

**shortcuts TO
happiness**
...THE PERFORMING ARTS...

Teacher Guide

www.pbs4549.org/shortcut



shortcuts TO happiness

.. THE PERFORMING ARTS ..

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Introduction

About the Series

Shortcuts to Happiness: The Performing Arts consists of 10 15-minute instructional television programs that feature performing artists and schools. It is useful in middle and high school music, theater, TV production, dance and speech classes. Each program introduces a professional performer and then captures students preparing a related performance. The intent is for students to understand that performances they prepare and do in class will be useful later in many career fields, or may even lead to a professional performing career. In other words, the series demonstrates real-world applications of the techniques taught in performing arts classes. Each episode is based on national and Ohio writing and performing arts curriculum standards.

Why Use This Series

As a teacher of a performing arts curriculum, consider yourself to be a native and your students to be immigrants. The immigrants are reacting to a whole new set of stimuli like language, body language and the production of new sounds. You, on the other hand, have already taken this journey in your preparation for teaching about something that you obviously love: performing. It is your responsibility to help students adapt to the new world they have entered by encouraging them to take chances in a safe environment.

The objectives of the series are to demonstrate to students the joy they can get out of performing and the hard work that is involved in developing each performance. The series gives a realistic look at how professionals must work hard to be successful, but that the hard work is enjoyable to them because they are doing something they love.

Series Goals

The students will:

1. Develop a personal philosophy and articulate the significance of the performing arts in their lives.
2. Recognize the relationship between concepts and skills learned in the performing arts with knowledge learned in other curricular subjects.
3. Recognize the relationship between concepts and skills learned in other curricular subjects with knowledge learned in the performing arts.
4. Establish criteria and apply analytical skills to critique the work of self and others.
5. Identify opportunities for lifelong involvement in the performing arts (e.g., career, patron, recreation and entertainment).
6. Compile a portfolio of performing arts experiences and accomplishments.

How to Use This Series

Pre-viewing Activities

Prepare your students to get the most out of the viewing experience with activities that set the stage for the learning process. Most students will have some prior knowledge of the subject. For example, they'll have watched a lot of acting on television, listened to a lot of music and given persuasive speeches to their parents. The **pre-viewing activities** are designed to bring their existing experiences into focus, to point out that they really aren't as new at this as they think. Set up the **viewing experience** by suggesting subjects to watch and listen for. However, do not pre-teach the lesson. In other words, don't tell them everything they are going to see in the video. It needs to be a new experience for them or they will become bored.

Watch the Video

Be ready to pause the video when something important has happened so that you can reinforce the topic by asking questions. The more interaction the students have, the better the learning experience. A 15-minute video can take a whole class period to show.

Follow-up Activities

The videos help students take a look at the world of performance. They demonstrate how professionals go about their daily business and then show other students preparing for a similar performance. The classroom activities are designed as building blocks to get your students ready to do performances like the ones spotlighted in each video.

Applying New Knowledge

These activities encourage students to use the information learned in the pre-viewing activity, video and follow-up activity. While these activities should be used for assigning grades, encourage your students to see them as opportunities to do performances. This project-based learning approach puts the writing and performing arts standards being addressed into a student-friendly context.

What Does It Really Take?

Embedded within each episode is an important discussion topic. These topics lead discussions past the "star quality" of each profession into the realm of what it really takes to make it in show business, or in some cases what it takes to be a good audience member. For example, if you are a drama teacher, you'll want to watch **What We Play Is Life: Musician** because it's about all the mental preparation it takes to be a performer. Or, if you teach music, don't skip **To Imagine Is Everything: Video Production** because it explores how performers are small-business owners. Each special topic has a Venn diagram to guide the discussion.

Assessment

Rubrics are provided for you to share with your students as they prepare their performances. Ensure that your students understand that critiquing their performance is an integral part of developing their performing skills.

Enjoy the Process

Always remember the reason you decided to teach. Helping students focus their energy to learn something new is very rewarding. Giving students the tools to continue learning and to go beyond the level to which you have brought them is an even greater reward.

Introducing the Series

Pre-viewing Activity: Analysis of the Performing Arts

This activity should be used prior to watching any of the videos in the *Shortcuts to Happiness* series. It is designed to introduce students to all aspects of the performing arts.

Choose two scenes from different movies that feature the same actor. Students are going to watch the scenes repeatedly, so pick something that will interest them. Choose an actor that is not playing the same role in two different movies, e.g. James Bond. A good example would be Meryl Streep in “Bridges of Madison County” and “Death Becomes Her.” Pick scenes that are a maximum of three minutes in length and are suitable for your class. Find scenes that will demonstrate the 10 topics listed below. To get things started, show each scene and then ask:

1. How are the scenes the same?
2. What are the differences between the two scenes?
3. Based on your observations of differences, why was it done that way?

