As part of DCT’s mission to integrate the arts into classroom academics, the *Behind the Curtain Resource Guide* is intended to provide helpful information for the teacher and students to use before and after attending a performance. The activities presented in this guide are suggested to stimulate lively responses and multi-sensory explorations of concepts in order to use the theatrical event as a vehicle for cross-cultural and language arts learning.

Please use our suggestions as springboards to lead your students into meaningful, dynamic learning; extending the dramatic experience of the play.
Dallas Children’s Theater

BEHIND THE CURTAIN
A Creative & Theatrical Resource Guide for Teachers

DCT Executive Artistic Director .....................................Robyn Flatt
Resource Guide Editor ......................................................Jessica Colaw

Play ..........................................................................................LITTLE WOMEN: THE MUSICAL
Script & Lyrics by .................................................................Linda Daugherty
Music & Lyrics by .................................................................B. Wolf
Based on the book by .......................................................Louisa May Alcott

DALLAS CHILDREN’S THEATER, one of the top five family theaters in the nation, serves over 250,000 young people and their families from 197 zip codes, 101 cities and 89 counties and 27 states each year through its main stage productions, touring, educational programming and outreach activities. Since its opening in 1984, this award-winning theater has existed to create challenging, inspiring and entertaining theater, which communicates vital messages to our youth and promotes an early appreciation for literature and the performing arts. As the only major organization in Dallas focusing on theater for youth and families, DCT produces literary classics, original scripts, folk tales, myths, fantasies and contemporary dramas that foster multicultural understanding, confront topical issues and celebrate the human spirit.

DCT is committed to the integration of creative arts into the teaching strategies of academic core curriculum and educating through the arts. Techniques utilized by DCT artists/teachers are based upon the approach developed in The Integration of Abilities and Making Sense with Five Senses by Paul Baker, Ph.D.

DCT Founder and Executive Artistic Director, Robyn Flatt defines the artistic mission and oversees the operations of the organization, consisting of 38 full time staff members and nearly 200 actors, designers, theater artists and educators.

TEKS that your field trip to Dallas Children’s Theater satisfies are listed at the back of this Resource Guide.

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CURTAINS UP ON PUTTING A PERFORMANCE TOGETHER

Every DCT performance you see is the result of many people working together to create a play. You see the cast perform on stage, but there are people behind the scenes that you do not see who help before, during, and after every production.

The DIRECTOR
Determines the overall look of the performance.
Guides the actors in stage movement and character interpretation.
Works with designers to plan the lights and sounds, scenery, costumes and make-up, and stage actions.

The DESIGNERS
Plan the lights, sounds, scenery, costumes, make-up, and actions to help bring the director’s vision to life. There are also designers who work to create the posters, advertisements, programs, and other media for the performance.

The STAGE MANAGER
Before the performance, they create a cue sheet to guide the crew in getting set pieces on and off the stage during the performances.
During the performance, the stage manager uses this cue sheet to direct people and things as they move on and off the stage.

The CREW
Build and operate the scenery, costumes, props, and light and sound during the performance.

The CAST
Includes all of the performers who present the story on stage.

The AUDIENCE
That’s right! There can be no performance without you—the audience. The role of the audience is unique because you experience the entertainment with the performers and backstage crew. You are a collaborator in the performance and it is important to learn your role so you can join all the people who work to create this Dallas Children’s Theater production.
CURTAINS UP ON THE ROLE OF THE AUDIENCE

Watching a play is different from watching television or a sporting event. When you watch T.V., you may leave the room or talk at any time. At a sporting event you might cheer and shout and discuss what you’re seeing. Your role as a member of the audience in a play means you must watch and listen carefully because:

- You need to concentrate on what the actors are saying.
- The actors are affected by your behavior because they share the room with you. Talking and moving around can make it difficult for them to concentrate on their roles.
- Extra noises and movement can distract other audience members.

Are you ready for your role in this performance?
Check the box next to the statements that describe proper etiquette for an audience member.

☐ Try your best to remain in your seat once the performance has begun.
☐ Share your thoughts out loud with those sitting near you.
☐ Wave and shout out to the actors on stage.
☐ Sit on your knees or stand near your seat.
☐ Bring snacks and chewing gum to enjoy during the show.
☐ Reward the cast and crew with applause when you like a song or dance, and at the end of the show.
☐ Arrive on time so that you do not miss anything or disturb other audience members when you are being seated.
☐ Keep all hands, feet, and other items out of the aisles during the performance.
1. Draw a picture of what the audience might look like from the stage. Consider your work from the viewpoint of the actors on stage. How might things look from where they stand?

