

StageNotes

A FIELD GUIDE FOR TEACHERS

SUMMER 2008

CATS





CATS



CATS



CATS

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This publication is based on the 2008 Dallas Summer Musicals production of *Cats* with music by Andrew Lloyd Webber; based on *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats* by T.S. Eliot; lyrics by T.S. Eliot; additional lyrics for "Jellicle Songs for Jellicle Cats" and "Memory" by Trevor Nunn;

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Printed in the United States of America
First Digital Edition, March 2008

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The background of the entire page is a vibrant, slightly blurred photograph of several performers from the musical Cats. They are wearing elaborate, fur-covered costumes and have their faces painted to resemble felines. The lighting is dramatic, with warm, colorful bokeh lights in the background, suggesting a stage performance at night.

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WELCOME FROM

Dallas Summer Musicals

SUMMER 2008

Welcome to Dallas Summer Musicals!

We're so glad you could join us! Musical theater is a unique American creation. It's also a joyful mixture of song and story, and, since 1945, Dallas Summer Musicals has brought the finest musicals to Dallas.



Want to know what goes into making a musical? Just two simple ingredients: singing and acting (song and story). There's just something about a song that makes a story mean more than just regular speech. It touches us in a different way.

Whether a show uses classical music or rock, a musical uses music to tell its story, to suggest feelings, emotions, and attitudes. As long as it mixes song and story, musical theater can be about literally anything, and this season's shows are great examples of the wide range of subjects. From the wacky comedy of *Hairspray* to the magic of *Cats* and the rhythm of *Stomp*, each show in the 2008 Dallas Summer Musicals season reveals a different aspect of what makes musical theater so special.

The story of Dallas Summer Musicals is a long and honored one, and by learning about and attending one of our shows, you are now part of that story too!

Sincerely,

Michael A. Jenkins
President and Managing Director

USING

The Field Guide

Camp Broadway® is pleased to bring you the Dallas Summer Musicals edition of **StageNOTES®**, the 23rd in our series. We are proud to be affiliated with this presenter and offer a comprehensive guide that incorporates their entire Seats for Kids season of musical theater. This guide has been developed as a teaching tool to assist educators in the classroom who are introducing their students to the stories in conjunction with the musical theater productions.

The Camp Broadway creative team, consisting of theater educators, scholars, researchers, and theater professionals, has developed a series of lesson plans that, although inspired by and themed around the musicals, can also accompany class study of the periods and other related literary works. To assist you in preparing your presentation of each lesson, we have included: an **objective** and **teaching tips** along with each lesson unit. There are four types of lesson ideas including a **written exercise**; a **discussion activity**; an **experiential exercise**; and an **“after hours activity”** that encourages students to interact with family, friends, or the community at large.

The curriculum categories in this guide have been developed in accordance with Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). The division provides information to school administrators, counselors, parents, and students on course offerings and meeting the learning needs of students through 19 TAC Chapter 74. In cooperation with the divisions of Instructional Materials and Educational Technology and Student Assessment, the goal of the Division of Curriculum provides information and resources to ensure academic success of all students in Texas public schools.

The Dallas Summer Musicals study guide is for you, the educator, in response to your need for standards-compliant curriculum. We hope this study guide will help you incorporate musical theater into your classroom activities.



Philip Katz
Producing Director
Camp Broadway



A BRIEF HISTORY OF The Broadway Musical

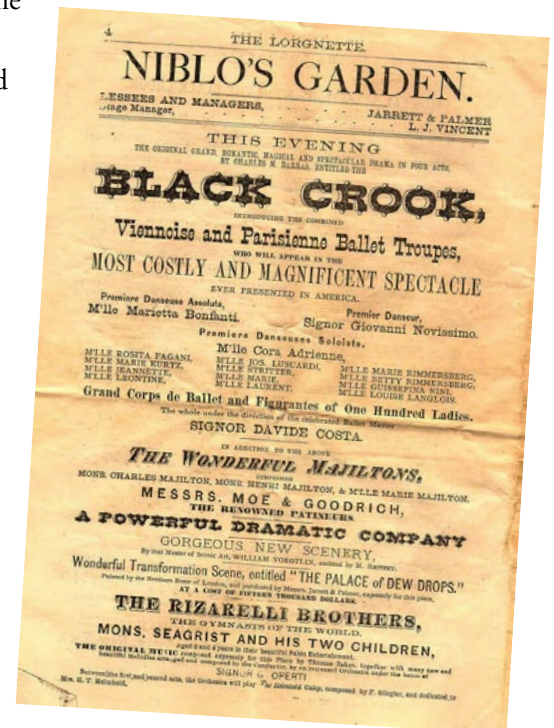
The Broadway musical is one of the few genuinely American art forms; like America itself, the musical was formed from a collision of immigrant traditions. British operetta, African-American song and dance styles, the melodies and humor of Eastern European Jews: All contributed to the development of the Broadway musical.

Just as America is described as a “melting pot,” the first American musical was a hasty melding of other works. In 1866, producers Henry C. Jarrett and Harry Palmer had brought over a French ballet troupe to perform in New York; however, the theater they had obtained for the performances was destroyed by fire. Trying to find a way to salvage their investment, they came to William Wheatley, the manager of Niblo’s Garden, a popular theater at Broadway and Prince Streets. He was about to open a production of a piece by Charles M. Barras, a version of von Weber’s Romantic opera, *Der Freischutz*. The two productions were combined, and audiences were treated to a five and one-half hour spectacle in which the

French ballerinas performed amidst the slim plot of an evil

alchemist who pursues two young lovers through a succession of elaborately designed scenes. *The Black Crook* was a success: The dancers in their pink tights entranced the audience, as did the intricately painted scenery. The plot was flexible enough to allow for changes and insertions of new material as the run continued; producers periodically advertised these “reconstructions” as a lure to bring audiences back for repeat viewings. *The Black Crook* ran for 475 performances, closing in 1868.