Hand out the assessment rubric. Next, divide up the class into small groups and assign each group a topic listed below. As you show both scenes to the class, each group will be watching for something different. Show each scene at least three times to make sure your students catch all the subtleties. Have each group write a list of how their topic helps create each scene. The groups should report their observations to the entire class.

1. Actors bring more to a part than their own personality. How do their mannerisms and movements change?
2. How does the actor’s voice change and help define the character?
3. Music is so important to set a mood or tone in our lives and it’s the same in a movie. What is the composer trying to say in the scene? How is he or she saying it?
4. Most people tune out background noise, but it adds a lot to our perception of the surroundings. What background sounds are used? What picture is the sound technician trying to paint for our ears and how does it add to the production?
5. After watching the scenes several times you should start to pick up differences in writing, such as sentence length, word usage, etc. How does the writing style help define the scene?
6. All kinds of artists work on a production. Look for how a makeup artist helps shape our perception of the character.
7. Since most scenes use some form of supplemental lighting, look at how the lighting affects the scene. Is it moody, bright or dark, and does the color connote a time and place?
8. Someone put a lot of thought into the set design. How does it help you understand the character or plot?
9. How fashion conscious are you? What do the costumes say about the character?
10. Study how a video or film editor helps shape the pace and your involvement in the scene by counting the number of camera shots. How many shots were there and how does it contribute to the feel of the scene?

Blackline Master: Analysis of the Performing Arts

List the Differences Between the Two Scenes

1. How do the actors' mannerisms and movements change?
2. How does the actor's voice change and help define the character?
3. What is the musical composer trying to say in the scene?
4. What background sounds are used? What picture is the sound technician trying to paint?
5. How does the writing style such as sentence length, word usage, etc., help define the scene?
6. How does the makeup shape our perception of the character?
7. How does the lighting affect the scene? Is it moody, bright, dark?
8. How does the set help you understand the character or plot?
9. What do the costumes say about the character?
10. Count the number of camera shots. How many were there and how does this number contribute to the feel of the scene?

What Does It Really Take?

Venn Diagram: What Is It?

This type of diagram is useful for illustrating how a student can employ multiple skills to succeed. The more skills a person brings to a task, the better the chance for success. Hold a discussion to point out how the Venn diagram works:

If you have one skill, it's represented by one circle:

- Actors can appear in plays or commercials
- Dancers perform in a dance company or appear in music videos
- Singers perform with a band or in a choir

If you have two skills, they are represented by two circles:

- A singer-dancer can be in the chorus of a musical
- An actor-dancer can be in a nonmusical play that requires dancing
- An actor-singer can be in a play that requires singing

If you have three skills, where the three circles overlap is where you are:

- You can get the lead role in a musical

Have your students name other jobs and create a Venn diagram for each.