2. Write a letter to an actor telling what you liked about his or her character.

3. Write how you think it might feel to be one of the actors. Are the actors aware of the audience? How might they feel about the reactions of the audience today? How would you feel before the play began? What about after the show ends?

4. Which job would you like to try? Acting, Directing, Lighting and Sounds, Stage Manager, Set designer, Costume designer, or another role? What skills might you need to complete your job?
CURTAINS UP ON THEATER VOCABULARY

ACTOR: any theatrical performer whose job it is to portray a character.

CAST: group of actors in a play.

CENTER STAGE: the middle of the stage.

CHARACTER: any person portrayed by an actor onstage. Characters may often be people, animals, and sometimes things.

CHOREOGRAPHER: the designer and teacher of the dances in a production.

COSTUME DESIGNER: the person who creates what the actors wear in the performance.

DIRECTOR: the person in charge of the actors' movements on stage.

DOWNSTAGE: the area at the front of the stage; closest to the audience.

HOUSE: where the audience sits in the theater.

LIGHTING DESIGNER: the person who creates the lighting for a play to simulate the time of day and the location.

ONSTAGE: the part of the stage the audience can see.

OFFSTAGE: the part of the stage the audience cannot see.

PLAYWRIGHT: the person who writes the script to be performed. Playwrights may write an original story or adapt a story by another author for performance.

PLOT: the story line.

PROSCENIUM: the opening framing the stage.

PROJECT: to speak loudly.

PROP: an object used by an actor in a scene.

SET: the background or scenery for a play.

SETTING: the time and place of the story.

SOUND DESIGNER: the person who provides special effects like thunder, a ringing phone, or crickets chirping.

STAGE CREW: the people who change the scenery during a performance.

STAGE MANAGER: the person who helps the director during the rehearsal and coordinates all crew during the performance.

UPSTAGE: the area at the back of the stage; farthest from the audience.
CURTAINS UP AFTER THE PERFORMANCE

Attending a play is an experience unlike any other entertainment experience. Because a play is presented live, it provides a unique opportunity to experience a story as it happens. **Dallas Children’s Theater** brings stories to life through its performances. Many people are involved in the process. **Playwrights** adapt the stories you read in order to bring them off the page and onto the stage. **Designers and technicians** create lighting effects so that you can feel the mood of a scene. **Carpenters** build the scenery and make the setting of the story become a real place, while **costumers** and **make-up designers** can turn actors into the characters you meet in the stories. **Directors** help actors bring the story to life and make it happen before your very eyes. All of these things make seeing a play very different from television, videos, computer games, or CDs of stories.

Hold a class discussion when you return from the performance. Ask students the following questions and allow them to write or draw pictures of their experience at DCT.

• What was the first thing you noticed when you entered the theater?
• What did you notice first on the stage?
• What about the set? Draw or tell about things you remember. Did the set change during the play? How was it moved or changed?
• Was there any space besides the stage where action took place?
• How did the lights set the mood of the play? How did they change throughout? What do you think the house lights are? How do they differ from the stage lights? Did you notice different areas of lighting?
• What did you think about the costumes? Do you think they fit the story? What things do you think the costume designers had to consider before creating the costumes?
• Was there music in the play? How did it add to the performance?
• What about the actors? Do you think they were able to bring the characters to life? Did you feel caught up in the story? What things do you think the actors had to work on in order to make you believe they were the characters?
CURTAINS UP ON ADAPTATION

An adaptation is a change made in something so that it can fit a new use. LITTLE WOMEN: THE MUSICAL is an adaptation of a book, which is meant to be read, into a play, which is meant to be performed and viewed. Linda Daugherty and B. Wolf took the work of Louisa May Alcott and adapted it so that it could be performed for an audience on stage.

Consider these questions for discussion before you attend the DCT production:

• What kinds of things did Linda Daugherty and B. Wolf have to consider in writing a script, music and lyrics of the story?
• If she was alive, what kinds of things would Louisa May Alcott be concerned about with an adaptation of the story?
• Do you think the performance will be shorter or longer than the book?
• What will the characters look like? How will they match the images described by Louisa May Alcott? What differences can you expect?
• What about the story? What changes might you expect in adapting it for the stage? Why would these changes be necessary?

After the performance, consider these questions:

• Were there any characters or events that were in the book but not in the play? Why do you think these choices were made?
• Did the changes make the story stronger or was it weaker because of them?
• What do you think the set and costume designers need to consider when bringing the book to the stage?
• What things helped to tell the story on stage?

