



MEMPHIS

★ ★ ★ ★ THE MUSICAL ★ ★ ★ ★

CURRICULUM GUIDE

THEATRE UNDER THE STARS

2017-2018 SEASON TEXAS ESSENTIAL
KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS DOCUMENT

Show Dates: February 20 – March 4

Written by: Joe DiPietro

Music by: David Bryan

Curricular tie-ins provided for grades : 7 – 12

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The information and activities in this guide were developed by TUTS Community Engagement staff, Rebecca J. Hopp and Sara Brunow.

The Following Selected Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills are addressed by seeing the show and discussing the questions below:

TEKS:

Fine Arts: Theatre Grade 7 8 High School

Fine Arts - Middle School

Fine Arts - High School

English Language Arts: Grade 7 8 High School

ELA - Middle School

ELA - High School

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



TUTS Education

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Theatre Under The Stars' School-Based Programming runs the spectrum of arts-based learning, challenging students to discover their world through the art of musical theatre. From creative problem solving, innovation through the arts, explorations into core curriculum, and technique-based learning, TUTS provides opportunities for students at every level. Artist residencies, professional development for teachers and more is available. Bring TUTS to your campus! Contact Sara Brunow, Director of Community Engagement, at sara@tuts.com, or call 713-558-8811.

HUMPHREYS SCHOOL OF MUSICAL THEATRE

Humphreys School of Musical Theatre (HSMT) educates and develops musical theatre students of all ages and ambitions, from the beginner to the Broadway bound. A myriad of courses, workshops and seasonal camps train pre-schoolers to pros in dance, acting and vocal technique. From jazz theory to improv, diction to demi-pliés, we help polish young stars until they truly shine. For more information please contact Calvin Hudson, Education Coordinator/Registrar, at calvin@tuts.com, or call 713-558-8801.

THE RIVER PERFORMING AND VISUAL ARTS CENTER

Theatre Under The Stars merged with The River in 2010 with a common goal — to extend arts access to children of all abilities. This revered pairing of two Houston-grown non-profits broadened TUTS' educational reach into the city's special-needs community through the demonstrated expertise of The River. Whether kids are twirling or tapping, singing or stenciling, The River's year-round, barrier-free classes allow all children to delight in the drama of the performing and visual arts. Financial aid is available. For more information please contact: Eileen Edmonds, Assistant Director of The River, at eileen@tuts.com, or call 713-558-8812.

About MEMPHIS

MEMPHIS is set in the places where rock and roll was born in the 1950s: the seedy nightclubs, radio stations and recording studios of the musically-rich Tennessee city. With an original score, it tells the fictional story of DJ Huey Calhoun, a good ole' local boy with a passion for R&B music and Felicia Farrell, an up-and-coming black singer that he meets one fateful night on Beale Street. Despite the objections of their loved ones (Huey's close-minded mama and Felicia's cautious brother, a club owner), they embark on a dangerous affair. As their careers rise, the relationship is challenged by personal ambition and the pressures of an outside world unable to accept their love. (source: Broadway.com)

MEMPHIS is a musical by David Bryan (music and lyrics) and Joe DiPietro (lyrics and book). It is loosely based on Memphis disc jockey Dewey Phillips, one of the first white DJs to play black music in the 1950s. It played on Broadway from October 19, 2009 to August 5, 2012. This production won four 2010 Tony Awards, including Best Musical. The show was previously staged at the North Shore Music Theatre in Beverly, Massachusetts and TheatreWorks in Mountain View, California during the 2003-04 season, as well as the 5th Avenue Theatre in Seattle during the 2008-2009 season.

WHO WAS DEWEY PHILLIPS?



