



Target Arts

The Addams Family

Curriculum Guide

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Program Overview

The Target Arts program, now in its third year, is a unique city-wide collaboration among Boston's fine arts, cultural, and municipal organizations. The program aims to improve school success, engage families, and strengthen community by giving access to Boston's rich offerings of music, dance, visual arts, theater and cultural events to students and families who typically have no opportunity to engage in the professional performing arts. Arts and cultural enrichment celebrations will develop diverse audiences by bringing information to the community through school-based development, community outreach, and citywide collaboration. The BPS Arts Office in partnership with Citi Performing Arts Center coordinates Target Arts programming.

This programming includes in-school residencies and special guest artist visits and an invitation to view professional performances at Citi Performing Arts Center and other Boston Theatre District venues.

Program Set-up

Curriculum Setup

- Offered to up to 30 (per site) 6th, 7th and 8th grade students, any level of experience
- Program Location- King K-8 School, Dorchester MA and Tobin K-8 School, Roxbury, MA
- Meets for six weeks, for up to three hours a week

Program Description

- Using the Production of *The Addams Family* and the production's "No Snap Judgments" outreach initiative as a starting point the youth will explore creative movement, original devising and script development through the themes of social acceptance, tolerance of differences and anti bullying through the performing arts
- Youth will use individual and group writing, drama, movement, dance, and/or other performing arts as outlets to examine this theme
- Students will focus on working as an ensemble, developing basic performing arts skills such as acting, movement, dance, physical and vocal warm-ups, storytelling, and creative expression.

Program Activities

- Physical/Voice Warm-ups
- Community building exercises
- Exploration of multiple cultures
- Class discussion
- Storytelling/reading
- Movement, Theater, Rhythm Exercises
- School performance by a local performing artist, including a question and answer session

- Attendance at a professional production

The Curriculum aligns with The National Arts Standards set by The Kennedy Center

Theatre:

- Content Standard 1 (K-4 and 5-8) Script writing by planning and recording improvisations based on personal experience and heritage, imagination, literature, and history
- Content Standard 2(K-4) Acting by assuming roles and interacting in improvisations
- Content Standard 2(5-8) Acting by developing basic acting skills to portray characters who interact in improvised and scripted scenes
- Content Standard 4 (K-4 and 5-8) Directing by planning classroom dramatizations
- Content Standard 5(K-4 and 5-8) Researching by finding information to support classroom dramatizations
- Content Standard 6 (K-4 and 5-8) Comparing and connecting art forms by describing theatre, dramatic media (such as film, television, and electronic media), and other art forms

Dance:

- Content Standard 1 (K-4 and 5-8) Identifying and demonstrating movement elements and skills in performing dance
- Content Standard 3 (K-4 and 5-8) Understanding dance as a way to create and communicate meaning
- Content Standard 4 (K-4 and 5-8) Applying and demonstrating critical and creative thinking skills in dance
- Content Standard 5 (K-4 and 5-8) Demonstrating and understanding dance in various cultures and historical periods
- Content Standard 7 (K-4 and 5-8) Making connections between dance and other disciplines

The Curriculum aligns with standards set by the Massachusetts Arts Curriculum Frameworks

Theatre

- Content Standard 1 (PreK-12) Students will develop acting skills to portray characters who interact in improvised and scripted scenes.
- Content Standard 2 (PreK-12) Students will read, analyze, and write dramatic works.
- Content Standard 3 (PreK-12) Students will rehearse and stage dramatic works.
- Content Standard 7 (PreK-12) Students will describe the roles of artists, patrons, cultural organizations, and arts institutions in societies of the past and present.
- Content Standard 8 (PreK-12) Students will demonstrate their understanding of styles, stylistic influence, and stylistic change by identifying when and where art works were created and by analyzing characteristic features of art works from various historical periods, cultures and genres

Dance

- Content Standard 1 (PreK-12) Students will identify and demonstrate movement elements and dance skills.
- Content Standard 2 (PreK-12) Students will create movement compositions based on choreographic principles, processes and forms.
- Content Standard 3 (PreK-12) Students will demonstrate an understanding of dance as a way to express and communicate meaning.
- Content Standard 4 (PreK-12) Students will rehearse and stage dance works.