Use the following template to illustrate the similarities and differences between the book and DCT’s performance of LITTLE WOMEN: THE MUSICAL.
LITTLE WOMEN

Compare & Contrast

Book

Both

Play
LOUISA MAY ALCOTT (author) was an American novelist, short story writer and poet best known as the author of the novel *Little Women* (1868) and its sequels *Little Men* (1871) and *Jo's Boys* (1886). Raised in New England by her transcendentalist parents, Abigail May and Amos Bronson Alcott, she grew up among many of the well-known intellectuals of the day, such as Ralph Waldo Emerson, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Henry David Thoreau, and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. Alcott's family suffered from financial difficulties, and while she worked to help support the family from an early age, she also sought an outlet in writing. She began to receive critical success for her writing in the 1860s. Early in her career, she sometimes used the pen name A. M. Barnard, under which she wrote novels for young adults that focused on spies and revenge. Published in 1868, *Little Women* is set in the Alcott family home, Orchard House, in Concord, Massachusetts, and is loosely based on Alcott's childhood experiences with her three sisters. The novel was very well received and is still a popular children's novel today, filmed several times. Alcott was an abolitionist and a feminist and remained unmarried throughout her life. She died from a stroke, two days after her father died, in Boston on March 6, 1888.

Excerpted from: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louisa_May_Alcott

LINDA DAUGHERTY’S (playwright) plays have been produced in all 50 states in the United States, throughout Canada, and internationally in England, India, Germany, Finland, Turkey, China, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa. She received the 2011 National Award from the Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine for her plays addressing teen issues: *The Secret Life of Girls* (bullying), *EAT (It's Not About Food)* (eating disorders), *dont u luv me?* (teen dating violence), and *hard 2 spel dad* (learning differences) (written with Mary Rohde Scudday). In 2009, Ms. Daugherty received the first Elisa Project Star of Hope Award for her work in promoting awareness of eating disorders. Along with Dr. Susan Sugerman, she is a *Dallas Morning News* arts staff 2011 nominee for Texan of the Year. Several of her plays have been National Endowment for the Arts recipients and have won the Bonderman Indiana Repertory Theatre Playwriting Competition, the Dallas-Fort Worth Theater Critics Forum Award for New Plays, the Southwest Theatre Association’s Playwright Award and Best New Children’s Script Award, the Orlin Corey Outstanding Playwright Award, and five Dallas Theatre League nominations for Outstanding New Play. Ms. Daugherty is Playwright-in-Residence at Dallas Children’s Theater and a member of the Dramatist Guild of America.

In 2017, we conducted an interview with Linda Daugherty regarding her original plays, her writing process, and what advice she would give to aspiring playwrights. Here's what she had to say:

*What inspired you to pursue playwriting?*
Ms. Daugherty was an actress and had performed in Dallas, New York and around the country. When they had children, Ms. Daugherty and her husband decided to move back to Dallas. Playwriting became a way
to stay involved in theater without being consistently away from her family. She was first approached by someone who had a musical and needed someone to write the book (the non-sung dialogue and storyline of the musical). Ms. Daugherty found she enjoyed writing. “As an actress it was fun because I got to play all the parts.” Playwriting was also more freeing for Ms. Daugherty than acting because, when she needed to, she could always just rewrite (as opposed to acting, where there aren’t do-overs for a performance).

**What is your writing process?**
“I usually write in a frenzy. I work best when I kind of get obsessed.” When Ms. Daugherty teaches playwriting workshops, she tells her students to write about something that they are passionate about. But, sometimes a playwright is hired to write about something that’s not a passion and he or she has to become passionate about it. She says a writer needs to learn more about the subject and really dig in. Ms. Daugherty does this by trying to get a character to come alive or talk in her head. Some of Ms. Daugherty’s plays have required a good deal of research. *EAT (It’s Not About Food)* was one of those plays. It took loads of discipline and work mining information to write that show. Ms. Daugherty also loves working with a deadline. She spends a lot of time writing on legal pads and small pieces of paper. When she has a pile of papers and it’s closer to her deadline, she starts putting all the ideas together. “Organized haphazard” is what she calls it. Once she gets a character talking, that’s when the play really starts to come together. Rewriting is also important, says Ms. Daugherty. “It’s going back and looking at it again. They say writing is rewriting. It really is.” She continues to rewrite during the rehearsal process and sometimes almost until the show opens. Ms. Daugherty also warns to be careful who you listen to regarding your work. It’s great to hear different viewpoints, but it can also be destructive.