- Born in 1926 in Tennessee
- In 1948 Dewey's first job in the music business was selling records at Grant's department store, where he played rhythm and blues music for the customers and passerbys on the street.
- He started his radio career with a 15 minute slot in 1949, and a year later he was heard six nights a week for two hours each night.
- Dewey played music and "eclectic mix of the latest records" such as hillbilly music and "race" records.
- Hear Dewey on WDIA: <http://memphismusichalloffame.com/inductee/deweyphillips/>
- Dewey played Elvis' "That's All Right" for the first time ever in 1954.
- His music was listened to by black and white teenagers across Memphis.
- In 1956 Dewey made his TV debut following the popular Laurence Welk Show.
- He struggled with alcohol and pain killers (he had chronic pain from multiple car accidents).
- Dewey died at age 42.

(Sources: <http://memphismusichalloffame.com/inductee/deweyphillips> and <http://www.706unionavenue.nl/91347538>)

The Language of MEMPHIS

In our everyday lives, our words are wrapped around every thought, movement, and emotion, whether we realize it or not. Many will say we are defined by that which we speak. As we know, in the world of theatre, language is purposeful; the author most likely had good reason for the specific language and words chosen. Words are chosen with care; the meaning behind those words is the key to understanding what a character is truly trying to say.

When training young actors, the conversation often revolves around the idea of intention – why we say and do what we say and do. When creating a piece such as MEMPHIS, it is important that everyone involved in the production understands the “why” behind each and every word.

In your classroom, challenge your students to focus on both intention and subtext in their communication. The activity below can be a guide to better understanding these theatrical tools. How can focusing on intention and subtext help to guide them in their own paths? How does discussion of language affect how we communicate? How can you use language to express who you are? Words are not easy, but if you know the path from which they came, you can better know the individual who speaks them.

Simmons says, “You shouldn’t say words you don’t know the meaning of – people think they’re dirty!” (in reference to Huey using the word “Hockadoo”).

THE LANGUAGE OF MEMPHIS

Hell 25	Heck 1	Hocka-fuckin’-do 1
Damn 5	Pee 1	Shitload 1
Shit 4	Cracker 1	Hick 1
Nigger 2	Son-of-a-Bitch 5	Negro 5
Hockadoo 19	Redneck 3	Helluva 1
Darn 1	Jesus 4	Hocka-damn-doo 1

DISCUSS

In the musical, Huey uses the word “Hockadoo” in several ways. What do you believe he is expressing by using this word? What conclusions can you draw from the reactions that this word receives?

The words “Cracker”, “Nigger”, “Redneck”, “Hick”, and “Negro” are used throughout the musical. What is the relationship between these words? In what ways have you heard these words used in conversation? How did those conversations make you feel? In what ways have you heard these words used in a positive or negative way?



Theatre Etiquette

THE DO'S AND DONT'S OF BEING A GREAT AUDIENCE MEMBER!

- **Arrive at least 30 minutes before the performance**
- **Wait for the ushers to help seat you**
- **During the show:**
 - Cell phones and electronic devices should be turned off – The light and noise is a big distraction to the actors and audience!
 - Recordings and photos are not allowed.
 - Avoid getting up to go to the restroom during the performance. Save this for pre/post show or intermission so that you don't disrupt others' experiences.
 - Remain quiet so that you don't distract others nearby or the actors.
- **DO!**
 - Thank the actors by applauding at the end of scenes.
 - Watch carefully and enjoy!
 - After the show, share your experience about the show with friends and family.

**REMEMBER TO TAG YOUR PRE-SHOW AND POST-SHOW PHOTOS
ON SOCIAL WITH #TUTSMEMPHIS AND #TUTSHOUSTON!**

Music as a Character

Music is a main character in the musical. Music reflects society, its people, and history. The music in MEMPHIS assists in revealing a story of love, history, struggle and strength. It also reveals information, feelings and ideas about a location and time. With your students, listen and review the lyrics of the following songs:

The Music of My Soul

(selections performed by Huey and Cast)

