



Your Custom Handbook

Understanding and Using the National Core Arts Standards

The arts have always served as the distinctive vehicle for discovering who we are. Providing ways of thinking as disciplined as science or math and as disparate as philosophy or literature, the arts are used by and have shaped every culture and individual on earth. They continue to infuse our lives on nearly all levels—generating a significant part of the creative and intellectual capital that drives our economy. The arts inform our lives with meaning every time we experience the joy of a well-remembered song, experience the flash of inspiration that comes with immersing ourselves in an artist’s sculpture, enjoying a sublime dance, learning from an exciting animation, or being moved by a captivating play.

The central purposes of education standards are to identify the learning that we want for all of our students and to drive improvement in the system that delivers that learning. Standards, therefore, should embody the key concepts, processes and traditions of study in each subject area, and articulate the aspirations of those invested in our schools—students, teachers, administrators, and the community at large. To realize that end goal, these new, voluntary National Core Arts Standards are framed by artistic literacy, as outlined in philosophical foundations, lifelong goals, and artistic processes; articulated as anchor and performance standards that students should attain; and supported by instructional resources, including model cornerstone assessments that illustrate how literacy might be measured. The connective threads of this conceptual framework are designed to be understood by all stakeholders and, ultimately, to ensure success for both educators and students.

While broad in concept, the standards are also focused in a framework that delivers the educational nuance of standards in only four artistic processes, bringing together what artists do and what we want for our students. Within this simple and elegant structure, decision-makers from teachers, to superintendents, to parents will be able to move forward in the rich variety of approaches that have become part of the American educational landscape.

The National Core Arts Standards are designed to guide the delivery of arts education in the classroom with new ways of thinking, learning, and creating. The standards also inform policy-makers about implementation of arts programs for the traditional and emerging models and structures of education. As with other subject areas, a commitment to quality education, equitable

opportunities, and comprehensive expectations is embedded within the new arts standards.

[Inclusion Guidelines](#)

Theatre

Welcome to the 2014 Theatre Standards. These grade-by-grade standards are an effort to articulate the most fundamental elements of theatre, in the hope that by doing so there will be recognition that every student can and should achieve a level of proficiency or beyond in this ancient and honorable craft. The most widespread theatre education opportunities in the United States have traditionally been in high schools, and the standards included here can readily be employed as a springboard for curriculum design and assessment at that level. The standards in the earlier grades suggest the same rigor and understanding but it's understood that at each successively earlier grade, there are fewer and fewer theatre programs and trained educators to teach in them. Thus, the PreK through middle grade standards are largely aspirational—what should be in our schools and arts programs.

The 2014 Theatre Standards are written with both drama processes and theatre products in mind. While many secondary theatre programs focus on performance and design in staged productions as evidence of a student's understanding and achievement in the art, ongoing student engagement in theatre without an end product in mind has not always been defined and valued. These standards address those drama processes as well as traditional theatre. Drama processes encompass envisioned worlds and unscripted activities designed to engage students in a wide range of real and imagined issues; theatre includes the broader and more traditional conventions of the craft that have been developed over the centuries—scripted plays, acting, public performance, and stagecraft.

To address both process and product in theatre, the grade 3 through high school standards of Proficient, Advanced, and Accomplished often include the term “drama/theatre” to clarify the distinct but companion parts of theatre education. The PreK through grade 2 standards, acknowledging the early childhood need for supervision and unfettered play, employ the phraseology “dramatic play” and/or “guided drama experience.”

You will also find Model Cornerstone Assessments (MCAs) intended to show the ways in which standards serve as a foundation for the creation of reliable and authentic measurements of student learning in theatre. These MCAs are not put forth as a definitive assessment of a particular set of skills; rather they presented to inspire teachers to create their own assessments that serve both their pedagogy and the learning needs of their students.

Please see the resources on these two partner organizations websites:

[Educational Theatre Association](#)

[American Alliance for Theatre and Education](#)

[Model Cornerstone Assessments:](#)

- [Grade 2](#)
- [Grade 5](#)
- [Grade 8: A](#)
- [Grade 8: B](#)
- [High School: Proficient](#)
- [High School: Accomplished](#)
- [High School: Advanced](#)

Additional Resources:

- [Inclusion Guidelines](#)
- [Theatre Standards Glossary](#)

Theatre/Connecting

#TH:Cn10.1

Process Component: Empathize

Anchor Standard: Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.

