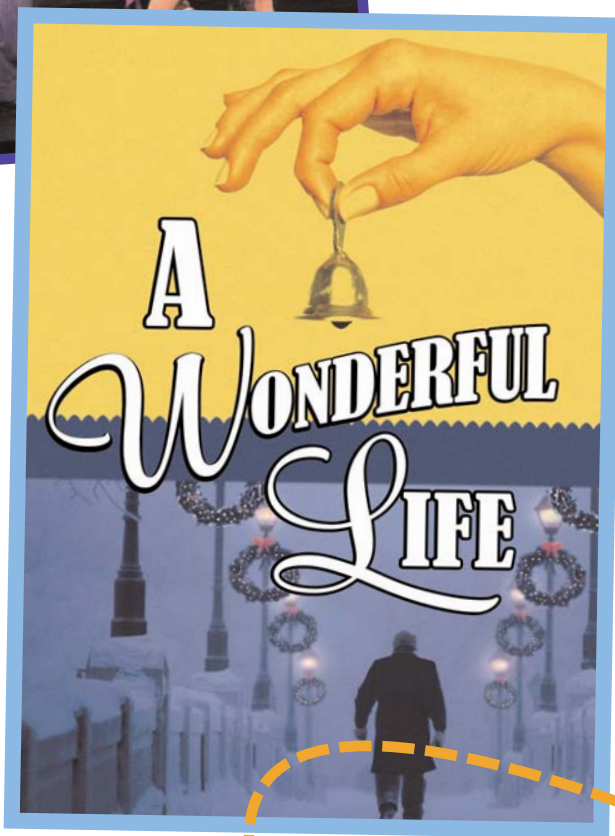
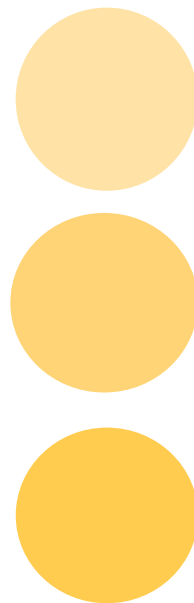


A Wonderful Life Educational Study Guide



THEATRE UNDER THE STARS
800 BAGBY, SUITE 200
HOUSTON, TEXAS 77002

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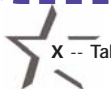
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*A Wonderful Life
Educational Study Guide*

Theatre Under The Stars
Houston, Texas

Written by
Shay Thornton



Introduction

History of Theatre Under The Stars

Founded in 1968, Theatre Under The Stars (TUTS, <http://www.tuts.com>) is currently under the direction of President and CEO John C. Breckenridge. TUTS was the first theatrical organization in Houston to perform free to the public in 1968 at Miller Outdoor Theatre in Hermann Park, and is the only Houston arts organization that has performed there free to the public every year since the building opened. Since its founding by Frank M. Young, TUTS has produced more than 275 musicals including many local, national and world premieres and is currently represented on Broadway with *Disney's Beauty and the Beast*. TUTS is also noted for mounting many International tours, including Debbie Reynolds in *The Unsinkable Molly Brown*, Juliet Prowse in *Mame*, Robert Goulet in *Man of La Mancha*, and the Tony Award-winning revival of *Carousel*.

As a way to continue the tradition of musical theatre, TUTS' Humphreys School of Musical provides instruction and stage experience for more than 1,700 students annually. Since 1972, Theatre Under The Stars' Humphreys School of Musical Theatre has provided a superb and thrilling forum for musical theatre training for children and adults. Housed at the Hobby Center for the Performing Arts, The Academy and The Studio at TUTS allow students to flourish in a year-round schedule of classes. Conducted by an outstanding professional faculty and renowned resident artists who inspire and train students in every aspect of musical theatre, TUTS' Humphreys School of Musical Theatre offers everything from vocal technique and choreography to costume design and prop construction. Specifically designed for the career-track student, The Academy offers Intermediate and Advanced Studies in Tap, Ballet/Jazz, Voice and Theory, Acting, Musical Theatre Workshop, and Directing. The Academy at TUTS gives students numerous opportunities to put their training to work in performance, with a final showcase at the end of each semester. Open to babies, teens, and the young at heart, The Studio offers a variety of classes for those on a non-audition basis. The Studio at TUTS is an exciting program for learning and fun that includes early morning and evening classes, Saturday workshops and summer and winter camps. TUTS also annually presents the Tommy Tune Awards, honoring the best and brightest in Houston's high school musical theatre programs

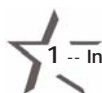
Purpose of Study Guides

TUTS has designed online study guides such as this one to enhance students' theatrical experiences. Using the guide, teachers can encourage their students to explore both the story and the production elements of the show. Live theater can enrich young peoples' lives like few other experiences. The study guides contain various discussion questions, projects, and activities that allow students to engage in literary analysis, historical research, and personal reflection. TUTS' hope is that these young people will be able to gain a greater understanding and appreciation for musical theatre.

" No child is fully educated or adequately prepared to live in an increasingly technological world without understanding the meaning and beauty transmitted by the arts."

J.P. Getty Trust

Beyond Creating a Place for Art in America's School, 1985



What is Musical Theatre?

Musical theatre establishes itself as the only genre of theatre that fully encompasses acting, singing, and dancing all furthering the development of the plot. This differs from traditional theatre because the plot is enhanced by the addition of singing and dancing not just supplemented like it is in 'straight' plays. To better understand musical theatre as a whole, and audience member must comprehend the importance of these three elements. A cast member in musical theatre is talented at acting, singing, and dancing thus called a triple threat because of their mastery of those three areas. Watching musical theatre, one must be careful to appreciate everything occurring on stage so they can understand what the director tried to achieve with the show.

What is Musical Theatre?

Musical theatre's history stretches far beyond the limits one might assume. In fact, evidence suggests elements of this art form were used over 2500 years ago! During the 5th century B.C.E. most plays in Greece were set up with one to three actors and a chorus that responded to what the characters did. Both the actors and the chorus sang lyrics throughout the play. The actors incorporated not only the dialogue and song, but dance in their parts as well. Grecian theatre can be divided into three main genres that all employ music and dance. Tragedy required a slow and graceful dance called the emmeleia, comedy used a more fast paced danced known as the kordax, and satyr plays (used for poking fun at a belief of the time) used a dance called the sikinnis that mocked tragedy's dance. Although, this all probably seems far-fetched for most, Grecian humor transcends time and elements of it are used still today! For example, did you think the crude body jokes and off-color humor used in sit-coms developed in ancient Greece? If not, think again. Tons of the guttural humor we laugh at today has been used for thousands of years. Although humor has remained the same over the years, most everything else concerning musical theatre has changed.

After the Greeks were taken over by the Romans during the Peloponnesian War, the popularity of theatre declined. The Romans, known for their military genius and stoic nature, didn't care much for theatre. The Middle Ages were not a particularly bright time for theatre, either. Performers often went from city to city performing for whomever, wherever. However, they were not always well received. A good example of this is the misconception at one time that these performers brought the plague with them, and no one would allow them admittance into the city gates. Musical theatre still managed to advance in this time period through the church. Although the history between the Roman Catholic Church and theatre is touchy at best, the Church used theatre to transmit it's messages to the illiterate masses. Most people did not know Latin, the official language of the Church, so clever monks started adding music and art to spread their faith. This went even further when cycle plays developed. A cycle play is a biblical story that has been chopped up and divided between different groups. Each group had a pageant wagon (a stage on wheels) and they would move about the city depicting biblical stories. Once one group was done the next part of the story would start. This caused religion not only to be widespread, but also entertaining. The cycle plays helped increase the popularity of theatre, which would soon skyrocket.

The Renaissance, which in French literally means "rebirth", reawakened the public to the arts. Throughout Europe technological, literary, and stylistic advances were occurring to appease the audience of the day. One of the most famous playwrights of all time, Moliere, shows this. King Louis XV demanded a further reaching entertainment, and called on Moliere to reformat his plays to do this. Moliere added music and dance to his shows making his farcical style, song, and dance appease the king's taste during the 1600s. This style grew and by the 1700s there were two main divisions: the ballad opera and comic opera. The ballad opera used popular songs of the day with new lyrics, while the comic operas had original scores and a more romantic plot development. Both these styles flourished, and the idea of incorporating music into plays grew and grew.