The Curriculum aligns with Positive Youth Development Frameworks set by the National Conference of State Legislatures

The Five Promises –developed by the America’s Promise Alliance

- Caring adults
- Safe places
- A healthy start and healthy development
- An effective education
- Opportunities to help others through service

Characteristics for Programs that Support and Promote the Positive Development of Youth
– developed by The National Research Council

- Physical and psychological safety
- Appropriate structure
- Supportive relationships
- Opportunities to belong
- Positive social norms
- Support for efficacy and mattering
- Opportunities for skill-building
- Integration of family, school and community efforts

The 40 Developmental Assets – developed by the Search Institute
(Assets listed are appropriate only to this program)

External Assets
Support

- Other adult relationships – Young person receives support from three or more nonparent adults.

Empowerment

- Community values youth – Young person perceives that adults in the community value youth.
- Youth as resources – Young people are given useful roles in the community.
- Safety – Young person feels safe at home, school and in the neighborhood.

Boundaries & Expectations

- Adult role models – Parent(s) and other adults model positive, responsible behavior.
- Positive peer influence – Young person’s best friends model responsible behavior.
- High expectations – Both parent(s) and teachers encourage the young person to do well.

Constructive Use of Time

- Creative activities – Young person spends three or more hours per week in lessons or practice in music, theatre or other arts.
- Youth programs – Young person spends three or more hours per week in sports, clubs or organizations at school and/or in the community.

Internal Assets

Positive Values

- Caring—Young person places high value on helping other people.
- Integrity—Young person acts on convictions and stands up for her or his beliefs.
- Responsibility—Young person accepts and takes personal responsibility.

Social Competencies

- Planning and decision making—Young person knows how to plan ahead and make choices.
- Interpersonal Competence—Young person has empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills.
- Cultural Competence—Young person has knowledge of and comfort with people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds.
- Peaceful conflict resolution—Young person seeks to resolve conflict nonviolently.

Positive Identity

- Personal power—Young person feels he or she has control over “things that happen to me.”
- Self-esteem—Young person reports having a high self-esteem.
- Sense of purpose—Young person reports that “my life has a purpose.”

- Positive view of personal future—Young person is optimistic about her or his personal future.

Cross Curriculum Activities

- English Language Arts (Reading/Poetry)
- Mathematics (Dance/Choreography)
- History
- Social Studies

Presentation Activities

- Sharing of work devised from exercises during workshops
- Sharing of work/exercises at a school assembly

Activity Line

The following structure is meant to provide guidance for teaching artists to use their strengths and knowledge to develop specific activities and exercises. Suggestions of art forms used to explore a particular story are flexible and interchangeable. The idea is to examine the stories from the youth using a variety of mediums. More than one story may be used and teaching artists are encouraged to find ways to incorporate reading into the curriculum. The rehearsal and performance period should provide a structured opportunity for students to share some of this exploration with others and not become a polished product.

Introduction to Exploring Story (Personal Stories and *The Addams Family*) Through

Drama- The residency begins with introductions, warm-ups, and exercises to create a safe space where students can work as an ensemble. This will include developing basic theatre skills, comfort and trust with the teaching artists and mutually agreed upon expectations of each member of the class. Students will approach personal stories and share them with their peers through movement. Students will also discuss the *The Addams Family* story and how it might relate to them. The teaching artist will introduce the theme of social acceptance of other's differences. For example, the teaching artist might provide a synopsis of *The Addams Family* story and the individual characters. The students will continue to explore the story and characters by dramatizing a small segment. Students will understand the importance of character and setting and concept of beginning, middle and end of the story in the recreation process. Having the students break up into groups and recreate a scene from the story through improvisation or movement/tableau.

Exploring our Similarities and Differences Through Movement, Original Devising- The Teaching Artist will continue the discussion of the importance of social acceptance and tolerance of differences and will continue to focus on stories created by the students. By focusing on movement, students will understand how to use the body as a tool for expression and to develop and demonstrate story. This should include exercises in expressing emotion, gesture, and relationship through movement and original writing. Additionally activities might comprise of movement elements such as dance, creative movement, gesture, tableau, sculpture and clown to include in the portrayal of the story.