Enduring Understanding: Theatre artists allow awareness of interrelationships between self and others to influence and inform their work.

Essential Question: What happens when theatre artists foster understanding between self and others through critical awareness, social responsibility, and the exploration of empathy?

Grade Hs proficient

TH:Cn10.1.HSI

a. Investigate how cultural perspectives, community ideas and personal beliefs impact a drama/theatre work.

Grade Hs accomplished

TH:Cn10.1.HSII

a. Choose and interpret a drama/theatre work to reflect or question personal beliefs.

Grade Hs advanced

TH:Cn10.1.HSIII

a. Collaborate on a drama/theatre work that examines a critical global issue using multiple personal, community, and cultural perspectives.

Theatre/Connecting

#TH:Cn11.1

Process Component: Interrelate

Anchor Standard: Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.

Enduring Understanding: Theatre artists understand and can communicate their creative process as they analyze the way the world may be understood.

Essential Question: What happens when theatre artists allow an understanding of themselves and the world to inform perceptions about theatre and the purpose of their work?

Grade Hs proficient

TH:Cn11.1.HSI

a. Explore how cultural, global, and historic belief systems affect creative choices in a drama/theatre work.

Grade Hs accomplished

TH:Cn11.1.HSII

a. Integrate conventions and knowledge from different art forms and other disciplines to develop a cross-cultural drama/theatre work.

Grade Hs advanced

TH:Cn11.1.HSIII

a. Develop a drama/theatre work that identifies and questions cultural, global, and historic belief systems.

Theatre/Connecting

#TH:Cn11.2

Process Component: Research

Anchor Standard: Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.

Enduring Understanding: Theatre artists critically inquire into the ways others have thought about and created drama processes and productions to inform their own work.

Essential Question: In what ways can research into theatre histories, theories, literature, and performances alter the way a drama process or production is understood?

Grade Hs proficient

TH:Cn11.2.HSI

- a. Research how other theatre artists apply creative processes to tell stories in a devised or scripted drama/theatre work, using theatre research methods.
 - b. Use basic theatre research methods to better understand the social and cultural background of a drama/theatre work.
-

Grade Hs accomplished

TH:Cn11.2.HSII

- a. Formulate creative choices for a devised or scripted drama/theatre work based on theatre research about the selected topic.
 - b. Explore how personal beliefs and biases can affect the interpretation of research data applied in drama/theatre work.
-

Grade Hs advanced

TH:Cn11.2.HSIII

- a. Justify the creative choices made in a devised or scripted drama/theatre work, based on a critical interpretation of specific data from theatre research.
- b. Present and support an opinion about the social, cultural, and historical understandings of a drama/theatre work, based on critical research.

Theatre/Creating

#TH:Cr1.1

Process Component: Envision, Conceptualize

Anchor Standard: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.

Enduring Understanding: Theatre artists rely on intuition, curiosity, and critical inquiry.

Essential Question: What happens when theatre artists use their imaginations and/or learned theatre skills while engaging in creative exploration and inquiry?

Grade Hs proficient

TH:Cr1.1.HSI

- a. Apply basic research to construct ideas about the visual composition of a drama/theatre work.
 - b. Explore the impact of technology on design choices in a drama/theatre work.
-

Grade Hs accomplished

TH:Cr1.1.HSII

- a. Investigate historical and cultural conventions and their impact on the visual composition of a drama/theatre work.
 - b. Understand and apply technology to design solutions for a drama/theatre work.
-

Grade Hs advanced

TH:Cr1.1.HSIII

- a. Synthesize knowledge from a variety of dramatic forms, theatrical conventions, and technologies

to create the visual composition of a drama/ theatre work.

b. Create a complete design for a drama/theatre work that incorporates all elements of technology.

Theatre/Creating

#TH:Cr2.1

Process Component: Develop

Anchor Standard: Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.

Enduring Understanding: Theatre artists work to discover different ways of communicating meaning

Essential Question: How, when, and why do theatre artists' choices change?