Blackline Master

Analysis of the Performing Arts

Assessment: Analysis of the Performing Arts

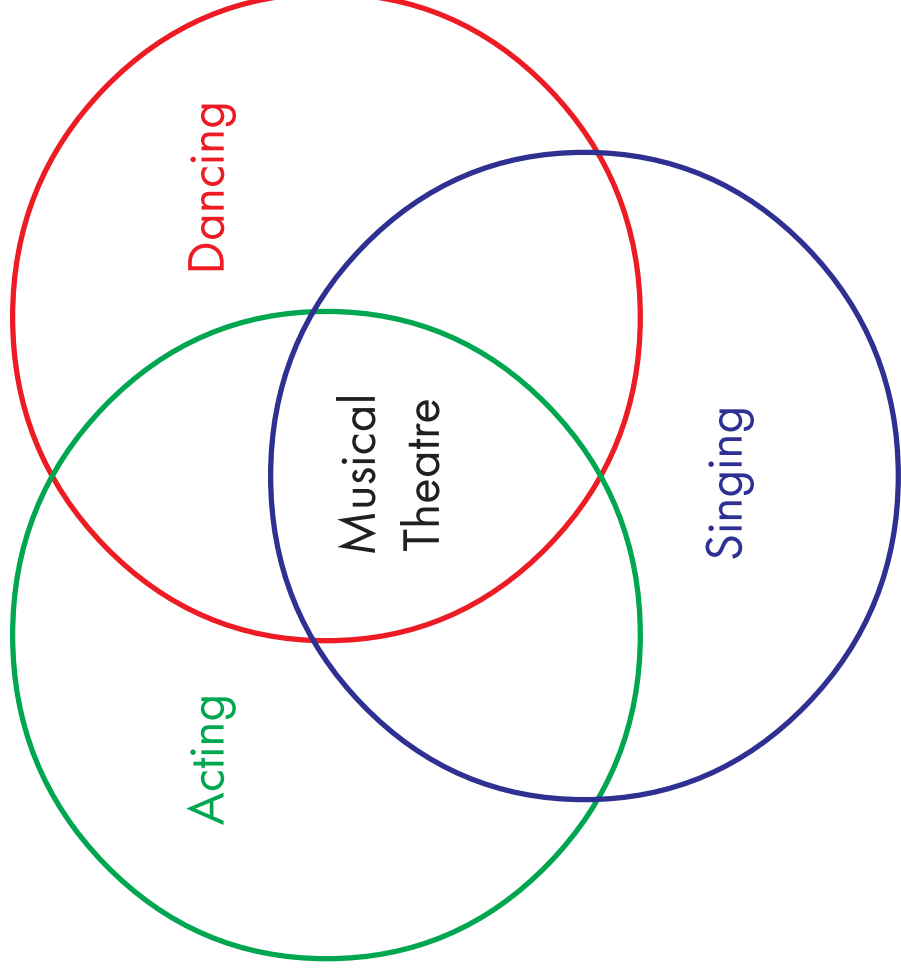
Category	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Needs Improvement
Content Observation	Lists a majority of the creative building blocks in the scene. Correctly identifies how the topic adds to the scene.	Lists some of the creative building blocks in the scene. Correctly identifies how the topic adds to the scene.	Lists a few of the creative building blocks in the scene. Shows some understanding of how the topic adds to the scene.	Does not identify the creative building blocks, or shows no understanding of how the topic adds to the scene.
Comparison of the Scenes	Correctly explains differences based on the way the assigned topic is used in each scene.	Points out differences in the scenes but has trouble explaining how the topic helped create the differences.	Points out differences in each scene with no explanation of how the topic helped create the differences.	Cannot point out any differences in the scenes.
Collaboration With Peers	Almost always listens to, shares with and supports the efforts of others in the group. Tries to keep people working well together.	Usually listens to, shares with and supports the efforts of others in the group. Does not cause problems within the group.	Often listens to, shares with and supports the efforts of others in the group. Sometimes is not a good team member.	Rarely listens to, shares with and supports the efforts of others in the group. Often is not a good team member.

Rubric adapted from: TeAch-nology: The Web Portal for Educators!, www.teachnology.com

What Is It?

Each circle represents one skill

Multiple skills are used when the circles overlap



List the Differences Between the Two Scenes

1. How do the actors' mannerisms and movements change?
2. How does the actor's voice change and help define the character?
3. What is the musical composer trying to say in the scene?
4. What background sounds are used? What picture is the sound technician trying to paint?
5. How does the writing style such as sentence length, word usage, etc., help define the scene?
6. How does the makeup shape our perception of the character?
7. How does the lighting affect the scene? Is it moody, bright, dark?
8. How does the set help you understand the character or plot?
9. What do the costumes say about the character?
10. Count the number of camera shots. How many were there and how does this number contribute to the feel of the scene?

Dance is music
made visible.

— George Balanchine

Music Made Visible: Dance

Synopsis of the TV program **Music Made Visible: Dance**

Professional: Jesse Factor, dancer with the Broadway touring company of *Cats*

School activity: Student dancers from the Dancing Wheels dance company

Lesson plan developed by

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Outcome

Students will apply knowledge of the choreographic principles, processes and structures in the creation, interpretation and performance of dance.

Curriculum Standards Addressed

The students will:

1. Analyze the similarities and differences between dance and the other art forms on the basis of fundamental concepts such as elements, themes and ways of communicating meaning.
2. Identify dance career options and explain the specialized training, experience and education required for each.
3. Effectively communicate a personal knowledge of the elements of dance from the perspective of a performer as well as a viewer.
4. Perform works requiring greater movement range, expression, personal interpretation and risk-taking.

Pre-viewing Activity

With a partner, have your students do a mirror exercise. The students should sit and face each other, with one student acting as the leader and the other as the follower. The leader should use hand, arm, face and upper-body motions. Make sure each student has a chance to be the leader. After a short practice time, turn on some music (soothing and slow at first) and have them do the exercise to the beat of the music. Change the music at least once so they have to change the pace of their motions.

Questions to ask at the end of this exercise:

- Was it easy to follow the other person?
- Were the movements too fast or too slow?
- How did the movements change when the music changed?

Students should be guided to the conclusions that dance involves body movement, may involve moving to music and can be taught and learned.

Follow-up Activity: Sculpting Dance

Introducing the elements of dance: space, time and force

Space

Divide the class into pairs. One person pretends to be clay and the other pretends to be the sculptor. The sculptor is to place the clay into a body position and then mirror the position. They will be sculpting three body positions that they should be able to remember so they can re-create them later in the class.