**What is the most difficult aspect about being a playwright?**
“First scene for me, first visualization for what you want to do.” Getting started can be difficult. Ms. Daugherty also says sometimes a play has a mind of its own. “Sometimes you have to throw a play on the floor and wrestle with it – it can’t go in all directions like an octopus.” It’s also sad when there’s a play on a shelf that hasn’t been performed onstage. She mentioned a story about her time in New York. She and her husband were living in a brownstone and a neighbor came over. She asked what he did for a living and he said he was a playwright and a cab driver. When Ms. Daugherty asked what he had written, he just said he was working on some stuff. She lived there ten years, and, although he kept saying he was a playwright, he never actually wrote anything. He eventually had to stop calling himself a playwright. “Can’t call yourself a playwright unless you pick up a pencil or sit at a computer.”

**What is most rewarding about being a playwright?**
“The most fun is the first read-thru. For me that’s opening night in a way.” Ms. Daugherty also likes when her plays touch people personally. She’s often approached by audience members who tell her that she told their story (especially with the teen plays that deal with weightier subject matter).

**What advice would you give to aspiring playwrights?**
She says playwrights need to start writing and find their voice. “The first thing is to believe you have something to say and to believe the way you say it will be interesting because everybody is interesting and has a distinct way of looking at the world.” Ms. Daugherty said she was writing a lot of fairy tale adaptations when her husband asked “when are you going to write something really important?”. “He was right and that’s when I wrote the play *Bless Cricket, Crest Toothpaste, & Tommy Tune* about my brother.” She sat down and in just ten days wrote a play based on her relationship with her brother with Down syndrome, submitted it to a playwriting contest, and won. Ms. Daugherty says that playwrights need to just “Go for it!”

**Why do you think theater is important?**
Although she loves movies and TV, the power of theater is in seeing a real person on stage and seeing their feelings in real time. “What you see in that moment is live – it’s right there in front of you.”
CURTAINS UP ON THE COMPOSER

B. WOLF (composer and lyricist), a native of west Texas, has been active in the Dallas theater community for many years. She has served as musical director and composer/playwright at Dallas Theater Center and at Dallas Children's Theater.

In her position as resident playwright/composer/musical director/sound designer for Kathy Burks Theatre of Puppetry Arts, a professional puppet troupe based in Dallas, she authored more than 30 puppet productions—original scripts and adaptations of classic tales—which performed in the Dallas metroplex area and toured extensively. Wolf is also a keyboard artist and has provided live accompaniment for productions at Dallas Children's Theater (Goodnight Moon; If You Give A Pig A Party; Go, Dog.Go!) and at Bootstraps Theater (The Boxer), also based in Dallas.

Adapted from: https://www.dramaticpublishing.com/authors/profile/view/url/b-wolf

CURTAINS UP ON DISCUSSION

Use the following questions to lead a discussion with students after attending DCT’s performance of LITTLE WOMEN: THE MUSICAL.

- What are Jo and her sisters preparing for when the play begins?
- Why isn’t their father home for Christmas?
- What do the March’s do with their Christmas breakfast?
- Compare Jo’s behavior at the New Year’s Eve dance to the other girls’ behavior.
- What “burdens” are the March girls dreading once the holidays have passed?
- What secrets do Jo and Laurie reveal to each other?
- How does Jo contribute to help their sick father?
- What happens to Beth while Marmee is away?
- What happens between Meg and John Brooke and what does Jo think about the matter?
- What does Laurie reveal to Jo after Meg’s wedding? What does she say in response?
- Why is Jo upset that Aunt March is taking Amy to Europe?
- How has Laurie changed in Europe?
- How does Jo make Beth’s “last months happy”?
- Why does Jo go to New York City?
- Who befriends Jo in New York City?
- What has changed between Amy and Laurie?
- Why does Professor Bhaer visit Jo at her family’s home? What happens between them?
- How has the March family changed from the beginning of the play to the end?
CURTAINS UP ON MATH AND NATURE

Louisa May Alcott and her sisters, like the March girls, experienced much of their schooling at home and in nature. Use the following activity with your students to encourage an understanding of the universal natures of Math and Science.

The Fibonacci Sequence is the series of numbers: 0, 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21, 34, ...

The next number is found by adding up the two numbers before it.
• The 2 is found by adding the two numbers before it (1+1).
• Similarly, the 3 is found by adding the two numbers before it (1+2),
• And the 5 is (2+3),
• and so on!