When I was a young boy
My daddy sat me down
He said "son, don't you never go
To the dark side of town
I'm talking downtown Memphis
See, that's where the black folk play"
And I said "Yes sir daddy"
And then I snuck down anyway
See never was taught to read none
Oh no never taught to write
The only thing my daddy taught
Was white should stay with white
But I heard it through the alleys
It floated on the breeze
It burst out through the doorways
And it knocked me to my knees
It broke down all of my senses
And make me feel so good
See I was lost but now I found
The music of my soul

And then one day my daddy died
And we laid him in his grave
And my mama she cried and cried and cried
And prayed that he'd be saved
But all I felt was pity
For he never understood
Well how could people be so bad
And made me feel so good
It went right through my body
It grabbed me by my heart
It broke down all my senses
It made me feel so home
And I would love it til the day I died

The music of my soul
It broke down all my senses
It made me so feel home
See I was lost until I found
I was deaf until I heard
I'll make this world come around to
The music of my soul

Colored Woman

(performed by Felicia)

Some got chances, some got choices,
Some got freedom in these states.
Colored women got few chances,
Got few choices on our plates.
Mama told me there are limits
For dark-skinned girls stuck in this light-skinned world.
Once in a while I lose myself in dreams-
A silly girl full of silly schemes.
Now along comes a man whose skin is white and pale,
A shiny fool full of shiny tales.
He says he'll make the people hear me.
He'll force this world to fin'ly see me.
Is he a lie like ev'ry other man
Or Lord could he somehow/ could he somehow/
Could he somehow help to free me?
Mama told me not to dream big,
But Mama lived her life running scared.
I am stronger and I'll fight longer!
I'll do what Mama never even dared!
Colored women with few chances,
Has to do what she must do!
I will make my colored dreams come true!
For this is one colored woman who will color
Her life her way!

You can find the songs at:

The Music of My Soul

<https://tinyurl.com/MusicSoulTUTS>

Colored Woman

<https://tinyurl.com/coloredmemphis>

Music as a Character (cont.)

1. Reflecting on the lyrics and using the chart, have the students compare the location of Memphis during the time of the musical to Houston today. In each quadrant of the **Music as a Character Chart**, have the students list characteristics, information, ideas and feelings about each location according to these categories: **Home, Family, Play, Day-to-Day**.
2. Print one chart for Memphis and one chart for Houston.
3. Use the songs above to help you reflect on the voices and stories of the characters in MEMPHIS:
 - What can you gather about education?
 - Interaction of people?
 - Roles and interactions of parents and children?
 - What did Memphis look like?
 - What struggles did they face?
4. In the Houston box have the students write about their city using similar questions:
 - What can you gather about education?
 - Interaction of people?
 - Roles and interactions of parents and children?
 - What does Houston look like?
 - What struggles do you face?
5. After completing each chart, have a discussion about the similarities and differences of TIME and COMMUNITY.
 - What was shocking to the students?
 - Have things changed over time?
 - What is still the same?

EXTENSION

DISCUSS

Are there parts of Houston that people have told you to avoid?

- What reasoning did they give?
- How does this make you feel?
- Have you been to a place you have been told to avoid?
- What was your impression of it?

CREATE

Have each student write lyrics or a poem about their experience of visiting a forbidden area of town.

MUSIC AS A CHARACTER Chart

<div>HOME</div>	<div>FAMILY</div>
<div>PLAY</div>	<div>DAY-TO-DAY</div>

DATE:

LOCATION:

Risk

Throughout MEMPHIS, Huey and Felicia take immense risks: personal risks, risks for love, and risks for change. These risks defy societal norms about race and even gender. Investigate risk throughout history.

EMBODYING HISTORY

What does it mean to risk? Why do we risk?