Crowds enjoyed not only romantic spectacles like those that followed in *The Black Crook*’s footsteps, but also knockabout-



A BRIEF HISTORY OF The Broadway Musical

comedy shows that traded in ethnic humor like Harrigan and Hart's *The Mulligan Guards Ball*. The team of Harrigan and Hart found inspiration for their comedy in the chaotic streets of New York of their day: a sea of immigrants all trying to get along and get ahead in a strange new country.



Florenz Ziegfeld

By the turn of the century, opulent revues featuring statuesque chorus girls in breathtaking costumes were popular; the *Ziegfeld Follies* were producer Florenz Ziegfeld's showcase of elegant (but slightly naughty) entertainment. The first smash hit of the Twenties was *Shuffle Along*, with Eubie Blake's "I'm Just Wild About Harry" as

the standout song; the show was the first to have an all African-American writing team and cast. The pulse of the Jazz Age continued to beat in the fast-paced comedy of shows like *Lady, Be Good!*, the first of 14 musicals written by brothers George and Ira Gershwin; the plots of Twenties musicals were often loosely strung together vaudeville routines intermixed with snappy, danceable tunes.

The musical reached a turning point when Ziegfeld took a risk and produced something different



— a musical adaptation of Edna Ferber's novel about generations of a theatrical family on the Mississippi, *Show Boat*. Ziegfeld hired Oscar Hammerstein to handle the task of reducing the novel's sprawling plotlines to a manageable few; composing the memorable music was Jerome Kern. In contrast to the bubble-headed plots of the musicals of the time, *Show Boat* dealt with serious themes such as racism, alcoholism, and racial intermarriage. It was an immediate popular and critical success, making it possible for musicals to take on subject matter of all kinds.

The Thirties were a time when a Depression-weary public went to the theater for frothy escapism, such as the elegant wackiness of Cole Porter's *Anything Goes*, featuring Ethel Merman singing "You're the Top" and "I Get a Kick Out of You."

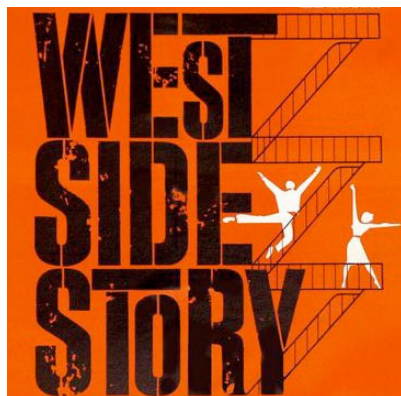
The patriotism of the World War II years made audiences respond emotionally to the heartfelt nostalgia of *Oklahoma!* Oscar Hammerstein and composer Richard Rodgers took the musical another step forward by creating a "musical play" in which dialogue, dance, and music were thoroughly integrated.

Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein



Because of this integration of all elements, director-choreographers such as Jerome Robbins soon came to prominence in musical

theater. After honing his craft on a number of shows like *Peter Pan*, Robbins pushed the boundaries of musical theater yet again when he reinterpreted ballet steps to create a new dance vocabulary in *West Side Story*. In this modern retelling of Romeo and Juliet, dance was made even more central to the musical's



structure.

Other director-choreographers like Bob Fosse and Michael Bennett began to move away from plot-driven shows, ultimately creating “concept

the decade were reflected in the lush music and over-the-top scenic effects of these long-running hit shows.

The slacker Nineties brought *Rent*, a gritty rock reimagining of Puccini's *La Boheme*. The decade also saw the emergence of Disney as a theatrical force with films reimagined for the stage like *Beauty and the Beast* and *The Lion King*.



At the turn of the Twenty-first century, it seems that Broadway has a little bit of everything. Classic vaudevillian humor lives on in *The Producers* while down the street you can find sing-your-guts-out pop opera like *Wicked*, dance-driven shows like *Movin' Out*, and optimistic musical comedy like *Hairspray*. Each of the golden eras of Broadway's past are reinvented for the audiences of today to discover and delight in.

Broadway Timeline

1866 *The Black Crook*
1879 *The Mulligan Guards Ball*
1907 *First edition of the Ziegfeld Follies*
1924 *Lady, Be Good!*
1927 *Show Boat*
1934 *Anything Goes*
1943 *Oklahoma!*
1954 *Peter Pan*
1957 *West Side Story*
1970 *Company*
1971 *Follies*
1973 *A Little Night Music*
1975 *Chicago, A Chorus Line*
1982 *Cats*
1987 *Les Miserables*
1988 *Phantom of the Opera*
1994 *Beauty and the Beast*
1996 *Rent*
1998 *The Lion King*
2001 *The Producers*
2002 *Hairspray, Movin' Out*
2003 *Wicked*

musicals” like *Chicago* and *A Chorus Line*, where dance was the dominant driving force. Deconstructing the standard “book musical” in another way was composer/lyricist Stephen Sondheim, who brought layers of dramatic irony and musical dissonance to the scores of his collaborations with director Hal Prince, such as *Company*, *Follies*, and *A Little Night Music*.