Example: the next number in the sequence above would be 21+34 = 55
It’s that simple! Can you figure out the next few numbers?

When you make squares with those widths, you get a nice spiral:

Encourage students to research examples of the Fibonacci sequence in nature.
A trip to a local botanic garden will provide lots of living examples while the internet and the library will provide many images and slides your students can share.

Excerpted from DCT Study Guide archives
Given today’s technology and ease of access to immediate communication through email, texts, and social media, students may find the idea of letter writing old-fashioned and impractical. However, for soldiers and their families during the Civil War, letters were a lifeline for both those fighting in the war and those left at home. Use the following activity to help students gain an understanding of the importance of letter writing and what historians can learn from letters written by ordinary citizens and preserved by their families.

Reading ‘Between the Lines’

Students can work individually or in groups to analyze and research Civil War letters from the National Archives at this link: http://www.civilwararchive.com/LETTERS/letters.htm

Once they have chosen a set of letters, have students fill out the Written Document Analysis Worksheet.

Use the following questions to encourage students to analyze and make inferences from the letters they’ve chosen.

1. What clues does the letter provide about the author at the time the Civil War started? What can you infer about his or her home, family, and level of education?

2. Are there specific clues regarding the side the author of the letter supported? Give examples.

3. What things led the letter writer to join the war, either as a soldier, nurse or other supporter? Do you find specific quotes that allow you to infer your answers? What are they?

4. How does the author feel about receiving letters and writing letters at this time? How important is this communication to him/her?

5. What personal concerns does the author express about the Civil War and its threat?

Try to search further in the National Archives and/or other internet sites and find out more about this letter writer and his or her family and life.

Extend the Lesson

Encourage students who are interested in writing letters to follow up by visiting the Letter Writer’s Alliance at: http://16sparrows.typepad.com/letterwritersalliance/
1. **TYPE OF DOCUMENT (Check one):**
   - [ ] Newspaper
   - [ ] Letter
   - [ ] Patent
   - [ ] Memorandum
   - [ ] Map
   - [ ] Telegram
   - [ ] Press Release
   - [ ] Report
   - [ ] Advertisement
   - [ ] Congressional Record
   - [ ] Census Report
   - [ ] Other

2. **UNIQUE PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DOCUMENT (Check one or more):**
   - [ ] Interesting Letterhead
   - [ ] Handwritten
   - [ ] Typed
   - [ ] Seals
   - [ ] Notations
   - [ ] "RECEIVED" stamp
   - [ ] Other

3. **DATE(S) OF DOCUMENT:**

4. **AUTHOR (OR CREATOR) OF THE DOCUMENT:**

   **POSITION (TITLE):**

5. **FOR WHAT AUDIENCE WAS THE DOCUMENT WRITTEN?**

6. **DOCUMENT INFORMATION (There are many possible ways to answer A-E.)**

   **Limit response for each question to 3 lines of text**

   **A.** List three things the author said that you think are important:

   **B.** Why do you think this document was written?

   **C.** What evidence in the document helps you know why it was written? Quote from the document.

   **D.** List two things the document tells you about life in the United States at the time it was written.

   **E.** Write a question to the author that is left unanswered by the document:
Civil War Letter Example
The following letter was written by Sullivan Ballou and made famous in the PBS series, The Civil War.

July 14, 1861
Camp Clark, Washington

My very dear Sarah:
The indications are very strong that we shall move in a few days—perhaps tomorrow. Lest I should not be able to write again, I feel impelled to write a few lines that may fall under your eye when I shall be no more . . .

I have no misgivings about, or lack of confidence in the cause in which I am engaged, and my courage does not halt or falter. I know how strongly American Civilization now leans on the triumph of the Government and how great a debt we owe to those who went before us through the blood and sufferings of the Revolution. And I am willing—perfectly willing—to lay down all my joys in this life, to help maintain this Government, and to pay that debt . . .

Sarah, my love for you is deathless, it seems to bind me with mighty cables that nothing but Omnipotence could break; and yet my love of Country comes over me like a strong wind and bears me irresistibly on with all these chains to the battle field.