1. Have your students individually choose and research a lesser known historical risk-taker.
2. Using their research, each student will create a PowerPoint about their risk-taker.
3. Students will then present their findings to the class. Instead of solely giving facts on their chosen person, have them personify/perform as their chosen risk-taker. The student should embody the historical figure as if they are sharing their autobiography. Students can go as far as dressing like their historic figure to help them get into character.
2. At the end of the presentation/performance encourage the audience (the classroom) to ask the historical figure questions.
3. Reflect as a group on what they learned in their research and what it felt like to become that person.
4. Here is a list of possible options for students to research. You can focus this on a specific time period or region as it applies to your classroom.
 - Buzz Aldrin, astronaut
 - Shirley Sherrod, race relations and poverty
 - Kathryn Bigelow, film director
 - Mendel Grossman, photographer
 - Irene Opdyke, rescuer
 - Harriet Tubman, Underground Railroad
 - Elon Musk, entrepreneur
 - Clem Sohn, stuntman
 - Octavius Catto, civil rights
 - Diane Nash, civil rights
 - Harry Ueno, Japanese Internment
 - Chiune Sugihara, rescuer
 - Zaha Hadid, architect
 - Wilma Mankiller, Cherokee Chief
 - Billie Holiday, performer
 - Russell Means, American Indian Movement
 - Ilhan Omar, Legislator
 - Edward V. Roberts, Disabilities Rights Movement

DISCUSS

RISKS OF OTHERS:

- Discuss those risks – would you have done the things that they did?
- In what ways did they inspire you?
- What choices did they make that you agree or disagree with?
- How do you define a risk-taker?

MY RISKS:

- In what ways have you been a risk taker in your life? How did it feel?
- What did you learn from hearing about other risk-takers?

Violence: Musical, History and Today

Violence is a main theme of MEMPHIS. What acts of violence did you note in the performance?

Examples:

- Gator's father was mentioned as being strung up.
- Father slaps his daughter for dancing to race music.
- Bricks thrown through windows.
- Felicia hit with a bat.
- Fear of violence, or fear/talk of "getting us killed"

DISCUSS

- Ask the students to journal about how specific scenes in the musical made them feel.
- What actions and reactions happened because of violence? In what ways did you notice the characters standing up for their beliefs in non-violent ways?
- What other historical events are they aware of that were violent? Why do they remember those events?
- What things do they interact with/see often that are violent? (Movies, video games, personal relationships)

