or the Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Company, was a chain of grocery stores that operated in the United States and Canada from 1859 to 2015. A&P was the largest grocery retailer in the United States from 1915 to 1975, and the largest retailer of any kind in the country until 1965.

**Armaments:** military weapons and equipment.

**Balsams:** a small to medium-sized evergreen tree native to North America that is a popular Christmas tree.

**Baste:** to pour juices or melted fat over (meat) during cooking in order to keep it moist.

**Befurred:** adorned with fur.

**Benrus:** an American watch brand that was founded in 1921 by the Lazrus brothers in New York City.

**Black Bart:** was an English-born American outlaw noted for the poetic messages he left behind after two of his robberies.

**Celluloid:** a type of plastic used to make many things, especially, in the past like photographic film.

**Clinker:** the stony residue from burned coal or from a furnace.

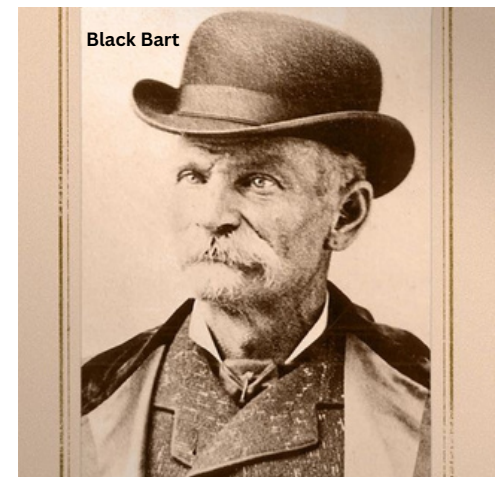
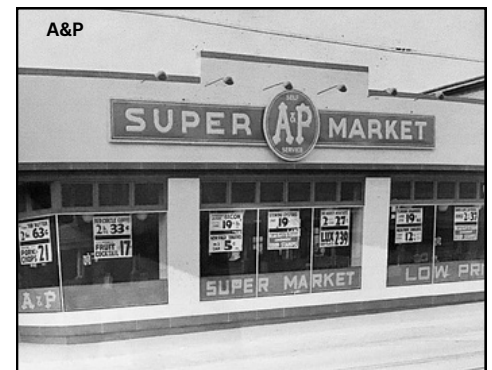
**Cloverleaf sight:** a hinged sight on a firearm that can be folded down or raised.

**Compass:** an instrument containing a magnetized pointer which shows the direction of magnetic north and bearings from it.

**Connoisseurs:** an expert judge in matters of taste.

**Conspiracy:** a secret plan by a group to do something unlawful or harmful.  
**Contrived:** created or arranged in a way that seems artificial and unrealistic.

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**Coup de grace:** an action or event that serves as the culmination of a bad or deteriorating situation.

**Daniel Boone:** was an early American frontiersman and legendary hero who helped blaze a trail through Cumberland Gap, a notch in the Appalachian Mountains near the juncture of Virginia, Tennessee, and Kentucky.

**Decoder pin:** a small metal device that allows users to decode secret messages or encrypt messages. The Orphan Annie decoder pin was a popular decoder pin that was part of the radio series Orphan Annie from 1931 to 1940.

**Defiant:** full of or showing a disposition to challenge, resist, or fight.

**Department store:** a retail establishment offering a wide range of consumer goods in different areas of the store, each area ("department") specializing in a product category.

