

Content Area Literacy Unit

*Diamond Gaston, Gabe Crane,
Zach Dunlap*

Introduction to the Content Area Literacy Unit

This course is designed around a high school (9th-12th Grade) group of students taking both a theatre and music class.

The subject area focuses on Musical Theatre and putting a production together. While learning how to implement all the working parts to put on a production.

The students will be working together in different groups (Design/Tech and Performance Groups) to create and produce a cabaret production with select pieces of music from the Disney musical *Newsies*.

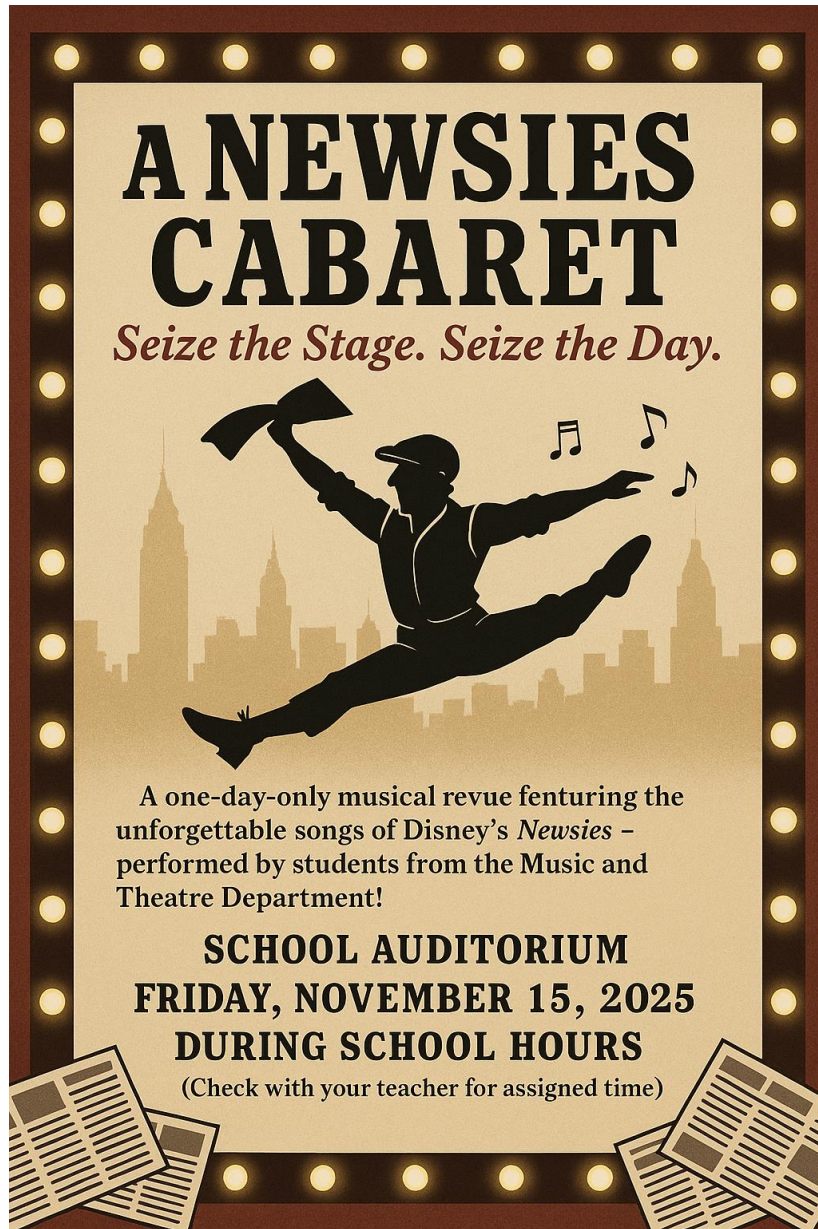


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The Topic

- *A production of “A Newsies Cabaret” will occur following the conclusion of the unit. Students will take what they have learned and bring that knowledge to the stage to put on this production.*
- *Songs include:*
 - “The World Will Know”
 - “Carrying the Banner”
 - “Seize the Day”
 - “Once and For All”

A Newsies **Cabaret: A** **General** **Overview**



During this unit, the students will learn about the musical "Newsies" and the meaning of a cabaret-style performance by watching the introduction to "Cabaret".