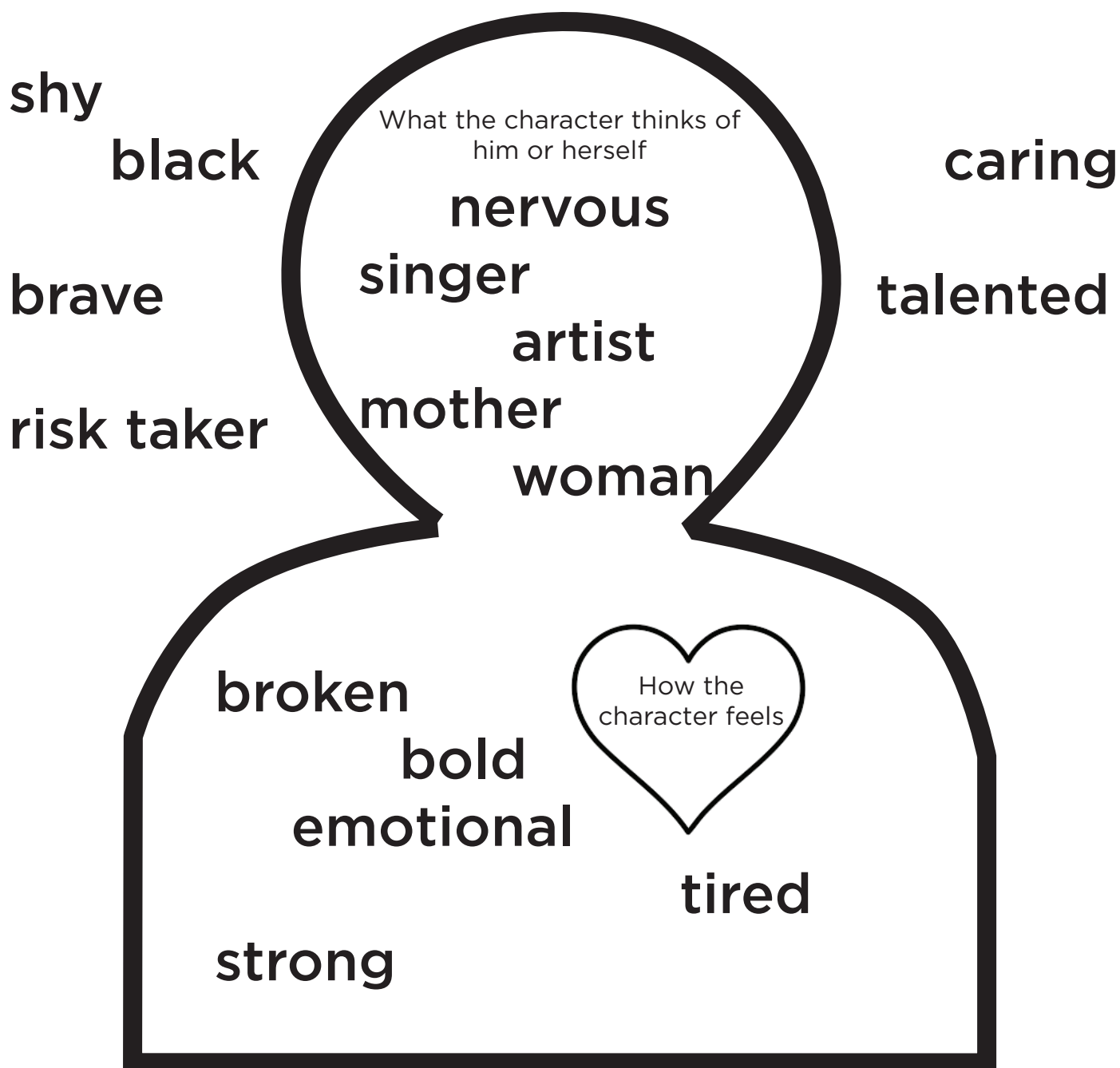
WRITE

1. Have the students investigate characteristics of historic and current non-violent protest and resistance such as the Civil Rights Movement or the Women's March.
 - What types of methods did the event or movement use?
 - How did they overcome difficulties? What were the results?
2. Next, students should individually choose a character that was affected by violence in MEMPHIS.
3. Using the **Role on the Wall Chart** have the students reflect on the character.
 - On the **outside** of the form, students should write words, labels, and ideas of how others see that character. (Example: shy, loud, black, white, rude, caring, brave, talented, risk taker)
 - On the **head**, write what the character thinks of him or herself. (example: nervous, a singer, an artist, a mother, a woman)
 - And around the **heart**/below the heart, write how the character feels. (examples: broken, bold, emotional, tired).
4. Discuss what the students discovered about their character.
5. Next, taking on the role and personality of this character, have each student write a letter to the newspaper telling their story and persuading the audience to stand up for their beliefs in non-violent ways.
 - What would their character feel was important to express about the violent act that happened to them?
 - Does their character feel that violence causes more violence? Why or why not? What is their personal stance on violence?
 - What information would they give to encourage others to look for non-violent solutions?
 - Would the solutions be big events, small gestures or something else?
6. When the letters have been completed, ask the students to exchange letters between two different characters.

7. Have each group list similarities and differences in the letters that each student wrote.
- Did the different characters share perspectives on any issues?
 - Do the students personally share any perspectives or learn anything new about their partner or themselves?
8. Have each group reflect on what they have learned about violence and non-violent resistance.