The memories of the blissful moments I have spent with you come creeping over me, and I feel most gratified to God and to you that I have enjoyed them so long. And hard it is for me to give them up and burn to ashes the hopes of future years, when, God willing, we might still have lived and loved together, and seen our sons grown up to honorable manhood, around us. I have, I know, but few and small claims upon Divine Providence, but something whispers to me—perhaps it is the wafted prayer of my little Edgar, that I shall return to my loved ones unharmed. If I do not my dear Sarah, never forget how much I love you, and when my last breath escapes me on the battle field, it will whisper your name. Forgive my many faults and the many pains I have caused you. How thoughtless and foolish I have often times been! How gladly would I wash out with my tears every little spot upon your happiness . . .

But, O Sarah! If the dead can come back to this earth and flit unseen around those they loved, I shall always be near you; in the gladdest days and in the darkest nights . . . always, always, and if there be a soft breeze upon your cheek, it shall be my breath, as the cool air fans your throbbing temple, it shall be my spirit passing by. Sarah do not mourn me dead; think I am gone and wait for thee, for we shall meet again . . .
A Stitch in Time

Jo and her sisters would often spend an evening mending or doing other needlework while their mother read stories aloud to them. Use this activity to introduce your students to the needle arts.

You will need:
- Drawing paper
- Colored pencils, markers, or crayons
- Large plastic sewing needle
- Stitch in Time Design Template
- Plastic Canvas cut into 5x5 inch squares
- Yarn in a variety of colors

Provide each student with drawing paper and colored pencils, crayons or markers. Encourage them to draw several ideas for a simple needlework pattern they might like to create. Ideas might include simple shapes like hearts and diamonds or their initials in block styles.

Once students have chosen a design, instruct them to transfer it to the design template by placing an X in each square using the colors they have chosen. (Be sure to include the background color so that every square contains a colored X.)

Use the following diagram to practice making lines of cross-stitch on the plastic canvas with yarn and a plastic needle. Once students have practiced the process, instruct them to remove them to begin working the pattern they’ve designed.
CURTAINS UP ON ART (CONT'D)

Choose the color yarn needed to work your design and count the number of stitches you'll need to make in each row. Change colors as needed until the design is complete.

Use these instructions to make a frame to display the finished artwork:

Lightly trace your cross-stitch project onto the back of a piece of card stock, poster board or fun foam which you've cut to the size you want your finished frame to be.

With the help of an adult, use an X-acto knife or sharp scissors to cut a hole out of your card stock where you traced.

Use double-sided tape or masking tape to attach your cross-stitch onto the card stock so the project shows through the hole you cut.

Use double sided tape to attach a back to the frame; then display your artwork in a place of honor!

Adapted from DCT Study Guide archives
CURTAINS UP ON MELODRAMA!

_Melodrama (noun) A sensational dramatic piece with exaggerated characters and exciting events intended to appeal to the emotions._

The March sisters love to write and perform plays for friends and family in the popular style of their times; melodrama. Jo writes the scripts and all of the girls create costumes and props. Use the following activities with the rough “Operatic Tragedy” plot in Chapter 2 of _Little Women_ to provide students an opportunity to understand and practice the theatrical techniques used in melodrama.

Explain that actors in the 1800’s were trained in the classical style, which meant that they were given a set of movements to express certain emotions. The audiences could easily understand these movements; even if they did not understand the verbal language, they could interpret the body language. Model a few of the movements described below and have the students copy them. Have them guess what emotion is being expressed.

**Standard Movements Used to Convey Emotions in Melodrama**

- **Grief:** Head down, shoulders rounded, hands cupping the face. Raising the shoulders up and down, with a sobbing noise, is optional.
- **Fear:** Face turned to the right side, with the right hand to the mouth, fingers curled under touching the top of the palm.
- **Horror:** Eyes wide, mouth open, both hands to the cheeks with the fingers extended.
- **Fortitude:** Body straight, chest up, hand to forehead, with the palm facing the audience and fingers curled slightly.
- **Love Expressed (Male):** Chest held high, right hand crosses the chest and rests on the upper left over the heart, then opens out to the right and the loved one.
- **Love Expressed (Female):** Chest held high, head cocked a bit to the side, opposite leg goes out with foot pointed, hands under the chin, fingers entwined and bent at the first and second knuckles (almost praying), hands go toward the loved one, smile on face.
- **Evil Planning:** One eyebrow up, the other down, a grimace on the face and hands rubbing together; if it is a really good plan, the fingers twiddle.
- **Evil Sneaking:** Shoulders hunched over, arm raised to cover the nose and mouth, eyes free to shift around the room, legs bent on the cross of the stage.
- **Pride:** Chest up, hands with knuckles to both hips, legs slightly apart, a balanced look.
- **Anger:** Both hands shoulder high, eyebrows pushed toward each other, face tense with a grimace, hands in tight fists.
- **Overwhelmed:** Chin up bringing the face to look up, one arm dropped limp to the side, the other hand open with palm towards the audience on the top of the forehead.