**Desperado:** a bold or violent criminal; a bandit of the western U.S. in the 19th century.

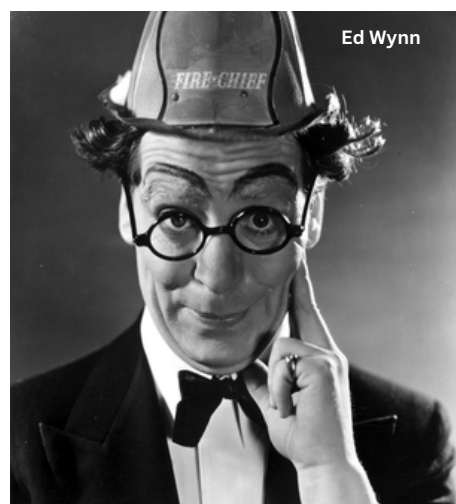
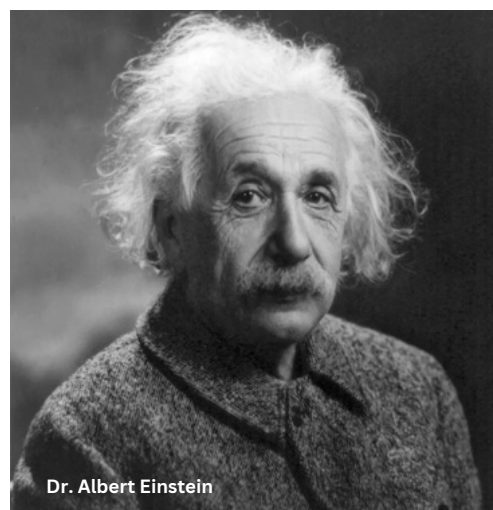
**Double dog dare:** An intensified form of a dare, frequently used after the dared person initially refuses.

**Dr. Einstein:** Albert Einstein was a German-born physicist who developed the special and general theories of relativity and won the Nobel Prize for Physics in 1921 for his explanation of the photoelectric effect.

**Ed Wynn:** American actor and comedian. He began his career in vaudeville in 1903 and was known for his Perfect Fool comedy character, his pioneering radio show of the 1930s, and his later career as a dramatic actor, which continued into the 1960s. His variety show (1949–1950), The Ed Wynn Show, won a Peabody Award and an Emmy Award.

**Etiquette:** the customary code of polite behavior in society or among members of a particular profession or group.

**Festering:** negative feeling or a problem becoming worse or more intense, especially through long-term neglect or indifference.



**Flit gun:** a hand-pumped insecticide sprayer used to dispense FLIT, a brand-name insecticide widely used against flies and mosquitoes between 1928 and the mid-1950s.

**Friction motor:** a simple mechanism that uses a flywheel to propel toys like cars, trucks, trains, and action figures.

**Fuse:** a safety device consisting of a strip of wire that melts and breaks an electric circuit if the current exceeds a safe level.

**Galoshes:** a waterproof overshoe, typically made of rubber.

**Gilbert chemistry set:** a set of equipment for children to learn chemistry through experiments. The A.C. Gilbert Company, founded by Albert Carlton Gilbert, a former Olympic pole vaulter, released their first chemistry set in 1923. The sets were marketed to boys and were designed to teach basic chemistry skills.

**Higbee's:** a department store chain in Ohio that was founded in 1860 and operated until 1992.

**Insensate:** completely lacking sense or reason; lacking sympathy or compassion; unfeeling.

**Invective:** abusive, or highly critical language.

**Inquisition:** a period of prolonged and intensive questioning or investigation.

**Juju baby, root beer barrel, and licorice pipe:** Old fashioned candy.

**Lake Michigan:** one of the five Great Lakes of North America. It is the second largest of the Great Lakes by volume.

**Lexicon:** the vocabulary of a person, language, or branch of knowledge.

**Lifebuoy:** a British brand of soap marketed by Unilever. Lifebuoy was originally, and for much of its history, a carbolic soap containing phenol (carbolic acid, a compound extracted from coal tar).

**Lincoln Logs:** a children's construction toy that consists of small, square-notched wooden logs that can be used to build model buildings and forts; The toy was invented by John Lloyd Wright, the son of architect Frank Lloyd Wright, around 1916. The toy is named after Abraham Lincoln, the U.S. president who once lived in a log cabin. Wright received a patent for Lincoln Logs in 1920 and the toy was first introduced in 1924. Lincoln Logs were inducted into the National Toy Hall of Fame in 1999.