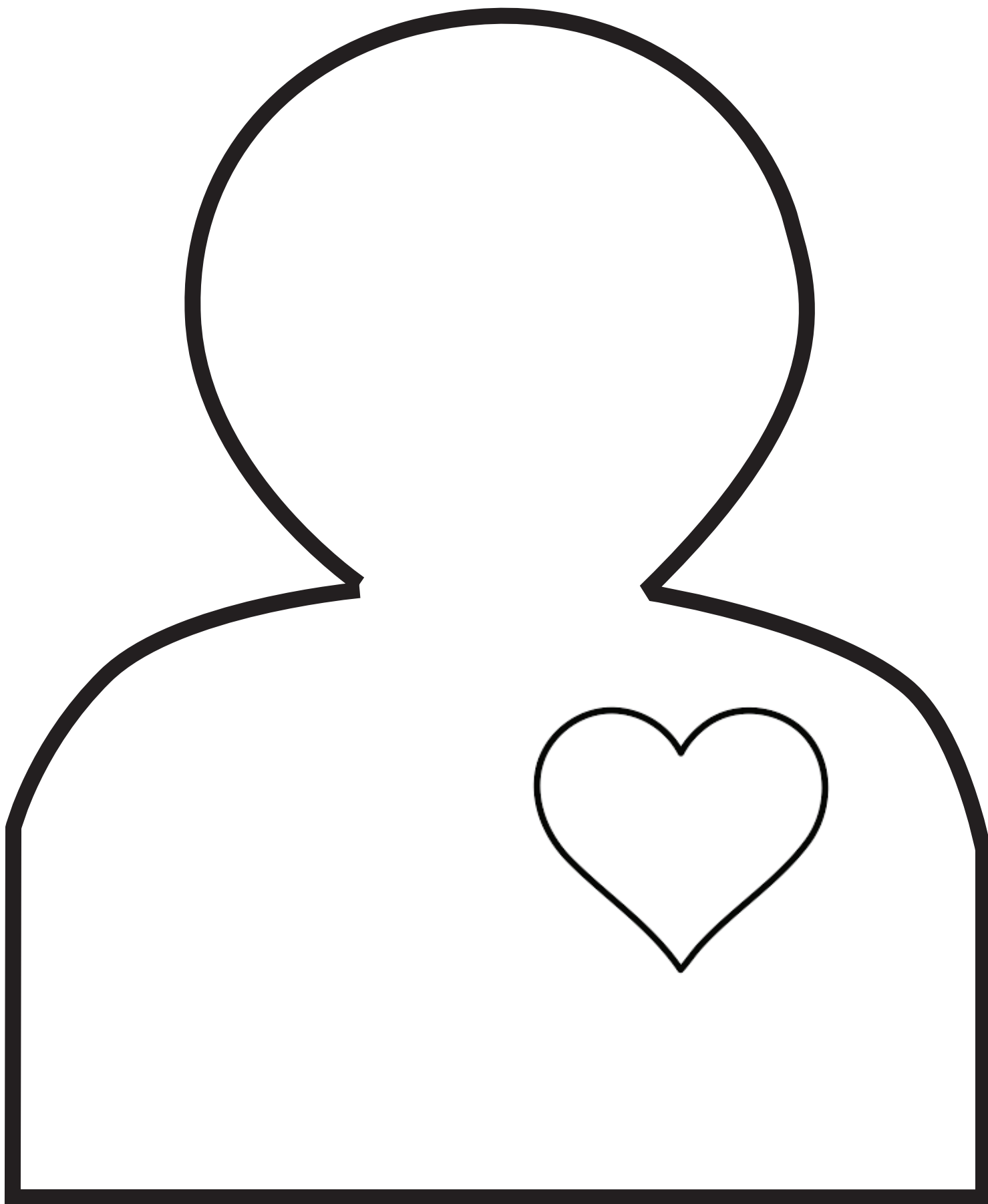
EXAMPLE ROLE ON THE WALL CHART

How others see the character



Character: _____

EXAMPLE Role on the Wall Chart



Character: _____
Role on the Wall Chart

I Come From A Place

Huey had a strong sense of love/belief of Memphis as his home. It was a part of his soul, his identity, and he sang that Memphis lives in him. What do you think that means? What other ways did his home of Memphis reflect who he was?