After practicing the movements above, encourage students to share other ideas they might have for emotions and the appropriate body language to convey them.

Explain to students that in melodrama, the actors of the time were given certain “lines of business.” This meant that they were cast as a certain character type, like hero, heroine, villain, old man, comedian, etc. They learned how to speak, walk, dress, use certain facial expressions, and behave as this character type. This was helpful for the actors, who often had little rehearsal time for new plays or were playing several parts a week (or even within the same play).
CURTAIN'S UP ON MELODRAMA (CONT'D)

Extend the activity by encouraging students to work in groups to write and produce their own melodrama. Teams can work together on making props, costumes, backdrops and sets as well as writing the script and acting out the roles. Students might even enjoy videotaping their own ‘Silent Movie” melodrama.

Adapted from:
https://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/educators/lessons/grade-9-12/Acting_up_a_Melodrama#Instruction

CURTAIN'S UP ON GOOD CITIZENSHIP

Let me say one word, dears. Not far away from here lies a poor woman with a newborn baby. The children are huddled together to keep from freezing. My girls, will you give them your breakfast as a present?
-Marmee, LITTLE WOMEN: THE MUSICAL

Throughout both the play and book, the March family strives to be good citizens in their community and home. From Mr. March fulfilling his war-time duty, to Jo cutting her hair for money for her family, to Beth bringing food to the poor Hummels, the March’s seem to be in constant service to others.

As a class, brainstorm ways students can be good citizens in their communities and families, and even in class. Write these ideas on the board and discuss actionable ways to achieve them. Have students select an idea they want to put in to action. Report back when those ideas are reality and celebrate the good citizenship prevalent in your classroom!

Created by: Jessica Colaw

CURTAIN'S UP ON MORE


http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/514
Project Gutenberg provides a free downloadable version of Louisa May Alcott’s book.

For Students:
https://louisamayalcott.org/about
Learn about the Alcott family and ‘tour’ their home, Orchard House, through photographs.

Louisa May Alcott's Little Instruction Book compiled by Evelyn L. Beilenson. This is a compilation of sayings taken from Louisa May Alcott’s books.

The Louisa May Alcott Cookbook by Gretchen Anderson provides recipes for young cooks based on dishes mentioned in Little Women and recreated from cookbooks of the times.
CURTAINS UP ON MORE (CONT'D)

More by Louisa May Alcott:
For more with the March sisters try:
Little Women
Little Men
Jo’s Boys

The Aunt-Hill books:
Eight Cousins: Orphan Rose Campbell goes to live with her aunts and seven rough-and-tumble male cousins. Parents protested the heroine’s unconventional home-school education, which includes the study of anatomy, and forbids the wearing of corsets.
Rose in Bloom: In this sequel to Eight Cousins, Rose Campbell and her cohorts come of age. As Alcott’s mouthpiece, she speaks out in favor of women’s suffrage and recommends the work of Henry David Thoreau.

Or try these companion books of short stories:
Spinning Wheel Stories
A Garland for Girls
Under the Lilacs: A children’s novel by Louisa May Alcott, first published in 1878. The story is about two girls; Bab and Betty Moss; Miss Celia; a circus runaway, Ben Brown; and his dog Sancho.
Flower Fables: Fairy Tales and poems Louisa first told at age 16.

For more advanced readers:
An Old-Fashioned Girl: A young adult novel about a poor country cousin and a rich city girl that mirror characters and storylines based on Alcott’s mother and grandfather.
Hospital Sketches: A compilation of letters and experiences Louis May Alcott encountered during her time as a nurse in the Civil War.

Excerpted from DCT Study Guide archives
110.6 - English Language Arts and Reading, Grade 4
b.6 - Comprehension skills: listening, speaking, reading, writing, and thinking using multiple texts. The student uses metacognitive skills to both develop and deepen comprehension of increasingly complex texts.
b.7 - Response skills: listening, speaking, reading, writing, and thinking using multiple texts. The student responds to an increasingly challenging variety of sources that are read, heard, or viewed.
b.11 - Composition: listening, speaking, reading, writing, and thinking using multiple texts - writing process. The student uses the writing process recursively to compose multiple texts that are legible and uses appropriate conventions.