The birth of the musical as we know it did not occur until 1866 in New York City. A theatre manager and producer, William Wheatley, was worried about his upcoming show, which he described as a boring melodrama. Looking for something to add excitement (and sell tickets) Wheatley jumped when the Academy of Music burnt down in a fire leaving their performers jobless. Wheatley and the collaborators at the Academy of Music joined together to mix the play Wheatley was producing and the ballet dancers that were scheduled to perform at the Academy. Combining the two together in a performance called *The Black Crook*, audiences were astounded at the integration of music, dance, and theatre making the popularity of this art form boom.

In the 1920's musical theatre faced its first big test. Film had just begun and started to gain popularity. What was theatre going to do with this medium stealing their audience? They kept seats filled by retaliating with emphasizing theatre's stars, bigger dance routines, and adding in popular songs to all increasing the spectacle of the performances. This also caused the budget to increase so when the Great Depression hit in 1929 very few could afford the theatre.



History of Musical Theatre? (cont.)

The theatre lived on, however, and in the 1940's the Golden Age of musical theatre began with Rodger and Hammerstein's *Oklahoma!* This is the first piece to really incorporate dance into the plot line of the musical- which happened almost by accident. The Theatre Guild, a controlling producing agency, went bankrupt so Rodgers and Hammerstein received full artistic control. The pair took many chances including hiring the modern dance choreography, Agnes DeMille. Since the characters were cowboys and farm girls, the idea of them expressing their emotions solely through words seemed awkward. Choreographer, Agnes DeMill, used everyday motions to express their ideas including butter churning- not traditional showgirl dancing. Opening night proved the musical a success and is now thought of as the quintessential musical theatre piece.

Musicals still continued to evolve. After the success of *Hair* (1968), the 1970's continued to use rock influence music in their production. One example *Grease* became so famous that it has turned into a classic movie. Also the 1970's started an increase in the appearance of African American issues and themes. Both *Dreamgirls* and *The Wiz* are known for their reflecting of the changing social climate where diversity became more and more accepted. The 1980's and 1990's brought along the rise of the "mega musicals". These incorporated larger casts, pop influenced scores, and an increase in the value upon special effects. Audiences were wowed with *The Phantom of the Opera*'s falling chandelier in 1986. The increase in spectacle had many implications, however. Now it has become impossible for a single individuals to fund shows, so more and more corporations got involved. The increased cost also meant that ticket prices would be raised. The price increase changed the status of theatre to a more upper class activity. Jonathon Larson's *Rent* tried to change this when he added heavily stylized rock music and a young cast. The 21st century has brought on a combination of many revivals and new styles to musical theatre. The revivals of shows provide almost a guarantee to producers that people will support the show, but new shows stretch the limits of theatre. *Avenue Q* is a new production where adult themed material is performed with puppets. Overall, musical theatre has had an interesting past, but the future seems just as unique.

How to make a Musical in 10 steps?

- 1) Pick the **PERFECT** musical! Some of the things to consider are: if audiences will like it, how much it costs, and if you can secure the rights to do the show. Sometimes you can't secure the rights to a musical if the licensing company thinks too many people are performing it in an area or if it is on Broadway.
- 2) Plan a **BUDGET!** Understanding how much you can spend on salaries, sets, costumes, musicians- while still paying bills to rent the theatre, pay the box office workers, and general upkeep is crucial to putting your musical up.
- 3) Secure the **CREATIVE** team! This goes beyond just the director (although they are important too), a musical needs a choreographer, music director, conductor, set designer, prop master... (the list goes on and on)!
- 4) Have a **PRODUCTION** meeting with the creative team! During these meetings the overall concept of the show should be discussed. This includes everything from the set design to the tiniest detail on a costume.
- 5) Actors **AUDITION!** This exciting process takes place in Houston, New York, and Los Angeles. After the initial auditions callbacks are scheduled to let the director see people audition again. At callbacks, actors usually prepare a song or scene from the show.
- 6) **CAST** the show! During this step discussions with actor's agents agree (or sometimes don't agree) on how much the performers will be paid.
- 7) Start **REHEARSALS!** Once everyone is situated in Houston, rehearsals start for the performance. This is when actors learn their blocking, songs, and dance. Rehearsals can sometimes last as short as 2 weeks before a show opens.
- 8) **PREPARE** all costumes, props, sets, and lights. This takes weeks of work on the production team's effort so that all the little details are taken care of.
- 9) Have a **TECH** rehearsal! During this step it is important to have patience because trying to get the lights, sound, and cues perfect is a very hard job. This usually happens during one of the last rehearsals.
- 10) Go on for a fabulous **OPENING** night! Your nerves might be high, however, all your work won't be lost because the cast and crew are so well prepared!



Jobs on a Production Team

A musical is much more than the two and a half hour show the audience sees. The production process often takes many months, even years, to complete.

Librettist

No musical would be possible without the imagination or inspiration of its authors. Over one third of the musicals on Broadway come from an existing book, play, article, or movie. Other times, authors write musicals from an original idea or concept. The **librettist** is the book writer- the person that writes the script for a musical. Just to show the importance of a strong script, most musicals with a strong score, but bad libretto will fail, while shows with an average score and strong script could succeed.

Composer/ Lyricist

A musical isn't complete without music so a **composer** and **lyricist** will do this job. Composers and lyricists begin to write the songs that fit the overall tone of the musical, but also carry the plot along so the audience can better understand the show. The composer writes the music, while the lyricist writes words to go along. Sometimes the same person will do both tasks. There have also been a few people who have been successful as a composer, librettist, and lyricist. This select group includes George M. Cohan, Noel Coward, Meredith Wilson, and Jonathan Larson.

Producer

Producers are a rather unknown field of theatre occupations. In the past, a show would only have one producer who had a tremendous impact on the creative direction of the show. Many shows started because a single producer had an idea for a musical and wanted to make it come to life. Now that musicals have become big business, however, it is almost impossible for a single producer to put up a show. Now Broadway shows have a dozen or so producers making it hard for them to exercise creative control.

INVESTOR

Investors traditionally would give a few thousand dollars in return for tickets and possibly money back from their investment if the show was a hit. This is no longer the case, however, because of the high price of producing a Broadway show. Now investors contribute hundreds of thousands of dollars with little chance that any of that money coming back. What is the point then? Most investors enjoy being in "show business" and they usually get great seats to see shows!

Director

The **director** is the person who stages the show to make it come to life for the audience. In the past directors were merely puppets doing what the producer envisioned, but since the 1950s they have taken basically full control. A director has to work with the cast on singing, acting, and dancing to tell a cohesive story for the audience. The director will help each actor understand their motivation for the show, block the action, and oversee how everything comes together. The director is the "top dog" in most shows that everyone answers to. They are in control of the overall artistic vision of the show.

Choreographer

A **choreographer** designs dance sequences for the performers to follow the director's vision. The dances are intricate movements that allow the performers to express the meaning of each song. Through the choreography, the audience should understand what the characters are feeling. The choreographer used to be called the dance director, but changed when ballet choreographers started working on musicals. This person usually spends a large amount of time rehearsing all the dances with the cast.

Casting Director

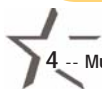
A **casting director** has the hard of job of finding the perfect person to play each role of a production. They need to stay up to date on the ever-changing talent and be ready to set up an audition for major and minor roles at any moment. Casting directors usually work as free agents for a variety of producers, but in some cases top producers have their very own casting directors.

Dance Captain

A **dance captain** has to be one of the most skilled dancers in the cast who can learn quickly and help teach. In big productions on Broadway, national tours, or major regional productions most choreographers are not going to be available to be on hand for every performance in case a cast member forgets a step. This is where a dance captain helps. They make sure everyone stays sharp on their dances and are there to teach any forgotten moves.

Music Director

The **music director** is in control of basically all the music in the show. They help the cast learn the music, and then they are given the task of pacing the music. The music director can sometimes conduct the orchestra as well, which comes in handy because they know the music of the show do well. They usually hire the orchestra members as well.



Designers

Whatever you see onstage probably did not come off a store rack, so costuming is very important! A **costume designer** has to design how the costumes should look so that they are historically correct, and build them in a way that they can stand the rough day to day wears & washings

How would a show look if you couldn't see it? Probably not very good! A **lighting designer's** job is the task of making everything that needs to be shown visible to the audience, while also setting the tone and mood with the lighting design. A lighting designer also has to be aware of the actors movements so they don't step out of the light.