Grade Hs proficient

TH:Cr2.1.HSI

- a. Explore the function of history and culture in the development of a dramatic concept through a critical analysis of original ideas in a drama/theatre work.
 - b. Investigate the collaborative nature of the actor, director, playwright, and designers and explore their interdependent roles in a drama/theatre work.
-

Grade Hs accomplished

TH:Cr2.1.HSII

- a. Refine a dramatic concept to demonstrate a critical understanding of historical and cultural influences of original ideas applied to a drama/theatre work.
 - b. Cooperate as a creative team to make interpretive choices for a drama/theatre work.
-

Grade Hs advanced

TH:Cr2.1.HSIII

- a. Develop and synthesize original ideas in a drama/theatre work utilizing critical analysis, historical and cultural context, research, and western or non-western theatre traditions.
- b. Collaborate as a creative team to discover artistic solutions and make interpretive choices in a devised or scripted drama/theatre work.

Theatre/Creating

#TH:Cr3.1

Process Component: Rehearse

Anchor Standard: Refine new work through play, drama processes and theatre experiences using critical analysis and experimentation.

Enduring Understanding: Theatre artists refine their work and practice their craft through rehearsal.

Essential Question: How do theatre artists transform and edit their initial ideas?

Grade Hs proficient

TH:Cr3.1.HSI

- a. Practice and revise a devised or scripted drama/theatre work using theatrical staging conventions.
 - b. Explore physical, vocal and physiological choices to develop a performance that is believable, authentic, and relevant to a drama/theatre work.
 - c. Refine technical design choices to support the story and emotional impact of a devised or scripted drama/ theatre work.
-

Grade Hs accomplished

TH:Cr3.1.HSII

- a. Use the rehearsal process to analyze the dramatic concept and technical design elements of a devised or scripted drama/theatre work.
- b. Use research and script analysis to revise physical, vocal, and physiological choices impacting the believability and relevance of a drama/ theatre work.

c. Re-imagine and revise technical design choices during the course of a rehearsal process to enhance the story and emotional impact of a devised or scripted drama/theatre work.

Grade Hs advanced

TH:Cr3.1.HSIII

- a. Refine, transform, and re-imagine a devised or scripted drama/theatre work using the rehearsal process to invent or re-imagine style, genre, form, and conventions.
- b. Synthesize ideas from research, script analysis, and context to create a performance that is believable, authentic, and relevant in a drama/theatre work.
- c. Apply a high level of technical proficiencies to the rehearsal process to support the story and emotional impact of a devised or scripted drama/theatre work.

Theatre/Performing

#TH:Pr4.1

Process Component: Select

Anchor Standard: Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation.

Enduring Understanding: Theatre artists make strong choices to effectively convey meaning.

Essential Question: Why are strong choices essential to interpreting a drama or theatre piece?

Grade Hs proficient

TH:Pr4.1.HSI

- a. Examine how character relationships assist in telling the story of a drama/theatre work.
 - b. Shape character choices using given circumstances in a drama/theatre work.
-

Grade Hs accomplished

TH:Pr4.1.HSII

- a. Discover how unique choices shape believable and sustainable drama/ theatre work.
 - b. Identify essential text information, research from various sources, and the director's concept that influence character choices in a drama/theatre work.
-

Grade Hs advanced

TH:Pr4.1.HSIII

- a. Apply reliable research of directors' styles to form unique choices for a directorial concept in a drama/theatre work.
- b. Apply a variety of researched acting techniques as an approach to character choices in a drama/theatre work.

Theatre/Performing

#TH:Pr5.1

Process Component: Prepare

Anchor Standard: Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation.

Enduring Understanding: Theatre artists develop personal processes and skills for a performance or design.

Essential Question: What can I do to fully prepare a performance or technical design?

Grade Hs proficient

TH:Pr5.1.HSI

- a. Practice various acting techniques to expand skills in a rehearsal or drama/theatre performance.
 - b. Use researched technical elements to increase the impact of design for a drama/theatre production.
-

Grade Hs accomplished

TH:Pr5.1.HSII

- a. Refine a range of acting skills to build a believable and sustainable drama/theatre performance.
 - b. Apply technical elements and research to create a design that communicates the concept of a drama/theatre production.
-

Grade Hs advanced

TH:Pr5.1.HSIII

- a. Use and justify a collection of acting exercises from reliable resources to prepare a believable and sustainable performance.
- b. Explain and justify the selection of technical elements used to build a design that communicates the concept of a drama/theatre production.