Students will gain an in-depth understanding of how different elements of music and theatre work together to put on a production.



This unit is designed for students to work in two separate groups, design/tech and performance, then come together and display what they have created for a final presentation to friends and family in the school's auditorium.



Students will learn different terminology and concepts throughout the week in order to help them progress in their learning, their performances, and their designs.




CABARET STYLE PRODUCTIONS

Lesson #2 in the unit “A Newsies Cabaret”

What behaviors should students demonstrate?

The students will need to demonstrate that they can work in both individually and as a group.



The students will need to show an aptitude for learning. This week will be very intensive and require a lot of effort on the part of the student.



Above all, students will need to be able to demonstrate patience. Putting together a production is a lot of hard work. This requires constant rehearsals both in and out of the classroom, and it requires the students to accept that mistakes are going to happen, as that is a part of the learning process and what helps us grow as performers and designers/technicians.

National Music Standards



MU:Cn10.0.H.1a: Demonstrate how interests, knowledge, and skills relate to personal choices and intent when creating, performing, and responding to music.



MU:Cr3.2.E.1a: Share personally-developed melodies, rhythmic passages, and arrangements – individually or as an ensemble – that address identified purposes.



MU:Pr4.1.E.1a: Explain the criteria used to select a varied repertoire to study based on an understanding of theoretical and structural characteristics of the music, the technical skills of the individual or ensemble, and the purpose or context of the performance.



MU:Pr4.3.E.1a: Demonstrate an understanding of context in a varied repertoire of music through prepared and improvised performances.



MU:Re7.1.E.1a: Apply criteria to select music for specified purposes, supporting choices by citing characteristics found in the music and connections to interest, purpose, and context

SC State Theatre Standards

Benchmark T.P NL.4: I can identify the function of performance and audience spaces.

Benchmark T.PIL.4: I can distinguish between parts of the stage and various performance spaces and how they Impact directing.

Student Learning Objectives

1

Students will be able to create a cabaret-style design concept.

2

Students will be able to perform a piece of music with minimal error.

3

Students will be able to understand the historical contexts behind cabaret-style performances.

Materials Needed

Materials needed for today's class:

- Notebook and pencil for note-taking
- Sketch Books or Journals
- Colored Pencils and Markers
- Overhead Projector or Smartboard
- Their personal school Chromebooks
- Access to instruments
- Rehearsal Space



Technology Needed

Technology needed for today's class:

- Access to YouTube
- Access to Kahoot
- Access to sound equipment
- Access to light board



The Introduction

(5 Minutes)

[Cabaret \(1972\) – Willkommen](#)



The teacher will begin the lesson by playing a clip of "Willkommen" from the musical *Cabaret*. After the clip, students will engage in a brief discussion guided by the following questions:

- How is this performance different from "Seize the Day" from *Newsies*?
- What do you notice about the tone, setting, costumes, and performance style?
- How did this musical number make you feel as an audience member?

Body of Lesson

Whole Class (10 Minutes)

Term

Cabaret style refers to performances that take place in small, intimate venues and often involve direct interaction with the audience. These performances tend to be edgy, emotional, and socially or politically charged.

The teacher will introduce and define cabaret style, using performance clips and examples to support student understanding.

Historical Context:

The teacher will provide a brief background on the origins of cabaret:

- Originated in 19th-century France and Germany
- Became popular during the Weimar Republic (1920s Germany)
- Known for being politically subversive, raw, and reflective of social change

About *Cabaret* (the Musical):

The teacher will explain the setting and themes of the musical:

- Set in 1930s Berlin, during the rise of Nazi Germany
- Themes include:
 - Escapism
 - Political apathy
 - Identity and performance
 - The contrast between appearance and reality

Small Groups

(20 Minutes)

- *Students will break into their original Newsies groups based on their chosen roles (Performers or Designers).*
- *Each group will prepare to perform a short performance excerpt with the class.*

Performers Group:

- Choose a short cabaret-style song (or a verse/chorus from one).
- Rehearse the piece with a focus on direct audience engagement—including eye contact, expressive facial/body language, and emphasis on character and emotional tone.
- Think minimal set: How can you use space, presence, and subtlety to tell the story?