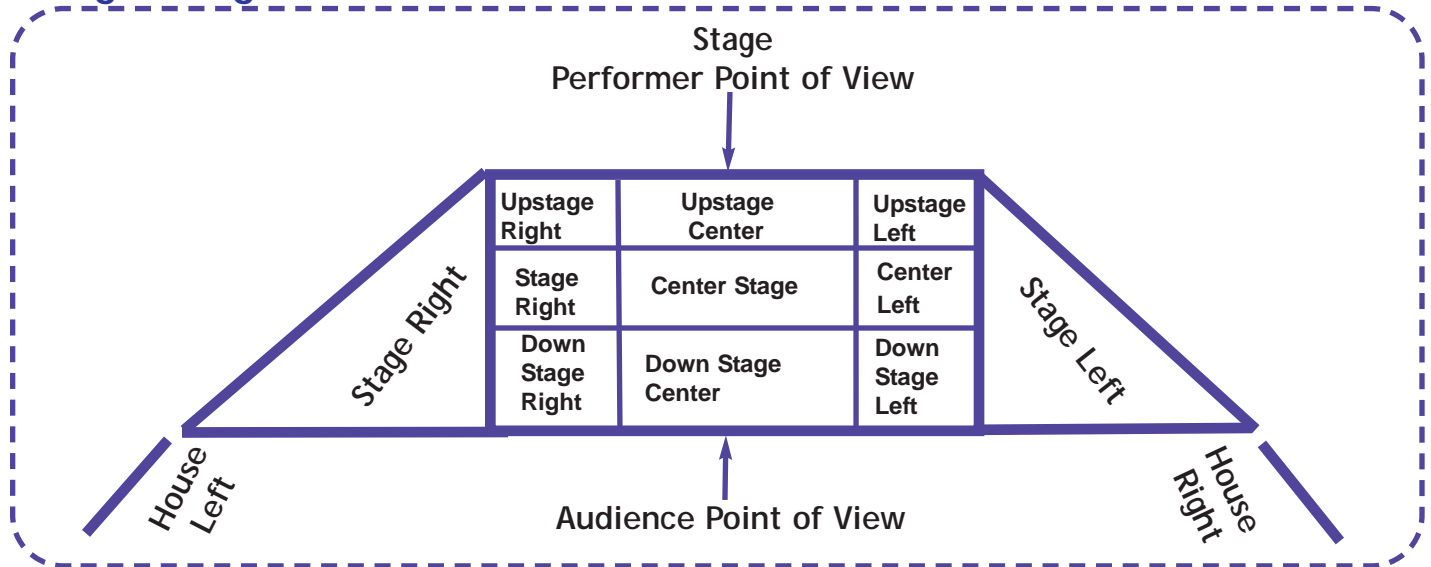
A **sound director** has the complex job of making everything heard! Since most of the characters onstage have a microphone on, the sound designer needs to watch how loud that each mic gets. This job used to not even be listed in the playbill, but with the rise of technology, it is now a crucial part of theatre.

The **set designer** plays an important role in the audience being able to be taken to the place of the action during the play. They are responsible to design how the set should look, and what materials will be used to build it. Sometimes the set designer will double as the scenic painter, and paint the set pieces as well!

Stage Manager

The **stage manager** is usually the unsung hero of a production. They are in control of making sure all the elements of a show come together during each and every performance. They are in control of "calling the show" meaning they cue all the technical actions of the show. The SM is in full command of the backstage area, and once the show opens they receive full control from the director. The stage manager's script or "bible" has every single cue marked for the whole show, so that the action can continue onstage trouble-free. The stage manager usually has a team of assistants that can be anywhere doing whatever is needed.

Stage Diagram



Why is Musical Theatre Important?

Musical theatre is unlike any other medium of entertainment, which makes it important. Any live theatrical experience not only involves the actors on stage, it also involves the audience in ways that film and television do not. There is no barrier between the performers and the audience like in film or television. Each performance allows each of us to become our own editors because we can choose to watch whatever part of the stage we want to. The wonders of movies and television are remarkable, but often provide an isolated experience. Being part of the communal magic when performer and audience connect at the theater cannot be duplicated. How the audience reacts to the show deeply affects the actors. Something seemingly trivial like whispering or unwrapping a piece of candy can distract the actors and alter the mood and tone of their performance.

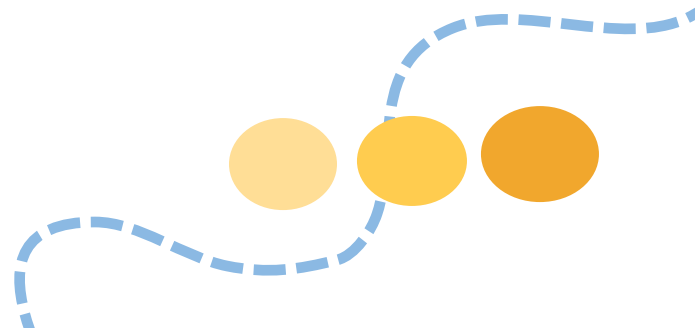
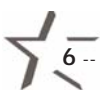
Musical theatre can help students grow academically, aesthetically and personally. Musical theatre writers, lyricists, and composers have long looked to literature for their inspiration and subject material. As a result, students have the opportunity to engage in literary analysis of both the story and its inspiration. Elementary students can begin to explore plot and characters, while junior high and high school students can delve into theme, symbolism, and historical context.

Students will also have the opportunity to discover how music, dance, lighting, backdrops, etc. contribute to the show. Musical theatre allows young people to explore the elements of production beyond television and film, and gain a greater appreciation for the arts.



Glossary of Terms

- the writer of a musical script also called the book
- Audition** - to perform in order to get a role in the production; usually includes singing, dancing, and reading scenes from the show
- Ballad** - a slow, romantic song for actors to showcase vocal clarity
- Blocking** - the specific movements of actors on stage
- Box** - a separate compartment of seats usually elevated on the sides of the theater, for the accommodation of VIP's
- Box Office** - a booth inside the theater where tickets are sold
- "Calling the Show"** - the process of calling out the lighting, sound, and scene-change cues during a performance usually done by the stage manager
- Casting** - the process through which actors are chosen for roles in the production
- Casting Agent** - one who chooses actors for roles in the production
- Child Wrangler** - one who works with child performers
- Choreographer** - one who designs dance sequences
- Composer** - one who writes music
- Conductor** - one who directs the orchestra
- Dance Captain** - one who teaches and rehearses dance sequences with the performers
- Director** - one who supervises the creative aspects and guides the artistic vision of the production
- Dress Rehearsal** - rehearsal in which performers practice with costumes and props
- Dresser** - one who assists performers with their costumes during dress rehearsals and shows
- Electrician** - one who works with the lighting designer to adjust and operate lighting instruments
- a dance for the Grecian tragedies that was slow and graceful
- Ensemble / Chorus** - a group of singers, dancers, or actors who perform musical numbers
- Flyman** - one who pulls the curtain before and after performances and operates the flying system, if one is used
- Gallery** - the section of seats in a theater farthest away from the stage; separated into front gallery and rear gallery
- Head Carpenter** - one who builds the sets for the production
- Headshot** - a photograph of an actor from the shoulders up and lists his or her credits on the back
- House Left** - the left side of the theater, when facing the stage (audience's point of view)
- House Manager** - one who oversees all aspects of the audience; responsible for ushers and audience safety
- House Right** - the right side of the theater, when facing the stage (audience's point of view)
- Kordax** - a dance for Grecian comedies that was up beat
- Lighting Designer** - one who decides where the lighting instruments should go, how they should be colored, and which ones should be on at any particular time to affect mood, visibility, and to showcase costumes and sets
- Lyricist** - one who writes the words to a song
- Makeup Artist** - one who applies cosmetics to a performer's face and body
- Marquee** - a signboard projecting over the theater's entrance
- Mezzanine** - the middle section of seats in a theater between the orchestra and the gallery; separated into front mezzanine and rear mezzanine
- Music Director** - one who teaches and rehearses the music with the orchestra
- Orchestra** - the section of seats in a theater immediately behind where the orchestra sits
- Principal Performers** - the leading actors, those who portray the major roles
- Program** - a listing of the order of events, names of the cast and crew, and other relevant information for the production
- Property (Props) Master** - one who manages all items used on stage that cannot be classified as scenery, electrics or wardrobe
- Read-through** - the cast reads through the script without movement or music
- Rehearsal Pianist** - one who plays the piano for early-stage rehearsals
- Set Designer** - one who creates the scenery for the stage
- Sikinnis** - a dance for the Grecian satyr plays that mocked tragedy
- Sitzprobe** - the first rehearsal with both the performers and the orchestra, with no staging or dancing
- Sound Designer** - one who plans and executes the layout of all sound playback and equipment for the show
- Sound Operator** - one who handles the sound playback and mixing equipment for the show; works with the sound designer
- Sound Board** - a desk comprising a number of input channels where each sound source is provided with its own control channel through which sound signals are routed into two or more outputs; changes the quality of the sound
- Sound Effects Designer** - one who creates or enhances sounds that are not part of the music or dialogue
- Standby / Understudy** - one who studies a role and is prepared to substitute the principal performer when needed
- the left side of the stage, when facing the audience (performer's point of view)
- Stage Manager** - one who is responsible for the quality of the show's production, assists the director and oversees the show at each performance
- Stage Right** - the right side of the stage, when facing the audience (performer's point of view)
- Swings** - one who is prepared to substitute for ensemble or chorus members who are unable to perform
- Tailor** - one who alters garments to fit a person's specific measurements
- Technical Rehearsal** - rehearsal incorporating the technical elements of a show, such as the scene and property shifts, lighting, sound, and special effects
- Uptempo Song** - a fast, upbeat song for actors to showcase dancing and acting ability
- Usher** - one who guides audience members to their seats
- Wanderprobe** - rehearsal in which the performers practice singing and dancing on stage while the orchestra plays
- Wig Master / Mistress** - one who obtains and customizes wigs for performers to wear