Theatre/Performing

#TH:Pr6.1

Process Component: Share, Present

Anchor Standard: Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.

Enduring Understanding: Theatre artists share and present stories, ideas, and envisioned worlds to explore the human experience.

Essential Question: What happens when theatre artists and audiences share a creative experience?

Grade Hs proficient

TH:Pr6.1.HSI

- a. Perform a scripted drama/theatre work for a specific audience.

Grade Hs accomplished

TH:Pr6.1.HSII

a. Present a drama/theatre work using creative processes that shape the production for a specific audience.

Grade Hs advanced

TH:Pr6.1.HSIII

a. Present a drama/theatre production for a specific audience that employs research and analysis grounded in the creative perspectives of the playwright, director, designer, and dramaturg.

Theatre/Responding

#TH:Re7.1

Process Component: Reflect

Anchor Standard: Perceive and analyze artistic work.

Enduring Understanding: Theatre artists reflect to understand the impact of drama processes and theatre experiences.

Essential Question: How do theatre artists comprehend the essence of drama processes and theatre experiences?

Grade Hs proficient

TH:Re7.1.HSI

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

Grade Hs accomplished

TH:Re7.1.HSII

a. Demonstrate an understanding of multiple interpretations of artistic criteria and how each might be used to influence future artistic choices of a drama/theatre work.

Grade Hs advanced

TH:Re71.HSIII

a. Use historical and cultural context to structure and justify personal responses to a drama/theatre work.

Theatre/Responding

#TH:Re8.1

Process Component: Interpret

Anchor Standard: Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.

Enduring Understanding: Theatre artists' interpretations of drama/theatre work are influenced by personal experiences and aesthetics.

Essential Question: How can the same work of art communicate different messages to different people?

Grade Hs proficient

TH:Re8.1.HSI

a. Analyze and compare artistic choices developed from personal experiences in multiple drama/theatre works.

b. Identify and compare cultural perspectives and contexts that may influence the evaluation of a drama/theatre work.

Grade Hs accomplished

TH:Re8.1.HSII

a. Develop detailed supporting evidence and criteria to reinforce artistic choices, when participating

in or observing a drama/theatre work.

b. Apply concepts from a drama/theatre work for personal realization about cultural perspectives and understanding.

Grade Hs advanced

TH:Re8.1.HSIII

a. Use detailed supporting evidence and appropriate criteria to revise personal work and interpret the work of others when participating in or observing a drama/ theatre work.

b. Use new understandings of cultures and contexts to shape personal responses to drama/theatre work.

Theatre/Responding

#TH:Re9.1

Process Component: Evaluate

Anchor Standard: Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work.

Enduring Understanding: Theatre artists apply criteria to investigate, explore, and assess drama and theatre work.

Essential Question: How are the theatre artist's processes and the audience's perspectives impacted by analysis and synthesis?

Grade Hs proficient

TH:Re9.1.HSI

a. Examine a drama/ theatre work using supporting evidence and criteria, while considering art forms, history, culture, and other disciplines.

b. Consider the aesthetics of the production elements in a drama/theatre work.

c. Formulate a deeper understanding and appreciation of a drama/ theatre work by considering its specific purpose or intended audience.

Grade Hs accomplished

TH:Re9.1.HSII

- a. Analyze and assess a drama/theatre work by connecting it to art forms, history, culture, and other disciplines using supporting evidence and criteria.
 - b. Construct meaning in a drama/theatre work, considering personal aesthetics and knowledge of production elements while respecting others' interpretations.
 - c. Verify how a drama/theatre work communicates for a specific purpose and audience.
-

Grade Hs advanced

TH:Re9.1.HSIII

- a. Research and synthesize cultural and historical information related to a drama/theatre work to support or evaluate artistic choices.
- b. Analyze and evaluate varied aesthetic interpretations of production elements for the same drama/theatre work.
- c. Compare and debate the connection between a drama/theatre work and contemporary issues that may impact audiences.

