

OKLAHOMA!

CONTENT GUIDE



THEATRE UNDER THE STARS

2018-2019 SEASON TEXAS ESSENTIAL
KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS DOCUMENT

ROGERS & HAMMERSTEIN'S OKLAHOMA!

Show Dates: September 11 - 23, 2018

Music by Richard Rodgers

Book and Lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein II

Based on the play "Green Grow The Lilacs" by Lynn Riggs

Curricular tie-ins provided for grades : 8, 9, 10, 11, 12

TEKS:

Fine Arts

[Fine Arts - Middle School](#)

[Fine Arts - High School](#)

English Language Arts

[ELA - Middle School](#)

[ELA - High School](#)

Social Studies

[Social Studies - Middle School](#)

[Social Studies - High School](#)

Health

[Health - Middle School](#)

[Health - High School](#)

The highlighted TEKS can be met by seeing the show, completing discussions, creating artwork and participating in the activities.

ABOUT THE SHOW

We are opening our 50th Anniversary Season in September with a timeless classic, Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Oklahoma!*, which is celebrating its 75th Anniversary.

The first collaboration by Rodgers and Hammerstein, *Oklahoma!* is often considered the single most important work in the musical theatre canon. The original production was a smash hit on Broadway running for an unprecedented 2,212 performances. It's had countless revivals, national tours, an Academy Award-winning film adaptation, and won a special Pulitzer Prize for Rodgers and Hammerstein in 1944.

Based on Lynn Riggs' play, *Green Grow the Lilacs*, with music by Richard Rodgers and lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein II, *Oklahoma!* centers on life in the early 1900s in the rural farmland of Oklahoma, and the love story between Curly and Laurey.

Full of familiar tunes that will get you humming and your toes tapping, this rousing and optimistic story of love and redemption, renewal and hard work is sure to resonate with our entire Houston community!

Disclaimers: *Oklahoma!* makes references to sexuality and the existence of sex, contains moments of violence, and comments about race. It also contains a toe-tapping score from one of the greatest musical theatre writing teams in history, Rodgers and Hammerstein.

Damn: 1

Hell: 1

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Below are some general discussion questions that will get students thinking about the production they've just seen!

THE LIFE OF *OKLAHOMA!*

Pre-Show Questions:

- Why do you think a musical written about the life of farmers and ranchers continues to be popular 75 years after it was written?

Post Show Questions:

- What themes did you recognize in the show that are still relevant today?
- How would *Oklahoma!* be different if it were written in 2018? Discuss pop culture, social, political, financial, and technological trends that might affect the 2018 interpretation.

DRAMA AND DIALECTS

Pre-Show Questions:

- The characters in *Oklahoma!* are written to speak in a distinct dialect.
 - What is a dialect? In what places (tv, movies, music, etc.) do you hear dialects? Do you think you speak in a dialect?

Post Show Questions:

- Why do you think the playwright chose for these characters to speak in this dialect?

- How does the way the characters speak affect how you see them?
- Do you relate to this dialect? Why or why not?

TALKING ABOUT GOSSIP

“Why do they think up stories that link my name to yours? Why do the neighbors gossip all day behind their doors?” Gossip is a prevalent theme in *Oklahoma!*.

Explore this topic with your class.

Pre-Show Questions:

- What is gossip?
- Why do you think gossip might be a useful storytelling device in a piece of theatre?
- Is gossip prevalent in your life, world, community? Why and how?

Post Show Questions:

- What gossip has been told in the community of the show?
- How did it affect the characters?
- If you were in the story of *Oklahoma!*, would you change the gossip to change the story? Why or why not? How would you go about doing that?

PLAYING THE PLAYWRIGHT

Pre-Show Questions:

- In musical theatre, characters openly describe themselves and others through song and dialogue.
 - Why would a playwright use song and not just words to describe a

character?

Post Show Questions:

- Who are some of the characters that you remember the most?
- What words were used to describe them? Was there music used to support their characterization?
- What words did they use to describe themselves? Did they sing about themselves, and what was the music like?
- How would those words/depictions change if *Oklahoma!* was written in 2018?