Use the following page about proper theatre etiquette during performances to copy and print out handouts for your students or cut along the dotted lines to make reminder cards for students to keep with them throughout the show.

Going to the Theatre!

Some basic theatre etiquette tips:

1. Do not talk, whisper, sing, or hum during the performance. Singing and swaying with the music or leaning forward in your seat blocks the view of those sitting behind you.
2. Do not eat and drink during the performance. It is distracting to both the performers and your neighbors.
3. Keep feet on the floor, not on the seat or balcony in front of you.
4. Clap after the songs to show the performers that you are enjoying the show. Also keep in mind that performers appreciate enthusiastic applause, but not whistling or shouting.
5. Appropriate laughter, tears, and applause are the best ways to express your feelings about the performance.
6. Stay until the end of the show and clap during the curtain call to say "thank you" to the performers.
7. No electronic devices should be brought into the theatre, and please silence all cell phones, pagers and watches.

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How About Trivia?

Do you know Roman actors wore the first tap shoes?

They would attach pieces of metal called *scabillas*, to the bottoms of their shoes so audiences would be able to hear the performers feet!

Did you know it used to be okay to talk in theatres?

Before the introduction of electric lighting, the goal of theatre was to be seen, not necessarily to be heard. Audience members would talk through performances and sometimes even correct the actors if they messed up! Now it would be very rude to disrupt a performance by talking, so be warned!

Not until Duke of Saxe-Meiningen Georg wanted historical accuracy in plays did theatre start providing costumes. Take a look back at Shakespearean plays where the actors wore doublets and tunics (clothing of the time) during shows set in ancient Greece.

Did you know actors used to "buy the audience"?

Actors hired a *claque*, a group of people paid to applaud an actor, to gain fame. Although this isn't in theatre anymore, it is still rumored to exist in opera.

Do you know how old lip-syncing is?

In ancient Rome, popular actors like Livius Andronicus, would have someone speak their words while they did the movements if they were sick.

Did you know actors were supposed to supply their own costumes for hundreds of years?

Do you know what the proscenium arch (the picture frame archway built around the stage) is named after?

Do you know how ancient actors got into character?

Do you know how old the traditions of spotlights in theatre have been used for?

Back in medieval times, when electricity hadn't been invented, stage hands would polish basins to reflect sunlight back in a beam on lead actors. This helped focus the audience's attention on what the director wanted the focus to be.

A *skene* was a building in Greek theatre that provided the backdrop which the actors performed in front of. Add the prefix "pro" meaning before and the term literally means before the *skene* or in front of the backdrop.

Actors are known for trying to experience the character they are portraying. The Greek actor Polus, while playing the part of Electra, in Sophocles' *Electra*, carried an urn of his own dead son's ashes to represent the late brother his character was mourning.

Review Questions

The following questions are intended to help students learn the basics of musical theatre. These may be used for class discussion or given as homework and written assignments.

Checking for Understanding

1. What is the definition of musical theatre?
2. Where is humor from ancient Greece still found today?
3. How did the Roman Catholic Church help theatre?
4. Who formulated the musical as we know it today?
5. What was the problem facing musical theatre in the 1920's?
6. What was the first musical to incorporate story telling in dance?
7. How can you be your own editor in theatre?
8. What does a choreographer do?
9. Draw a diagram noting upstage, downstage, stage left, and stage right. Can you further divide it?
10. What are four major theatre etiquette tips?

Critical Thinking

1. Do you think theatre from another time period would interest us today? Why or why not? Give an example.
2. What about musical theatre seems the most interesting? What about this is appealing?
3. Spectacle is so important in musicals now. Do you think it will stay that way forever? What technology might have encouraged this?
4. What step do you think is the most important in making a musical? The most challenging? The most fun?
5. What do you hope to gain from experiencing musical theatre?
6. What theatre element seems the most important? Do you think your neighbor would feel the same?
7. How can audiences influence performers since there is a new audience every night?
8. If you were to teach a child how to behave at the theater, what would you tell them?



Review Activities

The following activities and projects are intended to encourage students to further their understanding of musical theatre, and may also be used for class assignments or take-home projects.

1st - 5th Grade

E V O L U T I O N

OBJECTIVE: To learn the major shows throughout the history of musical theatre

ACTIVITY: Have students create a timeline of the major steps in musical theatre history. They can draw or find and cut-out pictures to represent each one. Test their knowledge by asking older children to write facts about each step.

MATERIALS: Construction paper, crayons/markers/colored pencils

E V E R Y O N E ' S A S T A R !

OBJECTIVE: To learn the elements of production in musical theatre, stimulate imagination, develop teamwork skills, and build self-confidence

ACTIVITY: As a class, choose a story to turn into a play. Think of an easy one like a class book or fairy tale. Divide into a production team (director, costume designer, choreographer) and actors. Follow the step by step musical guide and put on a show for parents.

MATERIALS: Homemade or real instruments, props (optional)

6th - 12th Grade

I N S P I R A T I O N

OBJECTIVE: To learn how historical context has affected and inspired musical theatre, and develop research and public speaking skills

ACTIVITY: Have students choose a musical to research and then create a presentation of how the show reflects the times in which it was created, including historical figures and relevant social or political issues. Encourage students to watch videos of the show, study song lyrics, and research the time period in which the musical was written. *Suggested Shows: Oklahoma, West Side Story, Bye Bye Birdie, Peter Pan, Annie, The Sound of Music, & Ragtime*

D E B A T E

OBJECTIVE: To learn the differences between various media, develop public speaking and verbal expression skills, and encourage self-expression

ACTIVITY: Divide the class into three groups and have each group choose a form of media (ex. television, newspapers, or theatre). Then have the groups debate on which medium is the best. Make sure students support their claims with specific benefits and limitations of each medium. Have opening remarks be done as a skit showing the same story done in each medium. Students should leave understanding the differences in each storytelling medium.



Show Background

Created from the genius minds of Sheldon Harnick and Joe Raposo, *A Wonderful Life* is a musical retelling of the classic Frank Capra film *It's a Wonderful Life*. The show took over 20 years to piece together with hard work from the talented pair. Harnick and Raposo worked together to build the book, but right when the story was completed controversy arose over the rights to the material. This further delayed production of the show. Sadly, Raposo died of cancer so Harnick kept working on the production. It was first performed at University of Michigan in 1986 followed by a staged reading at Paper Mill Playhouse in 1990. In 1991, at Washington D.C.'s Arena Stage, the show made its first professional run. In 2005 *A Wonderful Life* had a one night concert version performed in New York.

The film *It's a Wonderful Life*, has become a tradition around the winter holidays. The idea for the film first started in 1938 through Phillip Van Doren Stern's short story *The Greatest Gift*. No one picked up on his short story until 1944 when he packaged it as a pamphlet and sent it to his friends as a Christmas card. One of these cards got into the hands of a Hollywood agent who sold the story and its rights to RKO, a major film studio of the time. RKO originally thought this would be a good post-war story, but when Frank Capra offered them \$10,000 for the film they let him direct it. Once Capra started working on the screenplay he knew American audiences would enjoy it.