Theatre Glossary

Acting techniques: specific skills, pedagogies, theories, or methods of investigation used by an actor to prepare for a theatre performance

Believability: theatrical choices thought to be true based upon an understanding of any given fictional moment, interpretation of text, and/or human interaction

Character Traits: observable embodied actions that illustrate a character's personality, values, beliefs, and history

Conflict: the problem, confrontation, or struggle in a scene or play; conflict may include a character against him or herself, a character in opposition to another character, a character against nature, a character against society, or a character against the supernatural

Creative Drama: a process-centered, non-exhibitional approach to drama intended to benefit the

performers themselves; story drama and process drama are two types of creative drama

Creative Processes: the application of production and technical elements (see the definitions) to a theatrical production

Devised Drama: creation of an original performance piece by an ensemble

Dialogue: a conversation between two or more characters

Dramatic Play: make-believe where children naturally assign and accept roles, then act them out

Focus: commitment by a participant (an actor, technician, director) to remain in the scope of the project or to stay within the world of the play

Genre: relating to a specific kind or type of drama and theatre such as a tragedy, drama, melodrama, comedy, or farce

Gesture: an expressive and planned movement of the body or limbs

Given Circumstances: the underlying actions and events that have happened before the play, story, or devised piece begins

Guided Drama Experience: a leader guides participants during a process drama, story drama, or creative drama experience (see the definitions) through side-coaching, narration, and prompting; the action of the drama does not stop in order for the leader to support the students; facilitator may guide participants in or out of role

Imaginary Elsewhere: an imagined location which can be historical, fictional, or realistic

Imagined Worlds: an imaginary world created collectively by participants in a drama experience

Improvise: the spontaneous, intuitive, and immediate response of movement and speech; a distinction can be made between spontaneous improvisation, which is immediate and unrehearsed, and prepared improvisation, which is shaped and rehearsed

Inner Thoughts: the underlying and implied meaning or intentions in the characters dialogue or actions (also known as subtext)

Motivation: reasons why a character behaves or reacts in a particular way in a scene or play

Non-Representational Materials: objects which can be transformed into specific props through the imagination

Objective: a goal or particular need or want that a character has within a scene or play

Plot: a narrative as revealed through the action and/or dialogue; traditionally, a plot has the elements of exposition, inciting incident, conflict, rising action, climax, and resolution or falling action

Process Drama: a non-linear, episodic, process-centered, improvised form of drama in which teacher and students are in-role exploring and reflecting on an issue, story, theme, problem, or idea in a non-exhibitional format that is intended to benefit the performers themselves

Production Elements: technical elements selected for use in a specific production, including sets, sound, costumes, lights, music, props, and make-up, as well as elements specific to the production such as puppets, masks, special effects, or other story telling devices/concepts

Script Analysis: the study of a script to understand the underlying structure and themes of the plays story, and the motives and objectives of its characters

Scripted Drama: a piece of writing for the theatre that includes a description of the setting, a list of the characters, the dialogue, and the action of the characters

Staging: patterns of movement in a scene or play including, for example, stage crosses, entrances, and exits which help to convey meaning

Story Drama: episodic, process-centered, improvised form of drama that uses existing literature as a starting point for drama exploration, the drama explores implied moments (before, after, or within) that may not exist in the story and is presented in a non-exhibitional format that is intended to

benefit the performers themselves

Story Elements: characters, setting, dialogue, and plot that create a story

Style: the use of a specific set of characteristic or distinctive techniques such as realism, expressionism, epic theatre, documentary theatre, or classical drama; style may also refer to the unique artistic choices of a particular playwright, director, or actor

Tactic: the means by which a character seeks to achieve their objective, the selection of tactics are based on the obstacle presented; in acting and directing a tactic refers to a specific action verb

Technical Elements: the elements of spectacle such as sets, sound, costume, lights, music, props, and makeup used to create a unified and meaningful design for a theatrical production

Theatrical Conventions: practices and/or devices that the audience and actors accept in the world of the play even when it is not realistic, such as a narrator, flashback, or an aside

Theme: the aspect of the human condition under investigation in the drama; it can be drawn from unifying topics or questions across content areas

Visual Composition: the arrangement of actors and scenery on a stage for a theatrical production, sometimes known as *mise en scène*.

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Music Model Cornerstone Assessments

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