Designers Group:

- Plan a cabaret-style performance space:
 - Sketch a simple stage layout (e.g., café tables, barstools, spotlight).
 - Choose lighting and costume elements that enhance intimacy and mood.
 - Consider sound design: What background music or ambient sounds might set the scene (e.g., jazz, clinking glasses, crowd noise)?

Closure

(5 Minutes)

Each group will present a short excerpt of their cabaret-style performance or share their design concept with the class.

Following the presentations, the class will engage in a brief group discussion, guided by questions such as:

- What makes cabaret style unique compared to traditional musical theatre?
- How did it feel to perform or plan a piece in this more intimate, personal style?
- What stood out to you about your group's creative choices or someone else's?

Assessments

<https://create.kahoot.it/details/655899e9-8ec0-4b73-a149-103e5766ffa>



Outline the assessment(s) that will be used

- Students will be given three Kahoot questions to answer before the end of class. The questions will include:
 - Where did the concept of a cabaret originate?
 - A. 19th Century France and Germany
 - Which of the following is NOT a theme related to the musical *Cabaret*?
 - C. Totalitarianism
 - Cabaret-style performances take place in what kind of venues?
 - D. In a Small, Intimate Venue

Students will be given a copy of an analytic rubric outlining the performance criteria and expectations for the final performance on Friday.

Example of the Performance Grading Rubric

PERFORMANCE GRADING RUBRIC

TOTAL SCORE: ____/50 Points

Name: _____

Criterion	Excellent 9-10 Points	Very Good 7-8 Points	Good 6-7 Points	Fair 3-5 Points	Poor 0-2 Points
Memorization	The student has all their lines memorized with no errors and keeps the songs continuous and fluid.	The student has their songs memorized, but the songs have minor breaks in fluidity.	The student has most of their songs memorized and has a minor break in fluidity.	The student makes several errors during the performance and has several breaks in fluidity during the performance.	The songs are not memorized.
Characterization	Character choices were strong, clear and believable throughout the entire performance.	Good character choices were made, were clear, and stayed in character most of the time.	The performance lacked some character choices or was not fully in character some of the time.	The performance lacked some character choices and was not in character most of the time.	The performance has no characterization, and the student was not in character.
Technique	The student consistently shows technical demands with precision and dexterity, performing with correct articulation all of the time.	The student frequently shows technical demands with precision and dexterity, performing with correct articulation most of the time.	The student occasionally shows technical demands with precision and dexterity, performing with correct articulation some of the time.	The student rarely shows technical demands with precision and dexterity, performing articulation incorrectly.	The student's technical demands are not met with precision or dexterity. There is no articulation.
Rhythmic Accuracy	The student consistently demonstrates control of rhythm and tempo in all aspects present.	The student frequently demonstrates control of rhythm and tempo in all aspects present.	The student occasionally demonstrates control of rhythm and tempo in all aspects present.	The student rarely demonstrates control of rhythm and tempo in all aspects present.	The student shows no demonstration of control of rhythm and tempo.
Dictation and Projection	The student is clear and understandable. The student's voice carries very well within the performance space.	The student is clear and understandable. The student's voice carries well within the performance space.	The student is lacking some clarity in their performance, or the student cannot be fully heard.	The student is lacking some clarity in their performance and the student cannot fully be heard.	There is no clarity, and the student cannot be heard.

COMMENTS:

Accommodations for English Language Learners

Vocabulary will be written on the front board: All Vocabulary will be written on the board for students to refer to.

Native Language: Students with voice parts will be able to perform in either their native language, English, or a combination of the two.

Videos: Students will be provided with videos to refer to for performance.

For Assessments

The students will be allowed to have their translation applications open to help them translate the question.

They may utilize any forms of assistance as outlined by the student's ILAP.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities



Time: Additional time will be provided for practice and other rehearsal techniques.



IEPs: We will follow all information provided for students with IEPs



Vocabulary with enlarged text: All text will be enlarged for students with visual impairments, via the board or handout.



Videos: Students will be provided with videos to refer to for performance.



For Assessments:



The teacher will read aloud the question and the answer choices to the students to provide additional support for the students.



The student may use what devices necessary to complete the Kahoot activity per their IEP/504.

**THANK
YOU!**