Rehearsal and Performance- Students will use all of the elements from the previous sessions to prepare and present a performance that represent the different stories they explored. They will gather an awareness of the importance of rehearsal and share their presentation with their peers.

Section 1: Introduction to Exploring Story through Drama

Objectives:

- Students will be able to share their names with the Teaching Artist
- Create a safe space in which they are able to make mistakes, learn together, and take positive risks
- Understand purpose of warm-up techniques
- Begin to understand the elements of storytelling (beginning, middle, end, character, climax, denouement, etc.)
- Develop drama vocabulary and technique with a focus on character and setting and concept of acknowledging similarities in others as well as differences

Activities:

- Group Agreements, Ways of Being, Ground Rules Established
 - Teaching Artists and students will comprise a list of mutually agreed upon behavioral expectations.
 - Teaching Artists and students will sign the list to confirm that everyone is in agreement about behavioral expectations
 - This list will be posted in the room each day and referred to when needed.
- Name Game Activity – mostly for the Teaching Artists’ benefit to quickly learn names however it also establishes a sense of fun and trust with the group as they get to know each other
 - Each participant will stand in a circle. Take a few moments to think of an adjective and a relative gesture that best describes you. For example: “Adventurous Paul” will say his new name while doing a physical gesture that best fits the word adventure, like spreading his arms out like a bird in flight. Each participant will share their “new name” and gesture and the group will repeat it together.
 - CHALLENGE: One person can try to repeat all of the “new names” and gestures for the entire group being as precise as possible with each gesture. Make sure this challenge in the exercise is about physical commitment with body and voice as well as memory.

- Movement/Vocal Warm-ups - these types of warm-ups will be used at the beginning of each day to prepare students for their work and promote performance skills

-Shake Down – shake out the right arm and count down from 8 to 1 in full voice, then the left arm, then the right leg, then the left leg. Make sure the voice is shaking as loud as the limbs. Count from 7 to 1, then 6 to 1, etc.

-Tongue Twisters – the harder the better! Examples: *Can you can a can as a canner can can a can?* Or: *Why do you cry, Willy? Why do you cry? Why, Willy? Why, Willy? Why, Willy? Why?* And: *Tie twine to three tree twigs.* As fast as you can, over and over again!

-Mill and Seethe with Shapes – have students walk around the room within a defined boundary without talking. As students are walking in the space invite them to make eye contact with others as they pass. During this brief moment of eye contact, have students say a non-verbal “hello” to each person they pass, either with a nod of the head or a smile. Have students stop, freeze and start at the Teaching Artist’s vocal command. Next, have students explore making shapes with their bodies at the Teaching Artist’s vocal command, first on their own and then using the space around them including the floor, a chair or the wall – a triangle or a circle for example. And continue to mill and seethe between each shape command. The next vocal command can allow students to include one other person in making a shape. Increasing the number involved in making a shape together up to including the entire group.

-Mill and Seethe with Imagination – have students explore imaginary obstacles to walking. For example, “you are now walking through peanut butter.” Or “you are now walking through water.” Play with pace, levels and different substances to engage their bodies and imaginations.

Reflection: Why are warm ups important? What’s the difference between talking to your friends at school and speaking on stage? Why do we have to say these silly tongue twisters? How does it feel to do an exercise alone as opposed to working with others?

- Drama Exercises - improvisation, character/setting building, imagination exercises to prepare students for later work

-Using a piece of fabric, each person will form the fabric into an imaginary object while the other participants guess what the object is. For example: the fabric can be cradled like a baby or worn as a veil. This can be done while standing in a circle and passing the fabric around the circle.

Reflection: How many objects can we think of? How does the object influence your character as you use it?

-What are you doing? - Each student stands in a circle. One person begins by miming a physical activity like painting a canvas. The person next to them asks, "What are you doing?" Their answer should be another action, such as, "I'm running in place" or "I'm brushing my teeth". The person begins with miming that action as accurate as possible. Once the new action has begun, the first actor can drop their action and observe. The next person asks, "What are you doing?" The actor (still in the midst of their mimed action) gives this person a new action, such as, "I'm walking on snow shoes." The exercise continues around the circle with each actor providing a new action for the next person while continuing their action. Again, once the new action has begun, the actor can drop their action and observe.