The setting of Bedford Falls shows a perfect American city- a rallying point for troops during a time of war. The set took 2 months to build and covered over 4 acres of RKO's lot! This film was very expensive costing over \$3.7 million with only a \$3 million box office return. Interestingly enough, the FBI called it a "subversive" film stating Mr. Potter was a tool of communists. Today, the film has become a popular American holiday tradition.

The Creative Team

Sheldon Harnick

LYRICS & BOOK

Sheldon Harnick was born on April 30, 1924, in Chicago. From childhood Harnick was attracted to music and started playing the violin early in life. After a stint in the army, Sheldon graduated from Northwestern University School of Music with a bachelors degree. Although he was a talented violinist, Harnick went to New York City to become a lyricist. His first show was entitled "*The Boston Beguine*" which showcased his trademark humor. Harnick is best remembered for his huge hit *Fiddler on the Roof*. He has been nominated for 8 Tony awards and has won 2. Other than musical theatre, Harnick wrote for TV and film, even writing *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*. He has performed in *Sondheim: A Musical Tribute*.



Joe Raposo

MUSIC

Joe Raposo was born on February 8, 1937, in Massachusetts. His parents were Portugese immigrants. He attended Harvard University where he wrote songs for their shows. After college, Raposo worked as a musical supervisor on *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*. Raposo is most popular with his work on the children's TV show *Sesame Street* and the sitcom *Three's Company*. Raposo has received various Emmy and Grammy nominations featuring his songs from *The Great Muppet Caper* in 1981. Some of his most famous songs include "*It's Not Easy Being Green*" sung by Kermit the Frog and "*Sing*" which was featured in *Sesame Street*. Sadly, Mr. Raposo passed away in New York in 1989.



Frank Capra

Film Director

The film, *It's a Wonderful Life*, has become an American classic along with it's director Frank Capra. Capra was born in Italy on May 18, 1897. He came to America at 6 years old in the steerage class. Capra did very well in America and graduated college with an engineering degree. After college, Capra joined the military. When he returned home he started working in Hollywood as a "gag" writer for Hollywood directors and producers. Capra rose through the ranks and eventually became a director at Columbia Studios. He directed many films there including *The Miracle Woman*, *The Lady For A Day*, *It Happened One Night*, and *Mr. Smith Goes To Washington*. He was the first person to win all 5 major Oscars and then went on to win even more. He later left Columbia and directed elsewhere. Capra passed away in 1991.



A Brief Show Overview

Major Character List & descriptions

George Bailey- Character who is heartbroken about the state of his life.

Clarence- Angel who shows George the importance of his life.

Joseph- Head angel

Tom- George's father who doesn't want him to leave

Mary- George's wife

Harry- George's brother who doesn't want to run the family business

Potter- Member of the board of directors who is very rich and mean

Children- George's children

Ensemble- Townspeople of Bedford Falls

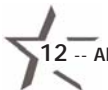
ACT I

George's Prayer
This Year Europe
One of the Lucky Ones/Can
You Find Me a House
In a State
A Wonderful Life
If I Had a Wish
One of the Lucky Ones-
Reprise
Wings
Good Night
Not What I Expected
Panic at the Loan Building
A Wonderful Life- Reprise

Song List

ACT II

Can You Find Me a House- Reprise
When You Own Your Own Home
First Class All the Way
I Couldn't Be with Anyone but You
Welcome a Hero
Christmas Gifts
Precious Little
Unborn Sequence
A Wonderful Life- Reprise
Welcome the Hero- Reprise
Christmas Gifts- Reprise



Show Synopsis

Act I

Following closely to the story line of the classic 1946 Frank Capra movie, *A Wonderful Life* opens with *George's Prayer* featuring Mr. George Bailey praying to God while contemplating suicide. The popular Christmas hit begins with Clarence, an angel in training, hearing from Joseph, a head angel, that he will earn his wings if he can stop George's suicide. Joseph tells Clarence the six most important days in George's life to start him on his difficult task.

The next scene takes place on June 3, 1928, as George plans a trip to Europe before attending Cornell. After George's plan unfolds in *This Year Europe*, his

father, Tom, wants him to come home and work for him- an offer that George flatly refuses. Tom tries to remind George through One of the *Lucky Ones/Can You Find Me a House* how blessed they are before George runs out to a dance. At the dance (*In a State*), George instantly becomes enamored with Mary Hatch (*A Wonderful Life*). After sharing *If I Had a Wish*, Mary along with George's trip to Europe gets set aside due to a family member's untimely death.

George and Clarence leave this scene and travel through time to a meeting concerning the disbanding of his late elder brother's company. As the board members try to break up the company, George fights back (*Can You Find Me a House- Reprise*), under Potter and the other board members conditions the company can stay open. As the new executive director of the company, George can no longer go to college.

Clarence and Joseph sing *Wings*, right before George relives his next surprise. Harry, his little brother, finishes college, which George paid for, and now Harry refuses to join the family company (*Ruth/ On To Pittsburgh*). George, distraught at the idea of not being replaced, accidentally meets Mary again. After a *Good Night*, Mary and George are ready to get married (*Not What I Expected*).

Before the couple can begin their honeymoon, a problem at the bank arises. The investors demand money back (*Panic at the Building and Loan*). George takes the issue into his own hands and in a selfless act uses the money for his honeymoon to solve the problem. Mary, awestruck by the goodness of her husband, holds a perfect honeymoon in town for them (*A Wonderful Life- Reprise* and *George's Prayer- Reprise*).

Act II

George is now seen in a montage where he is at work during *Can You Find Me a House-Reprise*, and then celebrating his thirteenth birthday. The scene then shifts to May 15th 1935, at a house warming party (*A Home of Your Own*). At the party, Potter approaches George with a huge sum of money asks him to join his company and become *First Class All the Way*. Refusing his offer, George walks dejectedly home to find Mary. She informs him of her 'news' during *I Couldn't Be With Anyone but You*.

Clarence now takes George back to the present. The town welcomes Harry, who has been at war, back during *Welcome a Hero*. Also seen is George's uncle carelessly losing an envelope containing 8,000 dollars. Outraged, George returns home mistreating his children while they sing *Christmas Gifts*. He cares for his sick child (*Precious Little*) until she falls asleep (*George's Prayer- Reprise*).

As a last resort, George returns to Potter asking to borrow money from him, an offer Potter happily rejects. Depressed and perplexed by his current situation, George tries to end his life. Clarence magically appears showing him how life would be different if he were not there (*Unborn Sequence*). Ashamed that he had not appreciated life before, George (*A Wonderful Life- Reprise*) meets Harry (*Welcome a Hero- Reprise*), and learns the town has saved him from his financial issues. At the Bailey home, the town appears for a celebration of both the Christmas spirit and life (*Christmas Gifts- Reprise*).



The questions and activities are encouraged for use with elementary level students to cover basic knowledge and understanding about the story. The following questions are intended to help students learn about the plot and the characters. These may be used to prompt class discussions or be given as a written assignment.

Digging A Little Deeper

Plot: refers to the arrangement of the events in a story that each follow plausibly from one to the next to create a logical order

Exposition: devices by which critical elements of the plot, often involving back-story, are not directly depicted, but instead are presented through dialogue (or lyrics) by either characters or a narrator; information is often crucial for the audience to understand the story's action

Rising Action: refers to the period after the exposition and after a conflict has been introduced to a story's plot;

Climax: a point of a story's highest tension or drama

Falling Action: a series of events in a story that follow the climax which serve as a conclusion of the story

Resolution: the end of a story in which all conflicts are resolved, creating normality for the characters or release of tension and anxiety for the audience

Literary
Terminology

What's Going On?

1. Describe the major plot of *A Wonderful Life* in one or two sentences.
2. Using the synopsis (pg. 13), identify each memory Clarence takes George to. Explain the importance of each event to the story in one sentence, and create a chronological timeline. Why is each one important?
3. This musical originated from a very popular movie. Watch the movie and answer these questions about the stage version. What are the similarities? What are the differences? What do you think would need to change to move the musical from on film to the stage? Why?
4. What did you learn in the exposition of the story? (Hint: what did you find out during *George's Prayer*)
5. Become familiar with the meaning of resolution. Identify and describe events in the story that can be considered part of the resolution.