**Lionel train set:** Lionel Trains is a model train company in New York City, founded and developed by Lionel Cowen in 1900. The company introduced the first train in 1901, known as The Electric Express. Lionel Cowen wasn't the first to manufacture toy trains, but his talents as an engineer and salesman soon put Lionel ahead of its competitors.



Lionel Train Set

**Little Orphan Annie:** is a character created by James Whitcomb Riley that represents the American spirit of resilience and hope in the face of hardship. The character is known for her plucky and optimistic demeanor. Her story also explores themes of poverty, family, and the power of imagination; The Little Orphan Annie radio show, transmitted secret code segments that usually previewed the upcoming episode.



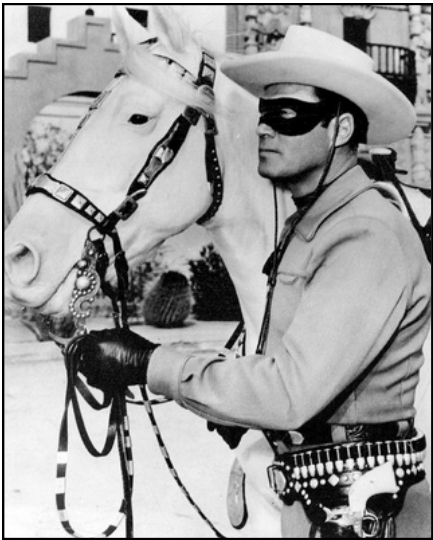
Little Orphan Annie Radio Show

**Lone Ranger:** is a fictional masked former Texas Ranger who fought outlaws in the American Old West with his Native American friend Tonto. The character has been called an enduring icon of American culture.

**Lug nuts:** a large rounded nut that fits over a heavy bolt, used especially to attach the wheel of a vehicle to its axle.

**Malevolent:** having or showing a wish to do evil to others.

**Michelson-Morley experiment:** The experiment was performed between April and July 1887 by American physicists Albert A. Michelson and Edward W. Morley at what is now Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio. The experiment compared the speed of light in perpendicular directions in an attempt to detect the relative motion of matter.



Lone Ranger

**Milling:** moving around in a confused mass.

**Monkey Ward catalogue:** Montgomery Ward was called “Monkey Wards” by some people because it supposedly once offered exotic monkeys in some of its stores and through its mail-order catalog. Founded in 1872, Montgomery Ward revolutionized retail sales at the turn of the century through its mail-order catalog, which was the only one of its kind back then.

**Mount Olympus:** In Greek mythology, Olympus is the home of the Greek gods; in A Christmas Story, Ralphie uses it to refer to Santa sitting up high.

**Mulled:** think about (a fact, proposal, or request) deeply and at length.  
Nuance: a subtle difference in or shade of meaning, expression, or sound.

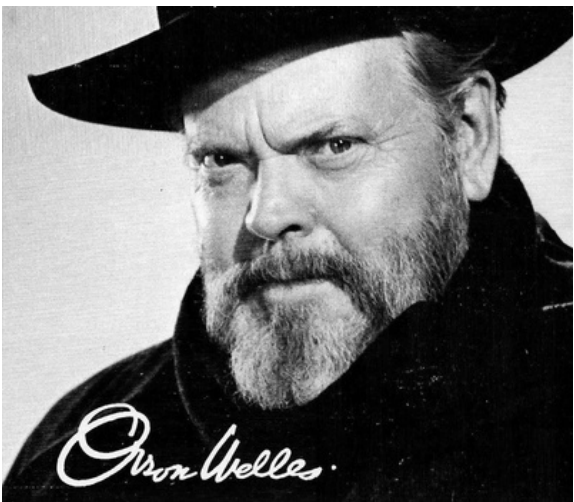


**Number three Erector set:** A. C. Gilbert conceived the Erector Set, an educational toy that encouraged kids to create their own miniature buildings; it introduced kids to engineering and the structural principles of modern skyscrapers.

**Oldsmobile:** a brand of American automobiles, produced for most of its existence by General Motors.

**Open Road for Boys:** a boys' magazine encouraging the outdoor life, was published from November 1919 to the 1950s.

**Orson Welles:** an American director, actor, writer, producer, and magician who is remembered for his innovative work in film, radio, and theater. He is considered to be among the greatest and most influential filmmakers of all time.