-Drop the page – break the group up into pairs. Each pair has a sheet of paper with a short, open-ended scene including dialogue between characters A and B. Students take 2 – 3 minutes to read the short scene, determine who is A and who is B and what their relationship is. When they reach the end of the scene, both students drop the page and continue improvising the scene, finding a resolution through their improvisation.

Reflection: How does it feel to mime an action at someone else's command? Why is improvisation important to acting?

- Understanding Storytelling - Elements of a clear story including beginning, middle, end, themes, character, conflict and resolution.

-Break up students into groups of 4 or 5 each. Select a well known story like *The Three Little Pigs* or *Little Red Riding Hood*. Have each group work on the same story. Give students 5-7 minutes to prepare a 2 minute scene depicting this story with as much detail as possible. Invite students to include movement, to use their bodies to depict set pieces and to have clear characters with dialogue. Have students present their scenes for each other and keep them on the clock to exactly 2 minutes. Their next task is to tell the same story with only 1 minute. And lastly, 10 seconds. And just for fun, 1 second!

Reflection: How much detail do you need to depict a story with a beginning, middle and end? How important is it to use physicality as well as dialogue to tell a story? How does time influence the quality of storytelling?

- Introduction of *The Addams Family* Story - see *The Addams Family* Stage Notes for story synopsis

-Group reading of story synopsis detailing characters, the story including events and conflict and resolution.

-Sharing of Charles Addams' cartoon work to provide visual images for each of the characters and the macabre setting chosen for the family.

-Discussion about overall themes found in the story.

Reflection: What is the message of this play? Why is this important to us today? Which character do you most identify with? Would you like to live next door to the Addams Family?

- Exploration of Story Through Drama:

-Have a few short sentences describing each character in the story and have students break into small groups and create a scene introducing each character.

-Select one of the main events of *The Addams Family* like the arrival of Wednesday's fiancé and his family for dinner or when Pugsley accidentally feeds Alice the potion that causes her to tell all of their family secrets. Have students break out into small groups and improvise one of the main events of the play. Adapt the previous exercise of beginning with 4 minutes to do their scene and then 2 minutes, then 1 minute and then 20 seconds.

Reflection: What is your favorite character? How does that character change from the beginning of the play to the end of the play? What makes people different from each other?

Section 2: Exploring our Similarities and Differences Through Movement, Original Devising

Objectives:

- Students will investigate how to use drama and movement as a tool to communicate and share feelings
- Develop original short writing pieces to express story
- Express emotion, gesture, and relationship through movement
- Develop movement sequences

Activities:

- Movement/Vocal Warm-ups
 - Name Dance – Invite students to write their names on an imaginary canvas by using imaginary paintbrushes on their bodies including elbows, knees, shoulders, and hips (not just

in their hands). Have them repeat this movement until they have choreographed their Name Dance. Next, have students break into pairs and teach one another how to write their names on the same canvas using the same paintbrushes. Have each duo share their partner's Name Dance with the group.

-Rhythm Circle – Start a beat, using simple instruments or hand claps. Have the next person add to the beat in a different way continuing to add beats until everyone is doing their part together to create a rhythm circle.

- Poetry Café

-Exploring poetry about identity with the following prompt (from <http://freeology.com/wp-content/files/iampoem.pdf> adapted from various teacher resources)

I am _____

(Two special characteristics)

I wonder _____

(Something you are curious about)

I hear _____

(An imaginary sound)

I see _____

(An imaginary sight)

I want _____

(A desire you have)

I am _____

(The first line of the poem repeated)

I pretend _____

(something you pretend to do)

I feel _____

(a feeling about something imaginary)

I touch _____

(an imaginary touch)

I worry _____

(something that really bothers you)

I cry _____

(something that makes you sad)

I am _____

(the first line of the poem)

I understand _____

(something you know is true)

I say _____
(something you believe in)
I dream _____
(something you actually hope for)
I try _____
(something you make an effort about)
I hope _____
(something you actually hope for)
I am _____
(the first line of the poem repeated)

-Share poetry with the group, adding recorded music, movement or tableau to each poem

Reflection: Listening to each person's poem, what are some of our similarities? Do we share some of the same hopes? Do we worry about some of the same things?