The Search For Answers!

1. What was your favorite flashback? Why
2. Out of all the main characters, determine which one you would say is most like yourself. Do you see yourself doing the same things as the character you picked if presented with similar situations? Explain why or why not.
3. Why is George upset at Harry? What would you do in the situation?
4. Do you think people know that George is so upset at himself? If not, why not? If so, why so?
5. Do you like or dislike George's character? Why?
6. How do you feel about Potter? Was this the case for the whole musical or did your feelings change?
7. What do you think will happen to Clarence now?
8. Do you feel that George is a selfish person? Why or why not?
9. How do you think George's children view him?
10. At the end of the musical, were you happy or sad? Why? Do you think you could have been both?



Get Creative!

MY STORY

OBJECTIVE: To develop creative writing skills, stimulate imagination, and encourage creative expression

ACTIVITY: Each flashback in *A Wonderful Life* shows an important moment in George's life. Each student should write out 5 of the most important days of their lives. They should then further elaborate on each day about what happened, why it was important, and what they chose to do. After they have written the days out, each student should illustrate the story they told and tie the pages together to make it into a book. Use the template on page 25 for the book pages. Once this is completed, it is a great memento for the students to have in the years to come.

COMPARE / CONTRAST

OBJECTIVE: To develop research skills, develop presentation skills, and encourage and stimulate imagination

ACTIVITY: *A Wonderful Life* has been adapted from a classic film that generations have all enjoyed. Watch parts of the film together and determine what has been changed and what has stayed the same. After doing this, assign each student to research the making of the film as homework with their parents. Come back together and discuss your findings. Does this make it easier to understand why things were changed in making the musical? Does it make it more difficult?

PREMIERE!

OBJECTIVE: To develop artistic skills, and encourage creative expression

ACTIVITY: Have the class split into 6 different groups. In each group, assign a leader who will act as head playwright. Each group has to re-envision a flashback from the musical. In these groups they should write out a script of exactly how they would re-tell the story. Interesting angles to twist the story would be from another point of view, if George was happy with his life, or if there was another important event that occurred which wasn't in the musical. Once the new re-telling of the musical is written each group needs to perform their piece. The more elaborate they want to get the better- which can include costumes, props, or dramatic lighting. The 6 groups should all perform as if it were a new premiere of the show. This is also a good way to get the students to further understand what goes into putting on a musical.

The Story Comes To Life- Good Journal Entries

DAILY DRAMA

A major theme in this story is the ideal of forgiveness. At the end of the musical the town supports George no matter what. Each student should think of a time that they had the choice to forgive someone or keep holding on to a grudge. Then write 2 separate journal entries. One should describe how the situation would have played out if they did not forgive the other person, while the second entry should describe what would happen if they did forgive the other person. After the students have completed the entries, they should split in groups of 4 and act out one of their entries. A good class discussion can follow tying back to the town in *A Wonderful Life* supporting George.

YOU'RE A CRITIC

One thing that is important to recognize in musical theatre is the incorporation of dance, music, and theatre into one production. Have each student pick a scene and write out how all three of these elements were incorporated. Things to include are: did you like it, did it further the story, what was the audience reaction, who was doing the primary action, why was a chorus used, was there a chorus used. After each student has finished their journal, have a class discussion about how this classic Hollywood film incorporated song and dance to become a musical. Decide as a class if this was a good or a bad thing.

FOLLOWING TRADITION

To some families the classic film *A Wonderful Life* has become a holiday tradition to watch. Have each student pick out a tradition that their family does on every holiday. Keep in mind it might be easier for some students to recognize a tradition that their family does on other holidays like the Fourth of July, Thanksgiving, Chanukah, or New Year's Eve. Each student should write a brief description of what the tradition is followed by a step by step guide on how to do it. Then they should pair up and try to see if they understand how to do the other's holiday tradition. If not, they should clear up the procedure on the step-by-step guide. If time permits, once all of these are completed, allow each student to present their tradition with their guides. If parents are available, it would also be interesting for them to either demonstrate their tradition or explain how it got started.



A Wonderful Life Word Search

Joe Raposo

Sheldon Harnick

Clarence

George Bailey

Joseph

Cornell

Harry

Mary

Potter

Welcome a Hero

Holiday

Honeymoon

RKO

Phillip Van Doren Stern

Tradition

If I Had a Wish

Precious Little

P	O	T	T	E	R	R	W	D	F	H	U	N	C	V	D	Z	N	L	E	C
Q	E	R	R	F	G	H	U	Y	T	R	E	D	F	V	B	R	P	Y	U	O
Z	A	W	A	Q	G	H	U	H	J	R	Y	A	D	I	L	O	H	R	W	R
S	E	F	D	L	I	J	G	T	O	V	G	H	J	T	N	G	I	R	F	N
W	C	V	I	G	Y	R	B	H	E	N	E	F	G	H	J	U	L	D	R	E
W	G	Y	T	D	B	H	U	I	R	X	E	C	V	B	Y	Q	L	A	D	L
E	D	F	I	X	G	U	F	K	A	D	V	H	F	G	G	Y	I	D	V	L
E	R	J	O	S	E	P	H	G	P	D	F	G	M	E	X	R	P	C	Y	G
D	F	H	N	C	Y	U	J	K	O	D	V	Y	I	O	N	H	V	X	P	R
G	Y	J	L	G	Y	K	B	J	S	X	R	H	G	R	O	G	A	D	R	I
K	L	O	G	U	M	L	H	T	O	D	R	Y	J	G	T	M	N	O	E	P
D	R	A	G	U	N	M	I	Y	D	R	J	O	B	E	X	T	D	V	C	J
Y	U	I	F	E	H	L	V	X	F	G	Y	U	I	B	Z	F	O	J	I	T
C	L	A	R	E	N	C	E	D	F	H	I	D	J	A	R	Y	R	T	O	K
D	F	T	S	H	E	L	D	O	N	H	A	R	N	I	C	K	E	F	U	J
D	F	H	U	W	E	R	B	Y	J	A	R	G	H	L	J	I	N	F	S	S
M	M	T	S	J	O	U	I	F	G	R	J	A	G	E	G	E	S	R	L	I
A	S	H	X	C	T	T	Y	H	E	R	N	R	E	Y	T	O	T	N	I	V
D	R	A	G	F	R	U	M	F	G	Y	S	F	H	K	O	U	E	R	T	W
W	E	L	C	O	M	E	A	H	E	R	O	A	X	V	B	N	R	Q	T	T
D	F	G	H	K	L	J	Y	U	I	O	P	W	E	M	V	H	N	G	L	N
A	S	R	Q	Y	E	F	L	C	B	U	A	J	C	K	A	Q	K	L	E	P
X	H	K	S	F	I	U	T	G	W	S	R	L	P	G	O	R	O	U	T	E
I	L	O	I	F	I	H	A	D	A	W	I	S	H	A	S	G	Y	D	T	U
A	F	H	I	B	M	J	O	S	E	I	H	Z	C	H	I	O	G	D	S	J



A Wonderful Life Word Search Answer Key

P	O	T	T	E	R													C
			R													P		O
			A				H	J		Y	A	D	I	L	O	H		R
			D					O								I		N
			I					E	N								L	E
			T					R		E							L	L
			I					A			Y		G				I	L
		J	O	S	E	P	H		P			M	E			P		
			N						O				O			V		P
									S				R	O		A		R
									O				G		N	N		E
													E			D		C
													B			O		I
C	L	A	R	E	N	C	E						A			R		O
			S	H	E	L	D	O	N	H	A	R	N	I	C	K	E	U
									A				L			N		S
									R				E			S		L
									R				Y			T		I
									Y							E		T
W	E	L	C	O	M	E	A	H	E	R	O					R		T
													M			N		L
		R												A				E
		K													R			
		O	I	F	I	H	A	D	A	W	I	S	H			Y		