The opulent Eighties heralded the “British Invasion”: lavish pop-opera spectacles like *Cats*, *Les Miserables*, and *Phantom of the Opera*. The big-hair-and-shoulder-pads excesses of



A scene from the original Broadway production of *Hairspray*

ALL ABOUT CATS

The Andrew Lloyd Webber smash-hit *Cats* was born on May 11, 1981 at the New London Theatre in London's world-famous West End. Spearheaded by the legendary producer Cameron Mackintosh, *Cats* became one of the most successful musicals of all time, playing a record setting 8,949 performances in London. The final performance was held on May 11, 2002 on its 21st birthday.



Despite the production's profound success, the concept of the musical was met with apprehension. The show is based on *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats* by T.S. Eliot, a collection of poems depicting the sociology of cats. While Andrew Lloyd Webber was already a notorious and critically acclaimed composer, many believed that Webber's solo work on a series of poems about cats set to music was not exactly destined to sell many tickets. How wrong they were!



Due to its popularity on the West End, the producers made plans to move the production to Broadway. On October 7, 1982, *Cats* premiered

at the Winter Garden Theatre – and premiere it did! The production was met with \$6.2 million in advance ticket sales. Directed by the famed Trevor Nunn, the production featured the choreography of Gillian Lynne, scenic and costume design by John Napier and lighting design by David Hersey to great acclaim. *Cats* was nominated for an astonishing eleven Tony awards and went on to win seven including Best Musical, Best Featured Actress in a Musical (Betty Buckley) and Best Direction of a Musical.

Exceeding reviewers' expectations, the production became the longest running musical on Broadway (6,138 performances!) on June 19, 1997. After playing 7,485 performances, the show finally closed on September 10, 2000. Upon its closing, *Cats* grossed an astonishing \$380 million in New York and close to \$3 billion worldwide.

The show became so popular that Andrew Lloyd Webber produced a video production of *Cats* starring some of the show's original actors including Elaine Paige as Grizabella (West End) and Ken Page as Old Deuteronomy (Broadway).

What made the show such a sensation? Audiences around the globe were mesmerized by the awe-inspiring sets (including a giant tire used to bring Grizabella to the Heavyside Layer) and the innovative and acrobatically-inspired choreography. Many people found the music to be exciting, tuneful and stirring. In fact Grizabella's song recalling the past, *Memory*, became one of the most popular show tunes of all time; it was translated into more than a dozen languages and became a global sensation.



Betty Buckley as "Grizabella"

ALL ABOUT CATS

CHARACTER BREAKDOWN

When you're watching a show like *Cats*, keeping up with all the names and faces can be quite a challenge! Here is a list of the principal characters to help you keep track.

ASPARAGUS / GUS: The theatre cat, he recounts his days in the theatre when he played the infamous Growltiger.

BOMBALURINA: Leader of the female cats – she has a fondness for The Rum Tum Tugger.

BUSTOPHER JONES: One of the fattest cats, he is always fancily dressed and upper class; all the cats respect him.

GRZABELLA: The former Glamour Cat who is now tattered with a scraggily coat. As a younger cat, she left the comfort of the tribe to explore the harsh world outside the junkyard.

JELLYLOUUM: One of the female cats who looks out for the kittens.

JENNYANYDOTS: The old Gumbie Cat, she sits and sleeps all day and minds the forgotten creatures at night.

MACAVITY: A villainous cat responsible for kidnapping Old Deuteronomy.

MR. MISTOFFELES: A young male cat with magical powers; the tribe asks for his help to find kidnapped Old Deuteronomy.

MUNGOJERRIE: One of the cat-burglars, along with Rumpleteazer.

MUNKUSTRAP: The show's narrator, he protects all members of the Jellicle tribe.

OLD DEUTERONOMY: He is the “grandfather” of the Jellicle tribe; he decides which cat will go to the Heavyside Layer.

RUMPLETEAZER: Female cohort of Mungojerrie, she is a cat-burglar.

THE RUM TUM TUGGER: A very flirty cat, he is the clownish cat in the tribe. He is characterized by his wild mane and is often compared to rock-n-roll legend Elvis Presley.

SKIMBLESHANKS: He is a railway cat who lives on the train. He helps run the train and guides the cat passengers.

MACAVITY: A villainous cat responsible for kidnapping Old Deuteronomy.

ALL ABOUT CATS

A SYNOPSIS

Cats begins with the gathering of the cats of the Jellicle tribe onstage to explain a bit about their lives and their purpose. After the group describes how they assign names to each cat in the tribe, they assemble in preparation to take part in the annual festival of cat-dom...they send out invitations to attend the Jellicle Ball! At the Ball, each cat tries to prove to Old Deuteronomy (the leader of the Jellicle tribe) why he or she deserves to go the Heavyside Layer – a heavenly feline afterlife.

Munkustrap, the show's feline narrator, introduces the cats one by one starting with Jennyanydots. The Rum Tum Tugger, the wild and inconstant Elvis-esque cat, interrupts her presentation with his grand entrance; he feels no obligation to other cats and does as he feels. Following Tugger's exuberant performance, the old and greying Grizabella makes her way through the group causing the tribe to scatter. The other cats dislike the lowly Grizabella and somberly sing of her sad state. As Grizabella sulks off into the night, the fat and renowned Bustopher Jones sings of his elite status among his fellow cats. The villainous feline Macavity ends the song with a crash in the distance as all the cats run away. With the stage empty, Mungojerrie and Rumpleteazer arrive telling how they love to create mischief for families around the city.