**Ovaltine:** is a brand of milk flavoring product made with malt extract, sugar, and whey. Some flavors also have cocoa. The US children's radio series Little Orphan Annie (1931–1940) was sponsored by Ovaltine. They had promotions in which listeners could save proofs-of-purchase from Ovaltine jars to obtain radio premiums, such as "secret decoder ring" badges, or pins that could be used to decode messages in the program.



**Palmolive:** an American multinational brand that grew from one product, Palmolive bar soap. Made of coconut, palm and olive oils, Palmolive bar soap was introduced in 1898. Originally, the bar soap floated like Procter & Gamble's Ivory bar soap. By the turn of the 20th century, Palmolive bar soap was the world's best-selling soap. The soap became very popular, due to an advertising campaign promoting it as the type of soap that would have been favored in ancient Egypt by the Pharaohs.

**Perfume atomizer:** small refillable bottles that offer a convenient solution for spraying perfume on the go.

**Pierre Andre:** was an announcer in the era of old-time radio.

**Piquant:** having a pleasantly sharp taste or appetizing flavor.

**Pulverized:** reduce to fine particles.

**Remorse:** deep regret or guilt for a wrong committed.

**Reveries:** a state of being pleasantly lost in one's thoughts; a daydream; a fanciful or impractical idea or theory.

**Scheming:** the activity or practice of making secret or underhanded plans.

Perfume Atomizer



**Shakespeare:** Full name, William Shakespeare, is an English playwright who wrote many famous plays and poems (sonnets) during the late 16th and early 17th centuries.

**Simoniz:** a brand of cleaning and protection products for vehicles, buildings, and other industries

**Sneevily, snively:** marked by sniveling, tearful, whiny, or weakly sentimental.

**Subconscious:** of or concerning the part of the mind of which one is not fully aware but which influences one's actions and feelings.

**Sundial:** an instrument showing the time by the shadow of a pointer cast by the sun on to a plate marked with the hours of the day.

**Terre Haute:** A city in Indiana

**The Principle of Relativity:** developed by Albert Einstein, essentially states that space and time are not absolute, but rather relative to the observer's frame of reference. Meaning how fast you are moving affects how you experience time and space. The laws of physics are the same for all observers regardless of their motion, as long as they are moving at a constant speed in a straight line; a key concept is that the speed of light is always the same for everyone, no matter how fast they are moving.

**Tin zeppelin:** is a toy that's made of tin and has a metal key that you wind up to make the propeller spin and the wheels move. Tin zeppelin toys were popular before World War II.

**Tinker Toys:** in 1913 or 1914, stonemason Charles Pajeau invented the Tinkertoy construction set after watching children play with sticks and spools.

**Trough:** a long, narrow open container for animals to eat or drink out of.

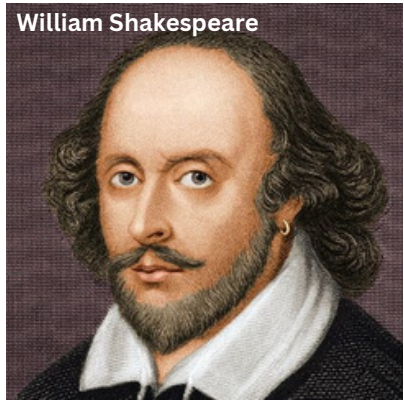
**Unbridled avarice:** an extreme and uncontrolled desire for wealth or possessions.

**Vamoose:** depart hurriedly.

**Varmints:** a troublesome wild animal; a troublesome and mischievous person, especially a child.

**Vigil:** a period of keeping awake during the time usually spent asleep, especially to keep watch or pray.

**Zenith:** the time at which something is most powerful or successful; or in astronomy, the point in the sky or celestial sphere directly above an observer.



