

Section 1: Curriculum Connections

The following study guide for *Driving Miss Daisy* is a practical, hands-on resource for the classroom, which contains background information related to the play and standard curriculum-based activities. The research, discussion, and interactive activities can be explored before and re-explored after attending the production of *Driving Miss Daisy*.

Purpose of Theater Arts

Through theater activities that foster creative expression, discipline, collaboration, self-awareness and personal transformation, students of diverse backgrounds and abilities channel their energies into inspiring artistic endeavors. Students engaged in Theater Making learn to value the literary, oral and cultural traditions of societies. They learn to express themselves and develop empathy for their own and other's situations. They begin to understand universal themes and ways of looking at the world, and they develop the means to express their own vision and ideas. Teaching and learning in theater develops confident learners who are better prepared to participate actively in their education, community and social lives.

General Connections of the natural relationships between the arts and reading, writing, and mathematics

Reading

- ✓ The approach to listening to a new piece of music is virtually identical to that used in reading a new story for the first time
- ✓ The process used to analyze dramatic text in theater arts closely parallels that used in English language arts to analyze any written work
- ✓ The analytical skills used in analyzing a reading passage are similar to those taught to view and analyze a painting, sculpture or other work of art

Writing

- ✓ The process used to write plays in theater arts is inherently the same as that used to teach writing in English language arts
- ✓ The writing skills needed to write a critique or analyze artwork in visual arts are the same as those required in English language arts
- ✓ The creation of choreography in dance follows very closely the procedure used to teach writing in English language arts

Mathematics

- ✓ The mathematic principles used in designing and constructing scenery in theater arts are the same as those used in geometry, algebra, and physics.
- ✓ The geometric shapes, proportions and relationships used in visual arts are those used in mathematics

The information and activities contained in this study guide focus on a theater-based curriculum but the guide also connects to the following related subjects: Social Studies, History, Behavioral and Life Skills, Language Arts, and Mathematics.

Driving Miss Daisy is recommended for students in Grade 8 and higher. Below are the Grade 8 benchmarks of the NYC Department of Education *Blueprint for Teaching and Learning in the Arts* curriculum. The New York City Department of Education's *Blueprint for Teaching and Learning in the Arts* provides a standards-based, rigorous approach to teaching the arts. While the study guide for *Driving Miss Daisy* cannot possibly meet every curriculum expectation at the Grade 8 or higher level, many curricular connections are made. These connections are highlighted in bold.

Theater Making: Acting

- **Students enhance and develop their performance skills while learning to work in diverse styles and forms, such as improvisation, theater games, spoken word, physical theater, clowning, puppetry, story theater, or musical theater.**
- **Students continue to develop the processes and the analytical and imaginative skills associated with acting.**

Theater Making: Playwriting/Play Making

- Middle school students will increase their range of expression as playwrights through the use of vocabulary and dramatic structure, and by exploring various theatrical styles and forms.
- **Students apply elements of research, imagination and revision in their dramatic writing.**
- **Working alone and in groups, students begin to recognize and articulate their personal vision and the cultural context of their work.**

Theater Making: Designing and Technical Theater

- Students expand their skills by examining and participating in the sequential processes of moving from design to production.
- **As designers, students make personal and artistic choices to convey meaning.**
- **Students experiment with transforming space in order to understand the abstract elements of design.**
- Students develop communication skills and proficiency in the use of theater documents while engaged in the authentic process of theater production.

Theater Making: Directing

- **Students develop a holistic understanding of theater and the diverse skills required of a director.**
- Students become competent in the basic elements of directing and recognize the work of directors in theater productions.
- **Students express personal vision and demonstrate an understanding of context through articulating directorial concepts.**

Developing Theater Literacy

- **Students apply an understanding of dramatic text and theater history in their critical responses as they enhance their skills to critique live performance.**
- **Students use vocabulary that is authentic and integral to theater.**
- **Students develop an appreciation of the role of theater in various cultures by exploring eras and personages in theater history.**
- **Students enhance their ability to critique live performance, and they apply an understanding of dramatic text and theater history in their critical responses.**

Making Connections Through Theater

- **Students broaden their understanding of theater by applying concrete learning from other disciplines.**
- **Students investigate how arts are incorporated in the theater production, and articulate the distinct choices that are made within the art forms to interpret and develop the theater work.**
- **Students examine the themes and context of theater works to recognize and connect personal experience to universal themes.**

Working With Community and Cultural Resources

- Through school partnerships, students broaden their horizons in theater and gain an understanding of the mission and goals of theater organizations.

- Students increase their capacity in Theater Making through collaborations with theater professionals.
- **Students increase their understanding of theater history and compare diverse productions and theater companies by using various research resources.**
- **Students share their theater learning by performing for others including their own school, families and communities.**

Exploring Careers and Lifelong Learning

- Students assess and evaluate their own personal and professional skills through the identification and examination of theater careers.
- Students become informed, active participants in deciding on a high school career by researching opportunities.
- **Students cultivate a personal response to and affinity for theater as a part of their lives.**