- Original Devising From Personal Stories

-Give each student an index card. Invite each student to write a short story on their index card depicting when they have felt really happy in their lives, like on a special occasion, a holiday with their family or on their birthday. The story should be at least three sentences long and include a beginning middle and end. Students are welcome to add as much detail as they want, but it must fit on the card. Each student will read their story aloud to their group.

Reflection: What is it that makes us happy? What are similarities to each story? What are some differences?

-Have each group place the cards in a pile and select one card. This is the working story that the group will now enact using tableau. Choose three still pictures or tableau which accurately portrays the selected story. The tableaux should include a beginning, middle and end. Someone who has not heard the story should be able to describe it at the end. Have each group share with the rest of the class. CHALLENGE: test the accuracy of each tableau series by asking the audience to describe each aspect of the story.

-Staying in the same groups, ask students to explore the quality of happiness depicted in their story. Was it joy? Love? Surprise? Next, have students depict through non verbal movement or tableau the quality of happiness depicted in their story. If it was a story of surprise, how can the group depict what surprise feels like, with their bodies and as a group? The group must work as a unit and express this quality through movement, together. Have

each group share back to the rest of the class. Continue the exercise with different emotions to express. For example: hope, compassion, fear or anxiety.

Reflection: How well did your group work together? Did you have one person leading or did everyone have a voice in putting the final piece together? What are some emotions you can express with your body? How does movement tell a story? If you had to do this again, how would you remember the moves and sequence of the story?

- Exploring No Snap Judgments Theme Through Poetry and Story

-The Use of Personal Power - Engage students in a discussion about their definition of power. What is power? Who has power? Continue the discussion about personal power. Invite students to write down their thoughts about their own power, how they use it and what they hope to do with their personal power in the future. What would they like to see changed in the future? What would they like to improve on in the future? What would they like to stay the same?

-The Unfair Use of Power – Engage students in a discussion on all elements of a bullying scenario: the bully, the victim, the bystander, the parent, the teacher, etc. Engage the groups in a discussion about each element and their use of their personal power. Which individual is using their power in a positive way? Which individual is using their power in an unfair way? Next, have students select one character in a bullying scenario and have them choose from the following list of writing prompts:

- Write an “I Am” poem from that character’s point of view.

- Write a letter to another character in the scenario sharing that character’s feelings about the event. For example, the bystander can write to the victim about their feelings on what they witnessed.

- Write an “I Wish” list. Each character can write down what they wish for if they could live that moment again. What would they say or do differently if given the chance to relive the scenario?

- Write a monologue depicting your character’s biggest fear.

-Taking on Someone Else’s Story - Invite students to share each others stories and poems from previous exercises with each other. Have students give each other permission to read another students writing aloud to the class from previous exercises.

Reflection: What are our shared fears? What do we want to improve in the future? What are some ways to exude personal power? What does it take within us to be open to each others differences? Where does compassion come from?

Section 3: Rehearsal and Performance

Objectives:

- Prepare and present a short performance that represents their original stories through drama and movement.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the rehearsal process to prepare for sharing.
- Demonstrate an awareness of a live audience and the actor’s relationship to the audience.

Activities:

- Movement Warm-ups
- Rehearsal
 - Students develop a short sharing that highlights their original stories through the elements drama and movement covered throughout the program
 - Students learn blocking, movement sequences, read their stories as well as lines for a shared performance
- Students watch a live performance at their school from a special guest artist
- Students attend a live performance at a venue in Boston

Reflection: Why is rehearsal important? How does it feel to perform for your friends and family? Why is this important? What was is like to perform an original piece? What are some of the similarities in the stories from each participant? What are some differences? Would you like to attend a live show again?

Resources

- <http://freeology.com/wp-content/files/iampoem.pdf>
- <http://www.theaddamsfamilymusicaltour.com/about.php>
- *Charles Addams The Addams Family, An Evulution*, By Miserocchi, Kevin (Book-2010)
- *Happily Ever After*, By Addams, Charles (Book – 2006)
- *Chas Addams A Cartoonist's Life*, By Davis, Linda H. (Book - 2006)
- *Games for Actors and Non-actors* By Boal, Augusto (Book - 2002)
- <http://organizingforpower.files.wordpress.com/2009/03/games-theater-of-oppressed.pdf>