110.7 - English Language Arts and Reading, Grade 5
b.6 – Comprehension skills: listening, speaking, reading, writing, and thinking using multiple texts. The student uses metacognitive skills to both develop and deepen comprehension of increasingly complex texts.
b.7 – Response skills: listening, speaking, reading, writing, and thinking using multiple texts. The student responds to an increasingly challenging variety of sources that are read, heard, or viewed.
b.11 – Composition: listening, speaking, reading, writing, and thinking using multiple texts - writing process. The student uses the writing process recursively to compose multiple texts that are legible and uses appropriate conventions.

110.18 - English Language Arts and Reading, Grade 6
b.5 - Reading/Comprehension of Literary Text/Drama. Students understand, make inferences and draw conclusions about the structure and elements of drama and provide evidence from text to support their understanding. Students are expected to explain the similarities and differences in the setting, characters, and plot of a play and those in a film based upon the same story line.
b.9 - Reading/Comprehension of Informational Text/Culture and History. Students analyze, make inferences and draw conclusions about the author’s purpose in cultural, historical, and contemporary contexts and provide evidence from the text to support their understanding. Students are expected to compare and contrast the stated or implied purposes of different authors writing on the same topic.

110.19 - English Language Arts and Reading, Grade 7
b.5 - Reading/Comprehension of Literary Text/Drama. Students understand, make inferences and draw conclusions about the structure and elements of drama and provide evidence from text to support their understanding. Students are expected to explain a playwright’s use of dialogue and stage directions.
b.9 - Reading/Comprehension of Informational Text/Culture and History. Students analyze, make inferences and draw conclusions about the author’s purpose in cultural, historical, and contemporary contexts and provide evidence from the text to support their understanding. Students are expected to explain the difference between the theme of a literary work and the author’s purpose in an expository text.

111.6 - Mathematics, Grade 4
b.1 - Mathematical process standards. The student uses mathematical processes to acquire and demonstrate mathematical understanding.

111.7 - Mathematics, Grade 5
b.1 - Mathematical process standards. The student uses mathematical processes to acquire and demonstrate mathematical understanding.

111.26 - Mathematics, Grade 6
b.1 - Mathematical process standards. The student uses mathematical processes to acquire and demonstrate mathematical understanding.
111.27 - Mathematics, Grade 7
b.1 - Mathematical process standards. The student uses mathematical processes to acquire and demonstrate mathematical understanding.

117.114 - Art, Grade 4
b.2 - Creative expression. The student communicates ideas through original artworks using a variety of media with appropriate skill. The student expresses thoughts and ideas creatively while challenging the imagination, fostering reflective thinking, and developing disciplined effort and progressive problem-solving skills.

117.117 - Art, Grade 5
b.2 - Creative expression. The student communicates ideas through original artworks using a variety of media with appropriate skill. The student expresses thoughts and ideas creatively while challenging the imagination, fostering reflective thinking, and developing disciplined effort and progressive problem-solving skills.

117.202 - Art, Middle School 1
b.2 - Creative expression. The student communicates ideas through original artworks using a variety of media with appropriate skill. The student expresses thoughts and ideas creatively while challenging the imagination, fostering reflective thinking, and developing disciplined effort and progressive problem-solving skills.

117.203 - Art, Middle School 2
b.2 - Creative expression. The student communicates ideas through original artworks using a variety of media with appropriate skill. The student expresses thoughts and ideas creatively while challenging the imagination, fostering reflective thinking, and developing disciplined effort and progressive problem-solving skills.

117.115 – Music, Grade 4
b.6 – Critical evaluation and response. The student listens to, responds to, and evaluates music and musical performances.

117.118 – Music, Grade 5
b.6 – Critical evaluation and response. The student listens to, responds to, and evaluates music and musical performances.

117.208 – Music, Middle School 1
b.5 – Critical evaluation and response. The student listens to, responds to, and evaluates music and musical performance in both formal and informal settings.

117.209 – Music, Middle School 2
b.6 – Critical evaluation and response. The student listens to, responds to, and evaluates music and musical performance in both formal and informal settings.

117.116 – Theatre, Grade 4
b.5 – Critical evaluation and response. The student responds to and evaluates theatre and theatrical performances.

117.119 – Theatre, Grade 5
b.5 – Critical evaluation and response. The student responds to and evaluates theatre and theatrical performances.

117.211 – Theatre, Middle School 1
b.5 – Critical evaluation and response. The student responds to and evaluates theatre and theatrical performances.

117.212 – Theatre, Middle School 2
b.5 – Critical evaluation and response. The student responds to and evaluates theatre and theatrical performances.