Memphis Lives in Me

There's a town that I call home
Where all the streets are paved with soul
Down on Beale there's a honky-tonk bar
So hear the wail of a blues guitar
Have a beer and drop a dime in the blind man's jar
The blues sing softly in the air like a Sunday morning prayer
Just one more drink and you'll see God everywhere
Like a sad old melody that cheers you up, it sets you free
That's how Memphis lives in me
There comes a time when muddy waters run rough
There comes a point when a man has had enough
Like a friend who always stands by me
Memphis knows me
Memphis shows me

Listen to the entire song here: <https://tinyurl.com/memphislives>

WRITE

Give the students a piece of paper that simply says, "I come from a place..."

1. Have the students complete the phrase in whatever means they would like, poetry, a feeling, a sentence, a location, etc
2. In a circle, have the students repeat, "I come from a place..." Then one by one have them read their writing and the group will repeat "I come from a place..." before each person starts.
3. Repeat the activity but have the students say their words with feeling, using pauses, and intention in their voice.
4. Have the students discuss the change sound in the new poem that was created.
5. Have the students discuss what it means to come from a place and how that place shapes you as a person.
6. Take the new class poem and use it as a writing prompt for the students to discuss the following: How does home shape who you are? How does your city/location live in you?

CREATE

1. Using the poem, *I Come from a Place*, have the students create a painting or magazine collage that reflects their sense of home.
2. Allow the students to create freely. It could be an abstract painting that represents the colors or feelings of their home, a literal painting of the front of their home, a painting full of words that they associate with home, or even their dream home.
3. Encourage the students to think about how location/city/culture affects how they view their home as a place and how their home plays a role in how they feel their personal identity is formed.

EXTENSION

Music, like all art forms, evolves and changes as society changes. One musician influences another and we begin to see similar ties. However, what is the difference between celebration and appropriation of music?

1. Have the students read the article, "*Taking the Rap: Are White Hip-Hoppers Stealing Black Thunder?*" Written by David Koen <https://tinyurl.com/takingtherap>
2. Discuss their impressions of music after reading this article.
 - What did they learn? Find fascinating?
 - Do they feel they will listen to music differently after reading this article?
 - Make a list of questions they would ask their favorite artist about the topic.

Resources & Ideas to Investigate

MUSIC

Evolution of African-American Music in America

www.indiana.edu/~a594/time.html

DJ Flash Gordon Parks, Houston DJ

www.mixcloud.com/flashgparks/
www.facebook.com/Flashgordonparks/

Golden Age of Radio

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golden_Age_of_Radio

VH1 Save the Music Program

www.vh1savethemusic.org/

MEMPHIS

Dewey Phillips and Elvis

www.elvis.com.au/presley/dewey-phillips-and-elvis-presley.shtml
scottymoore.net/Chisca.html

Beale Street

historic-memphis.com/memphis-historic/beale/bealestreet.html

Joe DiPietro

www.rnh.com/bio/88/DiPietro-Joe

David Bryan

www.davidbryan.com/Biography

More activities for exploring challenging materials through theatre:

DBL.com: http://dbp.theatredance.utexas.edu/teaching_strategies

Theatre for Community Conflict and Dialogue by Michael Rhod

Structuring Drama Work by Jonothan Neelands

2018-2019 STUDENT MATINEES



SEPTEMBER 19, 2018 @ 10:00AM
Recommended for grades 8-12



OCTOBER 31, 2018 @ 10:00AM
Recommended for grades K-12



DECEMBER 19, 2018 @ 10:00AM
Recommended for grades K-12



FEBRUARY 27, 2019 @ 10:00AM
Recommended for grades 10-12



APRIL 24, 2019 @ 10:00AM
Recommended for grades 8-12

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