Without further ado, the Jellicle leader, Old Deuteronomy, arrives on the scene. He is a wise and experienced old cat revered by the Jellicle tribe. It is Old Deuteronomy who will decide which cat will travel to the Heavyside Layer. In celebration of his arrival, the tribe performs a number (The Aweful Battle of the Pekes and the Pollicles) about a feud between two

dog tribes that ends with their shared fear of the Great Rumpus Cat. The Jellicle Ball has finally begun but Grizabella returns, wishing to be included in the festivities. Disregarded by the other cats, she melodically recalls the past when she was a beautiful and happy cat (*Memory*).

After another scare from Macavity, Old Deuteronomy calms the Jellicle tribe by reminding the cats about The Moments of Happiness. Gus, the once-famous theatre cat now old, tells the story of how he once played the notorious pirate Growltiger, Terror of the Thames. Following Gus the thespian is Skimbleshanks, the unofficial conductor of the railway train. One of the most clever cats of the tribe, he is responsible for starting the train; without him, the cats are stuck in place. After all his disturbances, Macavity appears with a final crash and an evil cackle. A delinquent feline who always escapes being seen at the scene of the crime, he captures Old Deuteronomy. Disguised as Old Deuteronomy, Macavity returns only to be discovered by the tribe and fought by Munkustrap. Thinking quickly, The Rum Tum Tugger convinces the tribe to find Mr. Mistoffelees – a magical cat – to help bring Old Deuteronomy back. Using his magical skills, Mr. Mistoffelees successfully brings back Old Deuteronomy so that he may now decide who enters the Heavyside Layer!

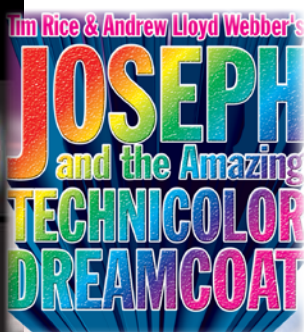
Before making his big decision, the tattered and disheveled Grizabella appears for the final time. Allowed the floor by Old Deuteronomy, she addresses the tribe for a chance to get to the Heavyside Layer. Her soulful reprise of *Memory* sways the cats and Old Deuteronomy chooses her to be the one to Journey to the Heavyside Layer. A huge tire descends from the sky and takes Grizabella up into the sky. Old Deuteronomy closes the show with *The Ad-Dressing of Cats*.

SPOTLIGHT ON

Andrew Lloyd Weber



Andrew Lloyd Weber's (b. March 22, 1948) love of music and composition began at a young age. At the age of nine he wrote his first instrumental composition – it was later published. A student at Magdalen College at Oxford University, he left his studies to focus on his love of musical theatre.



Lloyd Weber began his historic collaboration with lyricist Tim Rice on *The Likes of Us*; this piece of musical theatre revealed the influences of Richard Rodgers and Lionel Bart on his early work. Moving forward, the preparatory all-boys school Colet Court hired Lloyd Weber and Rice

to compose a musical theatre piece for their choir. This commission led to the development of Lloyd Weber's first major piece *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*. The success of the musical, which featured pop/contemporary music and diverse musical styling, led to the production of their next musical *Jesus Christ*



Superstar. While *Jesus* was viewed by audiences as a rock opera, its instrumental numbers were largely classical in style. Lloyd Weber and Rice's final collaboration spawned the hit musical *Evita*

EVITA

based on the life of First Lady of Argentina Eva Peron. The show showcased more classical music than in the past, but Lloyd Weber continued to use a number of styles of music including Latin and rock music.

In the 1980s, Lloyd Weber began working on his next project without a collaborator. Based on T.S. Eliot's

Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats, Lloyd Weber set the poetry to music of his own composition in *Cats* (excluding the famous song "Memory"). The fantastical story of *Cats* prominently displays a mixture of musical style including classical, jazz and pop. Only five years after the premiere of *Cats*, Lloyd Weber introduced his next mega smash *Phantom of the Opera* in 1986. Lloyd Weber sought the help of Charles Hart who wrote the lyrics and Richard Stillgoe who co-wrote the book of the musical. While the music for the production may be operatic in style, it maintains all the elements of a musical. *Phantom of the Opera* was met with mixed reviews but became a hit at the box office. In January 2006, *Phantom of the Opera* surpassed *Cats* as the longest running musical on Broadway.



Following his major success with *Cats* and *Phantom of the Opera*, Lloyd Weber continued to develop new musicals including *Aspects of Love*, *Sunset Boulevard* (starring Patti LuPone), *Whistle Down the Wind*, *The Woman in White* and, most recently, *The Sound of Music* (in which he cast Connie Fischer as the lead via the reality television show "How Do You Solve a Problem Like Maria?").



Among his many honors, Lloyd Weber has won an Academy Award for Best Original Song (*Evita*, 1996), three Grammy awards, an astonishing six Laurence Olivier awards and three Tony Awards (Best Original Score – *Evita*, *Cats* and *Sunset Boulevard*).

For more information, visit Andrew Lloyd Weber's Official Web Site at www.andrewlloydwebber.com.