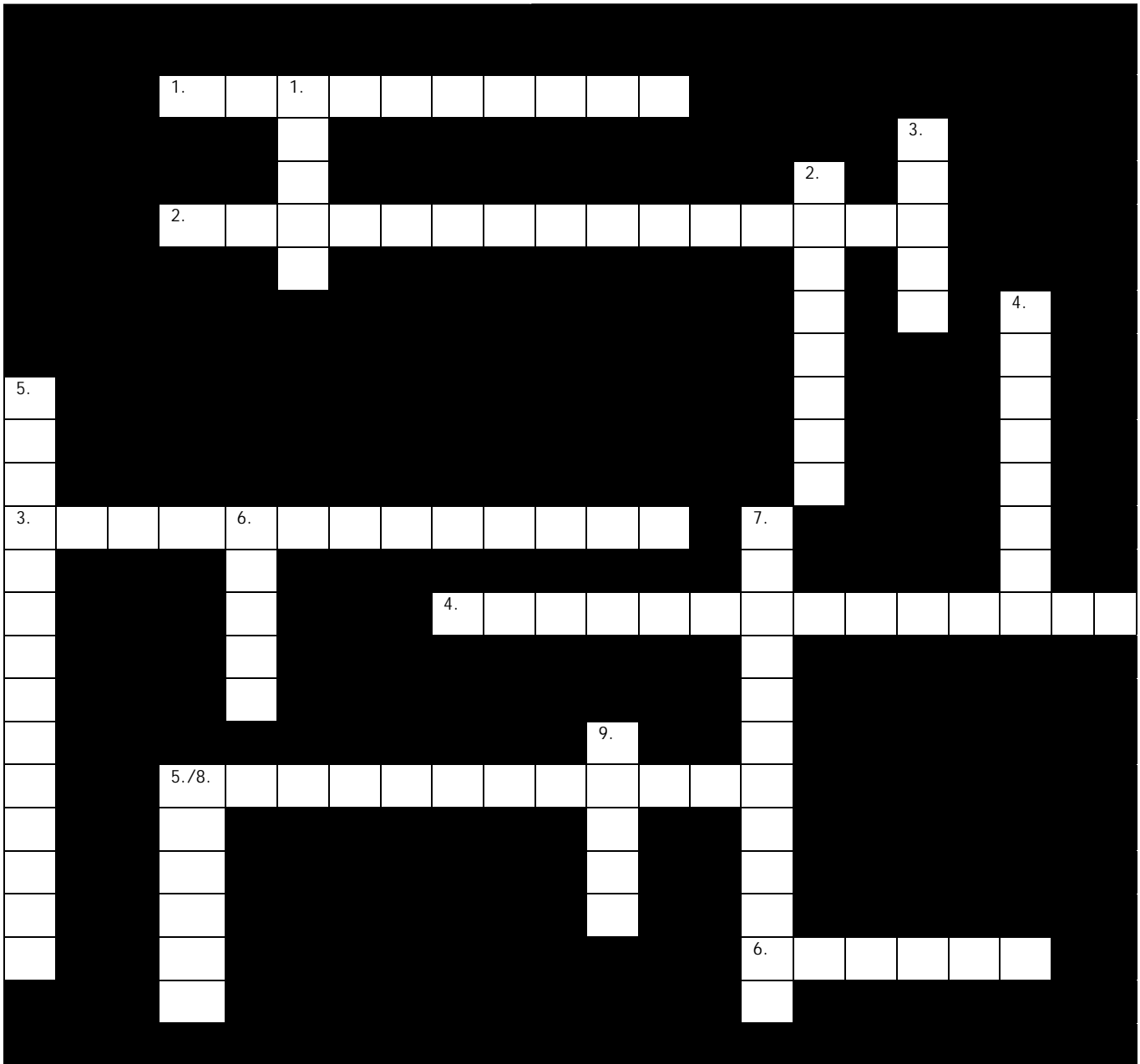
A Wonderful Life Crossword

Across

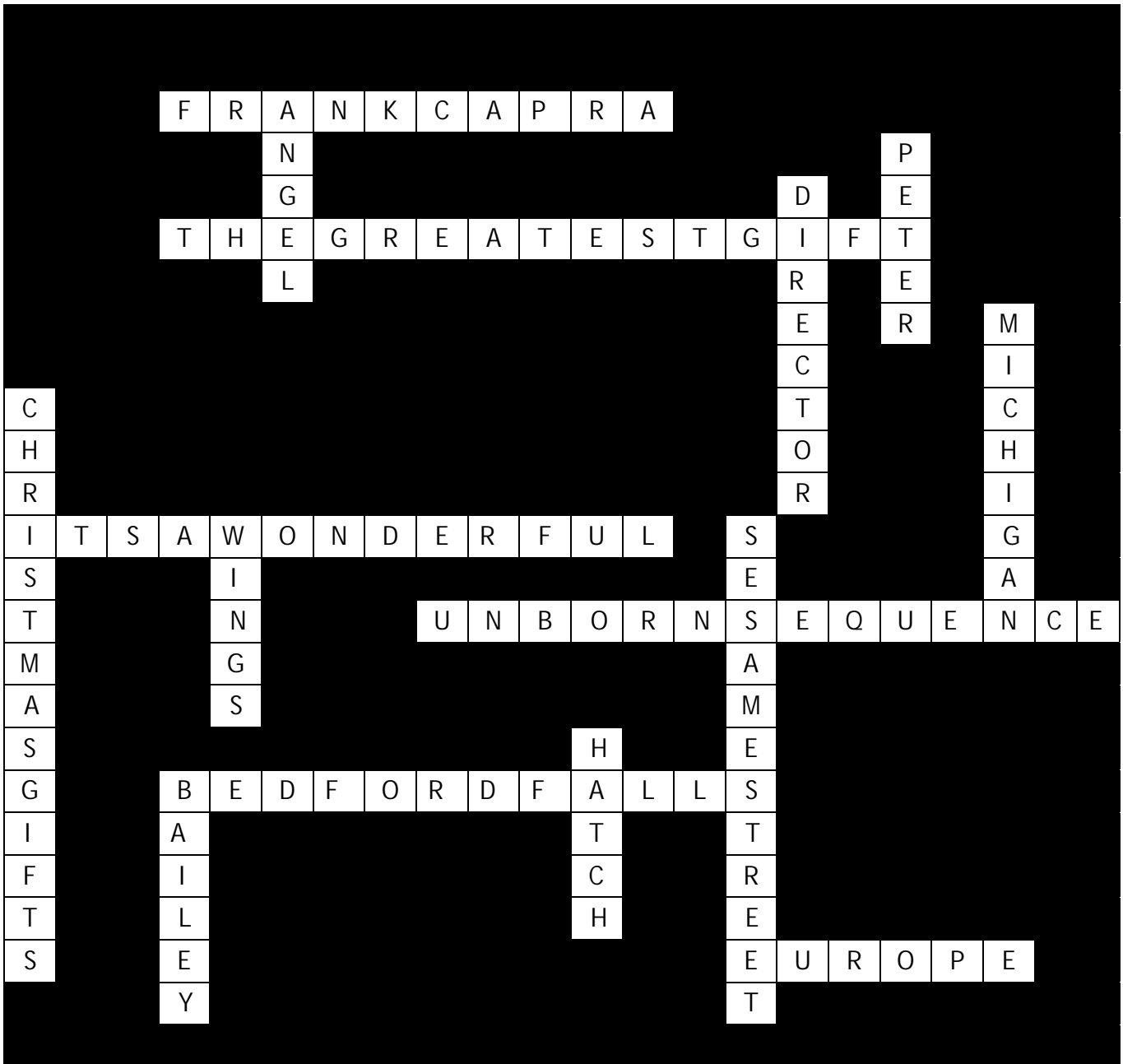
1. Director of movie
2. Name of short story based on
3. Name of movie _____ Life
4. Clarence shows how diff. Life would be in this
5. Setting of story (town)
6. *This Year* _____

Down

1. Clarence is an _____.
2. Frank Capra is the film _____.
3. Harnick also wrote *The Tale of _____ Rabbit*.
4. First production staged at University of _____.
5. Bailey children sang this
6. Clarence will earn these
7. Raposo worked for this kids TV show
8. George's last name
9. Mary's last name



A Wonderful Life Crossword Answer Key



The following questions are intended to encourage students to go beyond the surface of the play by engaging in literary analysis and outside research. These may be used to prompt class discussions or be given as written assignments.