Position 1: Put the "clay" in a high-level position, which, for example, would require the person to stand on tiptoes with arms extended above his or her head. The sculptor then mirrors the clay's position.

Position 2: Trade jobs and have the sculptor put the clay in a mid-level position, which might be standing, crouching or kneeling. The sculptor then mirrors the clay's position.

Position 3: Trade jobs again and have the sculptor put the clay in a low-level position, such as seated or lying down. The sculptor again mirrors the clay's position.

After all three body positions are completed, the students should practice each position so they can re-create them.

Time

Introduce time by having the students hold each of their positions for a number of beats that you count out. For example, count to four and then have them change positions (1 - 2 - 3 - 4 change, 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 change, 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 change). Do different beat patterns of eight counts, three counts and two counts. Once they have the idea, use music with different beats and have them do their poses counting to the time of the music.

Force

Have the students melt from their high-level position to their mid-level position and then to their low-level position. Do the changes using 32 counts, 16 counts, eight counts and four counts. Point out that the quicker beat creates a sharper body movement and the slower beat creates a more fluid body movement. Have the students do the melting exercises to three different pieces of music. Make sure each piece of music has a different tempo.

At this stage of the activity you should point out that they have choreographed a dance composition.

Discussion

1. The elements can now be named:
 - Step 1 equals **space** or how dancers create shapes that take up space.
 - Step 2 equals **time** or how changing the duration of the poses affects speed.
 - Step 3 equals **force** or how melting equates to using less muscle power and how sharper movements equate to using more muscle power.
2. Space, time and force are interrelated. For example, the less time you use for each movement the more speed and force you will use.
3. These elements, or terms, are used by the choreographer and dancer as a common language to express verbally how the dance should look and feel.
4. Dance conveys a message to an audience through the elements of movement. Most often the movements are united with music to increase the impact on the audience. A choreographer combines movement and music so the audience is using two senses, sight and hearing, to receive the message.
5. Comparing the movements that the students have choreographed to those by professional dancers is like comparing pedestrians to Olympic runners. Olympians are trained and polished to a much higher level in the following areas:
 - Balance
 - Flexibility
 - Strength
 - Stamina
 - Grace
6. It should also be pointed out that there are different types of artistic dance:
 - Jazz
 - Ballet
 - Modern
 - Tap
 - Folk
 - Ballroom

Applying New Knowledge

Hand out the assessment rubric. As a concluding exercise, groups of two students will choreograph a piece in which they form the letters of a word with their bodies. The piece should be set to music.

Depending on how advanced your students are, you can have them write a paragraph explaining the different body positions they used (high, mid, low), what tempo they used and the force used. Have them express what they were trying to convey with their choice of the word they spelled out, the movements they used and their music.

What Does It Really Take?

Venn Diagram: Overcoming Obstacles – All Kinds of Talents Are Needed

Everyone has obstacles to overcome in life so everyone must find ways to cope. There's room for everyone in the performing arts. Discuss how each of the descriptors adds to a good performance. What other descriptors could be used? Have your students name some obstacles and how they might overcome them.

For example:

- In a wheelchair – dance
- Can't sing a note – learn to act
- Can't act – learn to sing
- Suffer stage fright – produce or direct
- Have poor coordination – have someone else saw the lumber

Assessment: Sculpting Dance

Category	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Needs Improvement
Dance Elements	Demonstrates an understanding of space, time and force in the structuring of dance.	Demonstrates some understanding of the elements of dance.	Demonstrates an understanding of some, but not all, elements of dance.	Does not demonstrate an understanding of any of the elements of dance.
Student-Choreographed Dance	Creates a dance piece that uses a variety of techniques in which the correlation between the music, movement and word portrayed is consistent.	Creates a dance piece in which the correlation between the music, movement and word portrayed is consistent.	Creates a dance piece in which the correlation between the music, movement and word portrayed is recognizable.	Creates a dance piece that does not portray anything that is recognizable.
Written Explanation of Student-Choreographed Dance	Explains how the elements of dance and music work together to create an effect on the audience.	Explains how the dance and music work to create an effect on the audience.	Explains how the dance or music works to create an effect on the audience.	Cannot explain how the dance or music works to create an effect on the audience.
Collaboration With Peers	Almost always listens to, shares with and supports the efforts of others in the group. Tries to keep people working well together.	Usually listens to, shares with and supports the efforts of others in the group. Does not cause problems within the group.	Often listens to, shares with and supports the efforts of others in the group. Sometimes is not a good team member.	Rarely listens to, shares with and supports the efforts of others in the group. Often is not a good team member.

Rubric adapted from: TeAch-nology: The Web Portal for Educators!: www.teachnology.com

Overcoming Obstacles

What talents do you have that can help you succeed?