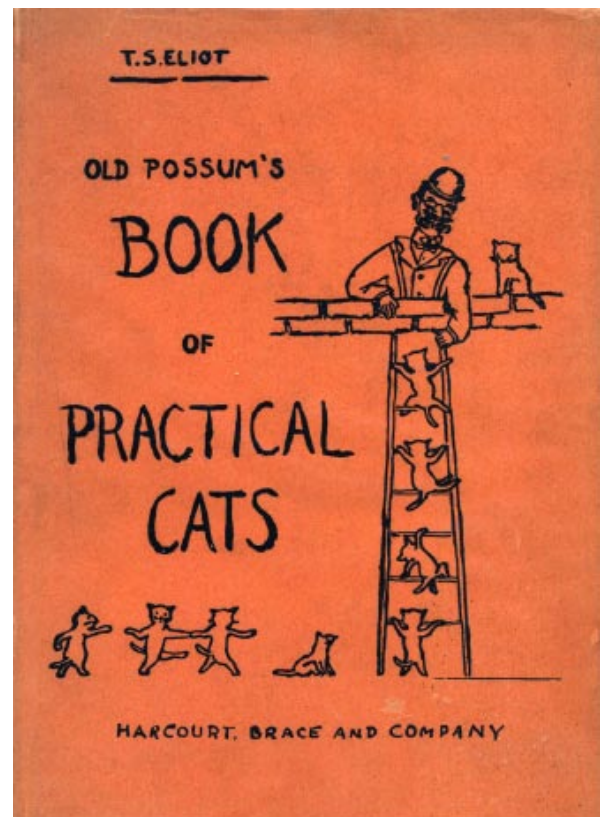
T. S. Eliot

AND HIS CATS

T. S. Eliot (September 26, 1888 – January 4, 1965) was one of the most prominent American-born poets and literary figures of the 20th century. He is the author of some of the most famous American poetry of all time including *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*, *The Waste Land* and *Four Quartets*. After the completion of, what many call his greatest masterpiece, *Four Quartets*, he was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1948 for his contribution to the field of modern-day poetry.

Eliot's *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats* is a compilation of poems written about the many personalities within the cat world – cat psychology if you will! While generally not recognized as a masterpiece, many literary critics have credited Eliot for his complex character development within the poems. While the poems are told from a childlike point of view to appeal to younger audiences, the collection satirizes and comments on human behavior. Narrated in the third person, the relatively brief poems successfully capture the personalities of the Cats. Anyone reading the poems will be able to see that Eliot is not just investigating the personalities of the Cats...he is also exploring different human personalities! Using the Cats as a way to investigate human behavior, Eliot shows that people have three separate identities (one individual showing three different parts of themselves) – what we are like everyday, what makes us unique and what we are like when nobody is watching.

Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Cats* is based almost entirely on Eliot's compilation. Perhaps when you are watching the show, you might realize that some of these cats have very human personalities...maybe you even share a personality trait. Don't be alarmed - that was exactly T.S. Eliot's intention!



USING THE Lessons

Writing

The focus is on the expression of thoughts in written form.

Discussion

The focus is on facilitating an in-depth class dialogue.

Experiential

The focus is on understanding social dynamics as well as collaboration and teamwork in small and large groups.

After Hours

Activities designed for students to further their education on a particular topic

CATS Lesson Ideas

WRITING

Objective:
Using classic poetry as inspiration to create original works.

Exercise:
Despite claims to the contrary, great art, literature, and music are not always as original as touted. Many were inspired by other works. The fact that Andrew Lloyd Webber's play *Cats* was based on the poet T.S. Eliot's *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats* does not diminish its value as an extraordinary 20th-century work. Audiences around the world who have seen it attest to that. Have students rent copies of Eliot's poems from the library, or research the poems online. After reading them, ask students to write original poems of their own in homage to their own pet or favorite animal. Identify and emulate Eliot's style.

Teaching Tips:
What do we mean when we say something is original? Are you a person who prefers original movies, or do you find yourself watching the same kind over and over? Why? Why not? What's the difference between plagiarism and using information already published in reputation for your own work?

Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) guidelines addressed:
English Language Arts and Reading Standard 110.45: 110.47; 110.55

Knowledge and Skills (b) (1) The student writes in a variety of forms. The student is expected to (a) write in a variety of forms with an emphasis on literary forms such as fiction, poetry, drama, and media scripts; (4) The student uses writing as a tool for learning and research. The student is expected to: (b) compile information from primary and secondary sources using available technology; (5) The student communicates with writers inside and outside the classroom, including writers who represent diverse cultures and fields. The student is expected to: (a) analyze strategies that writers in different fields use to compose; (3) The student reads for different purposes in varied sources. The student is expected to: (a) read to complete a task, to gather information, to be informed, to solve problems, to answer questions, and for pleasure; (1) The student reads widely to recognize writing as an art form. The student is expected to: (a) read widely to understand authors' craft and to discover models to use in his/her own writing.

Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) guidelines addressed:
English Language Arts and Reading Standard 110.42; 110.44

Knowledge and Skills (b) (11) The student analyzes literary elements for their contributions to meaning in literary texts. The student is expected to: (a) analyze characters and identify time and point of view; (13) The student reads in order to research self-selected and assigned topics. The student is expected to: (a) locate appropriate print and non-print information using texts and technical resources, periodicals and book sections, including databases and the Internet; (a) draw conclusions from information gathered.

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CATS Lesson Ideas

DISCUSSION

Objective:
Students gain understanding of themselves through character study.

Exercise:
The writers knew what they were doing in creating the characters in *Cats*. Clarify the musical portrayals each cat as having its own distinct personality, as they all do. From wise Old Deacon to the fickle enigmatic Rum Tum Tugger, there are human lessons to be learned about how we interact with peers, family, groups and society at general. One can almost surmise the writers' intent to encourage audience identification with one or more characters.

Have students go to the Cats Wikipedia website listing and the detailed synopsis of acts. They may use another site if they wish, but this one has in-depth information on each character. Tell them to read the description of the characters and the plot synopsis. After reading, ask them to identify which two cats they like most, least, Why?

