



RAWLINSON ROAD MIDDLE SCHOOL- Home of Raider PRIDE



Student Name: _____

Date: _____

Course: 6th grade Drama **Teacher:** Mrs. Fann

Teacher Office Hours: 10:00 am- 12:00 pm

Teacher Email: sfann@rhmail.org

Other form of contact if help is needed: Student may request a Zoom meeting with teacher. Requests may be sent through Canvas or email.

Instructions to complete the student packet:

This packet can be completed without needing any outside materials other than a pencil. There is space in the packet for all answers to be placed. In order to receive full credit, all answers must be complete and correct.

Instructions to submit work:

Please take pictures of the completed student work and email to sfann@rhmail.org. If you need assistance in how to scan the work on a phone (Android or iPhone) please contact me. I can provide details for you. Please make sure the pictures are clear so that I can read them easily. If I cannot read the answers, I cannot properly grade.

Technology

Laptop issues: please email the help desk- helpdesk@rhmail.org or phone at (803)981-3531 and include the following information:

Student ID number (ex: RS12345)

Parent/Guardian name, Parent/Guardian email and phone number contact information.

School Name / Teacher name

A description of the problem with the computer

The Rock Hill Schools Technology Department Staff will be on call between the hours of 8AM - 8PM

Launchpad: <https://launchpad.classlink.com/rockhill>

Canvas: <https://rockhill.instructure.com/login/canvas>

**** For more information on remote learning, please visit:**

RRMS website at <https://www.rock-hill.k12.sc.us/domain/2596> or

RHS District website at: <https://www.rock-hill.k12.sc.us/elearning>



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Remote Learning Round 2- 6th grade drama

In order to give you a basic knowledge of how theatre came to be what it is today, I will be leading you through a brief unit on Theatre History.

You will have 2 days to work on an assignment for each era (section) of Theatre History. I will provide an article for you to read and you will then answer the questions that go along with the article.

April 16th and 17th will be make up days for you to get any work done that you haven't completed.

This isn't the most exciting part of theatre, but it is extremely important!



April 2nd and 3rd- Assignment #1: The Origins of Theatre

Please read the following article of the Origins of Theatre. At the bottom of the page, please answer questions 1-10. You may write your answers directly on this page. You will find all answers within the article. All answers must be complete and correct to receive full assignment credit.

Article

Humans have always had a basic need to imitate. We get most of our learning by imitating others. Infants learn language by imitating the sounds made by those around them. Children's play often involves imitations of things they have seen or stories they know.

Imitation is the basis of all theatre. One definition of theatre is *a person or persons (the actor/s) imitating the actions and words of others (the play) for the benefit of others (the audience).*

We know little for certain of how the theatre evolved during primitive times. This lack of knowledge is due to the absence of written records. To find answers, anthropologists have studied artifacts and drawings in caves. They have also visited with and recorded the activities of primitive tribes still in existence. Though proof is scarce, anthropologists have developed several theories to explain the birth of theatre.

Here is one popular theory of how theatre developed. Some members of the tribe went out to hunt. The hunts had to be successful to provide necessary food for survival. The rest of the tribe stayed to protect the camp site. When the hunters returned, the most important question was "Did the hunt go well?" The hunters may have answered "Let us show you."

They then re-enacted the hunt. This showed the others what happened. Some of the hunters portrayed the animals. They may have used animal skins as costumes. Others portrayed the hunters. Together, they showed the story of the hunt. This re-enactment of the hunt was theatre. Actors (the hunters) wearing costumes (animal skins) imitated other characters (the animals) to tell a story (what happened during the hunt) to an audience (the non-hunters).

As years passed, changes in the acting out of the hunt occurred. Perhaps this is the way things evolved. The primitive tribes decided to act out a successful hunt *before* they went out to search for the animals. They believed this would create magic that would bring them success. The primitive people used magic to explain things they did not understand. They also used magic in attempts to protect themselves and control nature. They repeated this "magical theatre" performance before every hunt. It soon became a ritual. **A ritual is something performed repeatedly in exactly the same way.**

The hunting ritual and others like it continued to increase. The tribe chose one member to oversee the rituals. This was the shaman. The shaman was also the religious leader of the tribe. The rituals became the religious celebrations of the tribes.

In these primitive times, religion and theatre were the same. In many civilizations that followed, it was hard to separate theatre from religion, because theatrical performances were an important part of almost all religious ceremonies.



Questions on the Origins of Theatre

1. Why do we know so little about primitive tribes?
2. How have anthropologists discovered what they do know about primitive tribes?
3. Describe a popular theory about how theatre started.
4. What did primitive people use for costumes?
5. Why did they begin acting out a hunt before it occurred?
6. What is a ritual?
7. How many people oversaw the rituals?
8. What were people who oversaw rituals called?
9. What was the shaman's position in the tribe?
10. Why was it difficult to separate theatre and religion in many primitive civilizations?



April 13th and 14th- Assignment #2: Greek Theatre

Please read the following article about Greek Theatre. At the bottom of the page, please answer questions 1-10. You may write your answers directly on this page. You will find all answers within the article. All answers must be complete and correct to receive full assignment credit.

Article

Greek Theatre began over 2,500 years ago. It began in the religious festivals that honored Dionysus, the Greek God of wine and harvest. The festivals grew in popularity and important until, at its peak, the great theatre festival in Athens, *Dionysia*, lasted for six days. Over 15,000 people attended the festival each year.