Digging A Little Deeper

Plot: refers to the arrangement of the events in a story that each follow plausibly from one to the next to create a logical order

Exposition: devices by which critical elements of the plot, often involving back-story, are not directly depicted, but instead are presented through dialogue (or lyrics) by either characters or a narrator; information is often crucial for the audience to understand the story's action

Rising Action: refers to the period after the exposition and after a conflict has been introduced to a story's plot;

Climax: a point of a story's highest tension or drama

Falling Action: a series of events in a story that follow the climax which serve as a conclusion of the story

Resolution: the end of a story in which all conflicts are resolved, creating normality for the characters or release of tension and anxiety for the audience

Subplot: refers to a series of connected actions within a story that functions separately from the main plot and may connect to it either in time and place or thematic significance. Often involves the supporting characters in a story

Protagonist: the character that is the central figure of a story and his or her attitudes and actions are made clearest to the audience. Also characterized by an ability to change or evolve

Antagonist: the character, group of characters, or entity that represents the opposition against which the protagonist or other characters must contend with

Literary
Terminology

Discovering The Plot

1. Describe the main plot of the story in a brief paragraph. Next, identify a subplot, and summarize it and its relationship to the main plot.
2. Using the synopsis (pg. 13), categorize the important moments of the story into rising action, the climax, falling action, and the resolution. Briefly explain why you chose each moment in one or two sentences.
3. Become familiar with the meaning of exposition. In *A Wonderful Life*, what information was given that helped you understand the action of the story? In what ways did the show communicate this information? Was there any information you inferred (assumed) from the exposition? Think about the first song.
4. What role does Clarence play in the story (antagonist/ protagonist/ comic relief)? Can he fit into one clear role? Why or why not?
5. Who is the antagonist in the story? Is there more than one? Can you find a specific person or is it a group? Describe how an ideal the people have could fulfill the role of the antagonist as well?
6. This musical personifies the town at the end of the musical in a way that could be quite unexpected. Why do you think they did this?

Discovering The Historical Context

1. The Great Depression plays a major role in how George's life turned out. Give a brief description about how his life would change after this occurred. Why do you think the author chose this event?
2. One character that one would assume plays a major role in George's life, but isn't really stressed in the musical is Mary. Why do you feel she has such a small role? Name other factors of the time period that would contribute to this.
3. Many elements of this story transcend the time period and are relevant today. Describe two of these with your prediction on why they are still relevant.
4. What can be seen changing throughout the different years shown on stage? Do you think this is an accurate description. Why or why not?



Digging A Little Deeper (cont.)

Discovering The Theme

1. Identify and describe the major themes in *A Wonderful Life*. Do you feel the themes are easily discernable. If you believe they are more difficult to find, how so?
2. Explain the importance of the themes used in this musical placed around the holiday season. Do you feel that *A Wonderful Life* is supposed to be a reminder of some kind? How?
3. How does George show both good and bad family relationships throughout the show? Does this evolve? What theme could this tie into?
4. What do you feel the author was trying to illustrate when he showed both the good and the bad moments of George's life? What is this a reminder of?
5. At the end of the musical, the plot concludes very quickly. Why do you feel that the show lasted for a long time, but the resolution was so fast?

Discovering The Symbolism

1. What was the character of Potter supposed to symbolize? Think back to his job, character type, and relationship to George.
2. What is the town of Bedford Falls like? Why would it be shown this way? What ideal is this trying to uphold?
3. In this musical, George is the only character that shows extreme emotions and is placed in difficult situations. Why do you feel this is? Who does the character George represent?
4. Does Clarence fit the standard imagery of angels? Why or why not? How do you feel this impacts the effectiveness of the musical?
5. Since the film is such a classic movie, what do you think this means about society? What societal values does it uphold?



Get Creative!

The following project ideas are intended to enhance students' musical theatre experience through the analysis and creation of art. They may be assigned as in-class written assignments, take-home projects, or presentations.

EXTRA, EXTRA!

OBJECTIVE: To develop creative writing skills, further computer skills, and stimulate imagination.

ACTIVITY: In *A Wonderful Life*, the audience is privy to many of George's most personal moments. Think back on all those moments and try to write a report as if you were a Bedford Falls reporter. Think of catchy titles and inside scoops to excite the audience into reading your article. This report should be about 1/2 to 3/4s of a page long. After you have the bare bones story, use your computer skills to set up this article on a sheet of paper that looks like a newspaper. For advanced students, write mini articles to surround the feature like weather, local Bedford Falls' football scores, and baking recipes. Display all the different papers.

YOU ARE THE PLAYWRIGHT

OBJECTIVE: To engage creative writing, work on presentation skills through acting, encourage teamwork, and develop self confidence.

ACTIVITY: Everyone has moments that are important in their life. Think of 5 of these moments then choose your favorite one. You should then turn this life-changing moment into a script by writing dialogue, describing the characters, and including sets, costumes, lights, and sound cues. Try to describe the event as best as you can on paper because then everyone will get in groups of 4 and act the moments out. As a class, set aside time to work on these mini-productions for a week! Then, have an afternoon full of theatre with everyone performing. Remind students to use the theatre etiquette rules on page 7.

MOVIE TIME

OBJECTIVE: To develop writing skills, stimulate research, and develop presentation skills

ACTIVITY: As a class watch the classic Hollywood film *It's A Wonderful Life*. Since you have now seen the stage version, discuss the similarities and differences between the two. An important question to keep in mind is why did they change it. After this discussion, write in a 1-2 page persuasive paper why the creative teams of the 2 productions changed what they did. Use knowledge of the era, movie making, or the story itself to reinforce your argument. Once the assignment is completed, have interested students argue their case in front of the class.

CLARENCE

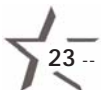
OBJECTIVE: To develop computer skills, understand Power Point, encourage creative writing, stimulate imagination, develop higher level thinking, and increase cause and effect logic skills.

ACTIVITY: Clarence has a very hard job when he is assigned to help George. Imagine if you were in Clarence's position, what would you do? Make a Power Point presentation to change George's mind. Explain the consequences his decision would render. Also, have him remember the good things, like Clarence did. Try to focus on the positive instead of the negative. After you have completed this, look it over and see what other information you might need to include. Once that is done, discuss as a class or in groups. What did you do the same, what did you do differently?



Mini Quiz

1. What was the short story inspired this musical?
 - a. *The Shabbiest Town*
 - b. *Try Again Sam*
 - c. *The Greatest Gift*
 - d. *Merry Christmas, Love Clarence*
 - e. *Wings*
2. How did RKO find this story from Phillip Van Doren Stern?
 - a. He pitched the idea
 - b. At a jazz cafe
 - c. An agent found this Christmas card
 - d. Well known anecdote
 - e. Director knew Van Doren
3. What imaginary town serves as the setting?
 - a. Bedford Falls
 - b. South Oaks
 - c. New Gruther
 - d. Boston
 - e. Brooks Briar
4. Who wrote the lyrics and score?
 - a. Joe Raposo
 - b. Frank Capra
 - c. Phillip Van Doren Stern
 - d. Sheldon Harnick
 - e. John Snyder
5. Who was the first to produce this show?
 - a. Theatre Under The Stars
 - b. University of Michigan
 - c. Arena Stage (Washington D.C.)
 - d. A theatre on Broadway
 - e. A West End theatre
6. What song does the musical open with?
 - a. *A Wonderful Life*
 - b. *Welcome A Hero*
 - c. *George's Prayer*
 - d. All of the above
 - e. None of the above
7. Who is George's younger brother?
 - a. Clarence
 - b. Harry
 - c. Joseph
 - d. Potter
 - e. None of the above
8. Who does George meet at the dance?
 - a. Clarence
 - b. Potter
 - c. Michelle
 - d. He doesn't attend
 - e. Mary
9. Who does George try to borrow money from?
 - a. No one- he is too proud
 - b. His father
 - c. Harry
 - d. Potter
 - e. Mary's family
10. What will happen if Clarence saves George?
 - a. He gets his wings
 - b. He won't be kicked out
 - c. Nothing
 - d. He will take Joseph's job
 - e. None of the above



Mini Quiz Answers

1. C
2. C
3. A
4. D
5. B
6. C
7. B
8. E
9. D
10. A



Section Six: Supplemental Materials

More Material

Memory Books

My Memory...

I was at _____. Then I saw
_____. After that,

A Wonderful Life Websites

Internet Broadway Database Listing
<http://www.ibdb.com/show.asp?ID=415073>

Paper Mill Playhouse Study Guide
(scroll to 2006-07 Season)
<http://papermill.org/outreach/studyguide.php>

It's A Wonderful Life on Internet Movie Database
<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0038650/>

Essay on Importance of Film
http://www.noirdame.com/blog/?page_id=5

General Websites

Internet Broadway Database
www.ibdb.com

Playbill
www.playbill.com

Houston Theatre
www.theatrereport.com

Musicals
www.musicals.net

Musical 101
www.musicals101.com