# PENNSYLVANIA CORE STANDARDS

## English Language Arts: Grades 6-12

**CC.1.2.8.G:** Evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of using different mediums (e.g., print or digital text, video, multimedia) to present a particular topic or idea.

**CC.1.2.9-10.G:** Analyze various accounts of a subject told in different mediums (e.g., a person's life story in both print and multimedia), determining which details are emphasized in each account.

**CC.1.2.11-12.G:** Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.

**CC.1.3.8.A:** Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text.

**CC.1.3.9-10.A:** Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

**CC.1.3.11-12.A:** Determine and analyze the relationship between two or more themes or central ideas of a text including the development and interaction of the themes; provide an objective summary of the text.

**CC.1.3.8.C:** Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.

**CC.1.3.9-10.C:** Analyze how complex characters develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

**CC.1.3.11-12.C:** Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama.

**CC.1.3.8.G:** Analyze the extent to which a filmed or live production of a story or drama stays faithful to or departs from the text or script, evaluating the choices made by directors or actors.

**CC.1.3.9-10.G:** Analyze the representation of a subject or a key scene in two different artistic mediums, including what is emphasized or absent in each treatment.

**CC.1.3.11-12.G:** Analyze multiple interpretations of a story, drama, or poem (e.g., recorded or live production of a play or recorded novel or poetry), evaluating how each version interprets the source text.

**CC.1.4.8.H:** Introduce and state an opinion on a topic.

**CC.1.4.8-12.M:** Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events.



# NATIONAL CORE STANDARDS

## GRADE 8

### TH:Cr1.1.8

- a. Imagine and explore multiple perspectives and solutions to staging problems in a drama/ theater work.
- b. Imagine and explore solutions to design challenges of a performance space in a drama/theater work.
- c. Develop a scripted or improvised character by articulating the character's inner thoughts, objectives, and motivations in a drama/theater work.

### TH:Re7.1.8

- a. Apply criteria to the evaluation of artistic choices in a drama/theater work.

### TH:Re8.1.8

- a. Recognize and share artistic choices when participating in or observing a drama/theater work.
- b. Analyze how cultural perspectives influence the evaluation of a drama/theater work.
- c. Apply personal aesthetics, preferences, and beliefs to evaluate a drama/theater work.

### TH:Re9.1.8

- a. Respond to a drama/theater work using supporting evidence, personal aesthetics, and artistic criteria.
- b. Apply the production elements used in a drama/theater work to assess aesthetic choices.
- c. Assess the impact of a drama/theater work on a specific audience.

## Grade Hs proficient

### TH:Cr1.1.HSI

- a. Apply basic research to construct ideas about the visual composition of a drama/theater work.
- b. Explore the impact of technology on design choices in a drama/theater work.
- c. Use script analysis to generate ideas about a character that is believable and authentic in a drama/theater work.

### TH:Re7.1.HSI

- a. Respond to what is seen, felt, and heard in a drama/theater work to develop criteria for artistic choices.

### TH:Re8.1.HSI

- a. Analyze and compare artistic choices developed from personal experiences in multiple drama/theater works.
- b. Identify and compare cultural perspectives and contexts that may influence the evaluation of a drama/theater work.
- c. Justify personal aesthetics, preferences, and beliefs through participation in and observation of a drama/theater work.

### TH:Re9.1.HSI

- a. Examine a drama/ theater work using supporting evidence and criteria, while considering art forms, history, culture, and other disciplines.
- b. Consider the aesthetics of the production elements in a drama/theater work.
- c. Formulate a deeper understanding and appreciation of a drama/theater work by considering its specific purpose or intended audience.

# ADDITIONAL SOURCES

<https://en.wikipedia.org>

<https://languages.oup.com/google-dictionary-en/>

<https://www.legion.org/about/organization/history>

<https://dictionary.cambridge.org>

<https://www.britannica.com>

[webster.com/dictionary](https://www.webster.com/dictionary)

<https://www.lionel.com/articles/timeline/> "On the Relative Motion of the Earth and the Luminiferous Ether"  
. American Journal of Science.

<https://museumofplay.org/toys>