Open a class discussion: Have each student name the cats they chose and say why they either liked or didn't like them. Other students then comment on their choices and agree or disagree if they wish.

Students write on a slip of paper which cat they identified with most. The teacher then tallies the slips and announces which cat got the most votes. The teacher conducts a guided discussion exploring why students think this character got the most votes.

Teaching Tips:
There's an ancient Greek aphorism, "Know thyself," but it's hard to be ourselves as others do. In fact, practically impossible! One purpose of drama is to encourage audiences to see themselves in the characters and learn a thing or two in the process. Did you ever see a *mirror*, and say, "Wow, I do that all the time." That's how *Cats* works.

Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) guidelines addressed:
English Language Arts and Reading Standard 117.56

Knowledge and Skills (c) (1) The student develops an awareness of the body's movement, using sensory information when dancing. The student is expected to: (a) demonstrate basic kinesthetic and spatial awareness with others; (b) develop sensitivity toward others when working in groups; (c) express ideas and emotions through movement; (2) The student develops knowledge using skills of dance elements and of choreographic processes and forms in a variety of dance styles. The student is expected to: (a) improve and demonstrate original movement.

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CATS Lesson Ideas

EXPERIENTIAL

Objective:
Expressing dramatic intent through interpretive dance.

Exercise:
From the discussion lesson students should have a pretty good idea about the characters—who they are, what their personalities are like, and how they might interact with their fellow cats. The musical is replete with songs coupled with the cat-like movements called "interpretive dance." While all of us are not dancers, interpreting stories through movement can be a hugely liberating experience. Remember, the number of professional dancers who now take ballet lessons to enhance their flexibility and movement capabilities proves the point that dancing is not only for dancers.

Ask for volunteers to join an interpretive dance group. In private, the group discusses which scenes from the play they will interpret and which characters they will portray. Leave time for rehearsals. Using interpretive movement the group acts out the scene while the rest of the class guesses which scenes they are interpreting and which characters they represent.

Teaching Tips:
Do you consider yourself athletic? How do you feel about dancing? Are you embarrassed to dance? Or do you get out on the floor and let it fly? Consider the term "body English." How important do you think movement is to overall communication?

Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) guidelines addressed:
English Language Arts and Reading Standard 117.56

Knowledge and Skills (c) (1) The student develops an awareness of the body's movement, using sensory information when dancing. The student is expected to: (a) demonstrate basic kinesthetic and spatial awareness with others; (b) develop sensitivity toward others when working in groups; (c) express ideas and emotions through movement; (2) The student develops knowledge using skills of dance elements and of choreographic processes and forms in a variety of dance styles. The student is expected to: (a) improve and demonstrate original movement.

CATS Lesson Ideas

AFTER HOURS

Objective:
"Know Your Cats"

Exercise:
Based on their behavior, social structure and the varied personalities of its members, The Jellicle Tab of Cats is no different from many human groups. In the novel *Lord of the Flies*, William Golding paints a disturbing picture of teenage boys marooned on a deserted island. As the story progresses, traits (not always pleasant) of the characters emerge. Who are the leaders, followers? Whose personalities are strong, weak, aggressive, passive? Read *Lord of the Flies* or see the film. Pay strict attention to the various personalities. Jot down a few notes so help you remember.

Now go to the Cats Wikipedia website and make a list of the Cat characters, putting a few words after each to indicate their "type." When you're finished, give each character a "Lord of the Flies" or "Cat" name based on personality that makes sense to you.

Your Opinion, Please
Grizabella, as an old cat of the group, is not treated with respect by some of the other younger cats. What do you think about this? Do you think she should have been treated better? Why? Write a letter to one cat that wasn't particularly nice to her and explain why his or her behavior was rude and thoughtless.

Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) guidelines addressed:
English Language Arts and Reading Standard 110.42; 110.43

Knowledge and Skills (b) (7) The student comprehends effective writing in a variety of strategies. The student is expected to: (a) establish a purpose for reading such as to discover, interpret, and enjoy; (11) The student analyzes literary elements, supporting contributions to meaning in literary texts. The student is expected to: (a) analyze characters and identify time and point of view; (c) identify basic conflicts; (a) draw conclusions from information gathered; (1) The student writes in a variety of forms, including business, personal, literary, and persuasive texts, for various audiences and purposes. The student is expected to: (a) write in a variety of forms with an emphasis on persuasive forms such as logical argument and expression of opinion.

Each StageNOTES™ lesson includes the following components:

Objective:

An overall note to the teacher outlining the goals of the lesson to follow.

Exercise:

A detailed description and instructions for the activity to be facilitated in class.

Teaching Tips:

Discussion points to aid the teacher and stimulate dialogue.

CATS

WRITING

Lesson Ideas

DISCUSSION

Objective:

Using classic poetry as inspiration to create original works

Exercise:

Despite claims to the contrary, great art, literature and music are not always as original as touted. Many were inspired by other works. The fact that Andrew Lloyd Webber's play *Cats* was based on the poet T.S. Eliot's *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats* does not diminish its value as an extraordinary 20th Century work. Audiences around the world who have seen it attest to that. Have students rent copies of Eliot's poems from the library, or research the poems online. After reading them, ask students to write original poems of their own in homage to their own pet or favorite animal. Identify and emulate Eliot's style.

Teaching Tips:

What do we mean when we say something is original? Are you a person who prefers original movies, or do you find yourself watching the same kind over and over? Why? Why not? What's the difference between plagiarism and using information already published as inspiration for your own works?

Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) guidelines addressed:

English Language Arts and Reading Standard 110.45; 110.47; 110.55

Knowledge and Skills (b) (1) *The student writes in a variety of forms. The student is expected to:* (a) write in a variety of forms with an emphasis on literary forms such as fiction, poetry, drama, and media scripts; **(4)** *The student uses writing as a tool for learning and research. The student is expected to:* (d) compile information from primary and secondary sources using available technology; **(5)** *The student communicates with writers inside and outside the classroom, including writers who represent diverse cultures and fields. The student is expected to:* (a) analyze strategies that writers in different fields use to compose; **(3)** *The student reads for different purposes in varied sources. The student is expected to:* (a) read to complete a task, to gather information, to be informed, to solve problems, to answer questions, and for pleasure; **(1)** *The student reads widely to recognize writing as an art form. The student is expected to:* (a) read widely to understand authors' craft and to discover models to use in his/her own writing.

Objective:

Students gain understanding of themselves through character study.

Exercise:

The writers knew what they were doing in creating the characters in *Cats*. Clearly the musical portrays each cat as having its own distinct personality, as we all do. From wise Old Deuteronomy to the fickle enigmatic Rum Tum Tugger, there are human lessons to be learned about how we interact with peers, family groups and society at general. One can almost surmise the writers' intent to encourage audience identification with one or more characters.

Have students go to the *Cats* Wikipedia website listing and the detailed synopsis of acts. They may use another site if they wish, but this one has in depth information on each character. Tell them to read the description of the characters and the play synopses. After reading, ask them to identify which two cats they like most—least. Why?

Open a class discussion. Have each student name the cats they chose and say why they either liked or didn't like them. Other students then comment on their choices and agree or disagree if they wish.

Students write on a slip of paper which cat they identified with most. The teacher then tallies the slips and announces which cat got the most votes. The teacher conducts a guided discussion exploring why students think this character got the most votes.

Teaching Tips:

There's an ancient Greek aphorism, "Know thyself." But it's hard to see ourselves as others do. In fact, practically impossible! One purpose of drama is to encourage audiences to see themselves in the characters and learn a thing or two in the process. Did you ever see a movie and say, "Wow, I do that all the time!" That's how it works.

Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) guidelines addressed:

English Language Arts and Reading Standard 110.42; 110.44

Knowledge and Skills (b) (11) *The student analyzes literary elements for their contributions to meaning in literary texts. The student is expected to:* (c) analyze characters and identify time and point of view; **(13)** *The student reads in order to research self-selected and assigned topics. The student is expected to:* (b) locate appropriate print and non-print information using texts and technical resources, periodicals and book indices, including databases and the Internet (e) draw conclusions from information gathered.

CATS

Lesson Ideas

EXPERIENTIAL

Objective:

Expressing dramatic intent through interpretive dance.

Exercise:

From the discussion lesson students should have a pretty good idea about the characters—who they are, what their personalities are like, and how they might interact with their fellow cats. The musical is replete with songs coupled with the cat-like movements called “interpretive dance.” While all of us are not dancers, interpreting stories through movement can be a happily liberating experience. Remember, the number of professional athletes who now take ballet lessons to enhance their flexibility and movement capabilities proves the point that dancing is not only for dancers.

Ask for volunteers to join an interpretive dance group. In private, the group discusses which scenes from the play they will interpret and which characters they will portray. Leave time for rehearsals. Using interpretive movement the group acts out the scene while the rest of the class guesses which scenes they are interpreting and which characters they represent.

Teaching Tips:

Do you consider yourself athletic? How do you feel about dancing? Are you embarrassed to dance or do you get out on the floor and let it fly! Consider the term “Body English.” How important do you think movement is to overall communication?

Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) guidelines addressed:

English Language Arts and Reading Standard 117.56

Knowledge and Skills (c) (1) *The student develops an awareness of the body's movement, using sensory information while dancing. The student is expected to:* (a) demonstrate basic kinesthetic and spatial awareness with others; (b) develop sensitivity toward others when working in groups; (c) express ideas and emotions through movement; **(3)** *The student develops knowledge and skills of dance elements and of choreographic processes and forms in a variety of dance styles. The student is expected to:* (c) improvise and demonstrate original movement.

AFTER HOURS

Objective:

“Know Your *Cats*!”

Exercise:

Based on their behavior, social structure and the varied personalities of its members, The Jellicle Tribe of Cats is no different from many human groups. In the novel *Lord of the Flies*, William Golding paints a disturbing picture of teenage boys marooned on a deserted island. As the story progresses traits (not always pleasant) of the characters emerge. Who are the leaders, followers? Whose personalities are strong, weak, aggressive, passive? Read *Lord of the Flies* or see the film. Pay strict attention to the various personalities. Jot down a few notes to help you remember.

Now go to the *Cats* Wikipedia website and make a list of the *Cats*' characters, jotting a few words after each to indicate their “type.” When you’ve finished, give each character in *Lord of the Flies* a “Cat” name based on personality that makes sense to you.

Your Opinion, Please

Grizabella, as an elder of the group, is not treated with respect by some of the other younger cats. What do you think about this? Do you think she should have been treated better? Why? Write a letter to one cat that wasn't particularly nice to her and explain why his or her behavior was rude and thoughtless.

Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) guidelines addressed:

English Language Arts and Reading Standard 110.42; 110.43

Knowledge and Skills (b) (7) *The student comprehends selections using a variety of strategies. The student is expected to:* (a) establish a purpose for reading such as to discover, interpret, and enjoy; **(11)** *The student analyzes literary elements for their contributions to meaning in literary texts. The student is expected to:* (c) analyze characters and identify time and point of view; (d) identify basic conflicts; (e) draw conclusions from information gathered; **(1)** *The student writes in a variety of forms, including business, personal, literary, and persuasive texts, for various audiences and purposes. The student is expected to:* (a) write in a variety of forms with an emphasis on persuasive forms such as logical argument and expression of opinion.



Social investment in the arts produces healthy dividends for students, teachers, arts institutions and communities. Dallas Summer Musicals (DSM), best known for bringing the Best of Broadway to the Dallas-Fort Worth region, extends its irreplaceable outreach programs into the community through five key initiatives.

DSM School of Musical Theatre

The first component of Dallas Summer Musicals' outreach initiatives, DSM School of Musical Theatre creates the broadest possible avenue for dramatic expression within this community. Over 1,500 students have attended classes at the DSM School of Musical Theatre since its inception in 1999.

Seats for Kids

Created in 2003 to provide a meaningful theatre arts experience to low-income, at-risk and special needs children, Seats for Kids serves approximately 2,000 children each year. Non-profit youth agencies and Title 1 schools are eligible to participate in the program. DSM provides children, their teachers and chaperones with free tickets as well as a professionally drafted study guide to support attending the performance. In 2008, DSM will provide this program to coincide with productions of *Cats*, *Stomp!* and *Hairspray*.

Kids Club

This free membership program for kids was created to develop tomorrow's musical theatre audience. Through exciting activities, special events, backstage tours and informational exchanges about shows included in the Kids Club membership, children gain an interest, knowledge and appreciate of the performing arts.

Stage Right

In 2005, the Stage Right was created in partnership with the Dallas Police Department (DPD) program to introduce at-risk youth ages 12-15 to arts and cultural events. Together, DSM and DPD are "Raising the curtain for education and spotlighting the appreciation of the arts through experience and positive quality lifestyles." Over 300 students have matriculated through this program since its inception.

Discover Theatre

In 2007, Dallas Summer Musicals added a program specifically for children in grades K-6. The inaugural year included *Disney's Cinderella Kids* and *The Jungle Book Kids*. Building on last year's initial success, DSM will be bringing *Frankly Ben* and *Frog and Toad* to The Majestic Theatre to entertain, educate and empower young people in elementary school. Over 3,000 students are expected to participate in this program in 2008.





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The ^{CAMP} *Broadway* Guide to Theatergoing Etiquette

In the early part of the nineteenth century, theatrical performances usually began at six o'clock. An evening would last four or five hours, beginning with a short "curtain raiser," followed by a five-act play, with other short pieces presented during the intermissions. It might be compared roughly to today's prime-time television, a series of shows designed to pass the time. With no television or radio, the theater was a place to find companionship, light, and warmth on a cold winter's evening.

As the century progressed, the theater audience reflected the changing social climate. More well-to-do patrons still arrived at six o'clock for the full program of the evening, while half price admission was offered at eight or eight-thirty to the working class. This allowed for their longer workday and tighter budgets. Still, the theaters were always full, allowing people to escape the drudgery of their daily lives and enjoy themselves.

Because of this popularity, theaters began to be built larger and larger. New progress in construction allowed balconies to be built overhanging the seats below—in contrast to the earlier style of receding tiers. This meant that the audience on the main floor (the section called "the orchestra") were out of the line of sight of the spectators in the galleries. As a result, the crowds became less busy peoplewatching and gossiping among themselves, and more interested in watching the performance. The theater managers began the practice of dimming the lights in the seating area (called the "house lights"), focusing the attention of the audience on the stage. The advent of gas lighting and the "limelight" (the earliest spotlights) made the elaborate settings even more attractive to the eye, gaining the audience's rapt attention.

By the 1850s, the wealthier audiences were no longer looking for a full evening's entertainment. Curtain time was pushed back to eight o'clock (for the convenience of patrons arriving from dinner); only one play would be presented, instead of four or five, freeing the audience for other social activities afterward. Matinee (afternoon) performances were not given regularly until the 1870s, allowing society ladies, who would not have ventured out late at night, the opportunity to attend the theater.

Now in a new millennium, many of these traditions are still with us. The theater is still a place to "see and be seen"; eight o'clock is still the standard curtain time; and the excited chatter of the audience falls to a hush when the house lights dim and the stage lights go up, and another night on Broadway begins.

You can make sure everyone you know has the very best experience at the theater by sharing this Theater Etiquette with them. And now, enjoy the show!

Being a Good Audience

Remember, going to the theater isn't like going to a movie. There are some different rules to keep in mind when you're at a live performance.

Believe it or not, **the actors can actually hear you.** The same acoustics that make it possible for you to hear the actors means that they can hear all the noises an audience makes: talking, unwrapping candy, cell phones ringing. That's why, when you're at a show, **there is no food or drink at your seats** (eat your treats at intermission; save the popcorn-munching for the multiplex)

No talking (even if you're just explaining the plot to the person next to you)

Always keep cell phones and beepers turned off (This even means no texting your friends during the show to tell them how great it is...)

Of course, what the actors like to hear is how much you're enjoying the performance. So go ahead and laugh at the funny parts, clap for the songs, and save your biggest cheers and applause for your favorite actors at the curtain call. That's their proof of a job well done.



StageNOTES™

A FIELD GUIDE FOR TEACHERS

A Camp Broadway LLC Publication

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