The earliest plays were told by a chorus of men and boys. According to legend, one day a man named Thespis stepped out of the chorus and spoke alone. The chorus then responded to his speeches. Thespis was the first actor. Today, we call actors *thespians* in his honor. Later, the number of actors increased to three, in addition to the chorus.

Each actor in Greek theatre played more than one role. To portray different roles, the actor wore different masks. The masks of tragedy and comedy have become symbols of the theatre.

Greek authors entered their plays in contests for the festivals. The winning playwright won a prize of money and an ivy wreath to wear as a symbol of victory. Greek theatre had many important playwrights. Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides wrote *tragedies* (dramas in which the main character suffers a disastrous end). Aristophanes and Menander wrote *comedies* (light, humorous dramas with a happy ending). A special type of play called a *satyr* play made fun of Greek legends. We get our word *satire* from this. Some of the most famous Greek plays were *Oedipus*, *Antigone*, *Electra*, *Medea*, *The Birds* and *The Frogs*.

The great Greek philosopher and teacher, Aristotle, wrote *The Poetics*. In his book, he discussed theatre of his time. Aristotle discussed important topics in theatre including *plot* (what happens), *theme* (the idea or message), *character*, *music*, *diction* (speech), and *spectacle* (what was seen). Aristotle became the first literary critic.

The Greek built their theatres on hillsides. They used the natural slope of the hill for seating the audience. A large circular area called the *orchestra* was located at the foot of the hill. It was here that members of the chorus moved as they chanted their lines. Behind the orchestra was a raised platform on which the actors performed. A small building named the *skene* was built in the back of the acting platform. The skene was where the actors changed masks. Our word *scene* comes from *skene*.

The Greek theatre also had special machinery including platforms on wheels and a device to lower an actor from the top of the skene house onto the stage. They used this device to show a god coming down to earth. The Greek also used scenery to help give locations for the action of the play. Most historians agree that the Greek era is one of the most important times in theatre history.



Questions about Greek Theatre

1. What did Greek theatre originally celebrate?
2. How many people attended the yearly festivals honoring Dionysus?
3. Who is known as the first actor?
4. How did Greek actors change roles?
5. Which 3 playwrights wrote tragedies?
6. Who were 2 playwrights who wrote comedies?
7. What type of play makes fun of Greek tragedies?
8. Who was known as the first literary critic? What is the name of the book he wrote about theatre during his time?
9. In Greek drama, what was the function of the chorus?
10. What was the skene?



April 15th and 16th- Assignment #3: Medieval Theatre

Please read the following article about Medieval Theatre. At the bottom of the page, please answer questions 1-10. You may write your answers directly on this page. You will find all answers within the article. All answers must be complete and correct to receive full assignment credit.

Article

Theatre was at its peak during the ancient Greek era. Theatre continued during the Roman Empire, but was never as important as it had been before. We call the era after the fall of the Roman Empire the Medieval Ages, the Middle Ages, or sometimes the Dark Ages. The church became the major force in the lives of the people at this time. At first the leaders of the church outlawed theatre. They believed that it was vulgar and evil. Only a few groups of traveling actors continued to perform.

After many years, the theatre was reborn as part of the church services. At first, the priests put on a short scene within the mass. The earliest of these scenes was the story of Jesus' resurrection from the tomb at Easter. Later, other masses also had short scenes included. The name given to a short biblical scene was *trope*.

The tropes were very popular. The priests soon realized they were a valuable way to tell the stories of the Bible. In time, the tropes became more elaborate, and the priests began to present more than one trope at a time. Soon the priests were presenting several tropes together to help celebrate certain festivals. The tropes that were shown together became known as *cycles*. The clergy built a small stage for each cycle inside the church. Each cycle told a complete story, and the congregation moved from one stage to the next to see each cycle.

Many of the clergy believed that staging the tropes was important but was taking too much of their time. Eventually, Pope Innocent II ordered that the tropes be moved outdoors. Members of the craft guilds (which trained and organized workers in each major occupation) replaced the clergy in the preparation of the tropes.

This new arrangement worked well. The clergy was able to devote more time to other church work. The members of the guilds were able to give their time working on the cycles as a means of helping the church. At times, workmen built small sets on a large platform on the steps of the church. They then presented a cycle in front of each set. The audience gathered in front of the platform to watch the entire series of cycles.

In other towns, cycles were presented on several carts. These carts resembled floats in today's parades. The audience gathered at several locations. Each cart, called a *pageant wagon*, stopped at each location and presented it again. Then the wagon following them presented the next trope in the cycle. All of the wagons stopped at each place until they had presented all the cycles at all of the locations.

Theatre had regained importance by the end of the Medieval Ages. At the end of the era, writers began producing secular or non-religious plays again



Questions on Medieval Theatre

1. What is the period following the fall of the Roman Empire known as?
2. Why was theatre outlawed for a time?
3. Who were the only performers in the early Medieval era?
4. Theatre was reborn as part of the services for what?
5. What was a trope?
6. What was a set of tropes performed together known as?
7. Where were the tropes originally presented?
8. Who took over the production of scenes from the clergy? Why?
9. What was the function of the pageant wagons?
10. What types of plays were becoming popular by the end of the Medieval Ages?