



THEATRE UNDER THE STARS

2019/20 SEASON

PURE COUNTRY CURRICULUM GUIDE

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Key to Subjects

Subject area icons show what curricular topics each activity addresses.

Theatre



English Language Arts



Social Studies



Music



Dance



Theatre Icons

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Social Studies, Art, English Language Arts Icons

"Creative Commons Education Solid Icons" by Creative Stall, PK are licensed under CC BY 3.0

Dance Icon

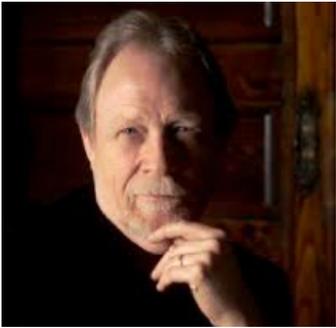
"Dancer" by Centis MENANT, licensed under CC BY 3.0

ABOUT PURE COUNTRY



STEVEN DORFF

Steven Dorff was the composer on the original *Pure Country* movie starring George Strait. He has written songs performed by Barbra Streisand, Kenny Rogers, Celine Dion, Whitney Houston, Anne Murray, Garth Dorff is also a prolific film and television composer, receiving three Grammy nominations and six Emmy nominations. In 2018, he was inducted into the prestigious Songwriters Hall of Fame. He collaborated with John Bettis once again on *Josephine*, a Broadway musical based on the life of Josephine Baker.



JOHN BETTIS

John Bettis was the lyricist on the original *Pure Country* movie starring George Strait. He has written several hit songs for artists such as Madonna, Michael Jackson, and Diana Ross. Bettis has provided lyrics for the musicals *Lunch*, *Svengali*, *The Last Session*, *Say Goodnight*, and most recently *Josephine*. He has received Grammy, Academy Award, and Golden Globe nominations and has received two Emmy awards. In 2011, he was inducted into both the Songwriters Hall of Fame as well as the Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame.



REX MCGEE

Rex McGee is a screenwriter, journalist, and creativity coach. He wrote the screenplay for Warner Brothers' *Pure Country*, produced by Jerry Weintraub and starring George Strait, upon which the musical is based. Today, he teaches screenwriting at SMU and the KD College of Film and Dramatic Arts in Dallas, and conducts creativity workshops that are based on the *The Artist's Way*, the bestselling book by Julia Cameron.

PRODUCTION STATS

Composer
Steven Dorff

Lyricist/Librettist
John Bettis

Writer/Producer
Rex McGee

Opened
June 2017 at the Irving Arts Center in Irving, TX, outside of Dallas.

World Premiere
April 2020 at Theatre Under The Stars in Houston, TX

YOU SHOULD KNOW

The musical is based on the 1992 film, starring celebrated country music star, George Strait, and actress Lesley Ann Warren.

The movie was conceived as a star-making vehicle for musician George Strait and was his acting debut.

The *Pure Country* movie soundtrack is still George Strait's best selling album of all time.

Pure Country is a Texas-themed story that explores the importance of home.

GEORGE STRAIT AND THE 1992 FILM



George Strait; Photo by Joe Pugliese

WHO IS GEORGE STRAIT?

George Strait was born on May 18, 1952, in Poteet, Texas, and was raised nearby on a family farm. After high school, he eloped with his high school sweetheart, Norma, before joining the army. While stationed in Hawaii, Strait began singing in an army-sponsored band named “Rambling Country.” When he returned to Texas, Strait put together his own band, Ace in the Hole. In 1981, he signed a contract with MCA records to produce his first solo album, Strait Country. He made his acting debut in the 1992 film *Pure Country*. Today, George Strait is known as the “King of Country” and is considered one of the most popular and influential recording artists of all time. Strait is known for his classic country look and style. He was one of the first big country stars to bring country music back to its roots and away from the pop-country style becoming popular in the 1980s.

HOW DID PURE COUNTRY GET STARTED?

The project started out as Jerry Weintraub’s idea, the producer of the *Pure Country* movie, to put George Strait in a movie and get a movie career going like Elvis. George was being overshadowed as more traditional country artists started rising to fame, and he needed to get his name back on top again. It took a year and a half to convince George to do the movie.

“After twenty years of being a screenwriter in Hollywood, where I was constantly busy and employed, but my scripts weren’t getting produced, I realized I had lost my creative spark and that’s why I had gone home to my roots in Texas to find it again. That was very much on my mind, and it eventually became the main story plot for Pure Country.”

-Screenwriter Rex McGee

LESSON 1: Sing a song about my life



Pure Country Movie Art 1992, Warner Bros

VOCABULARY WORDS

Lyrics
Metaphor
Narrative
Storytelling

KEY SUBJECTS

English Language Arts
Music

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How can we describe who we are and our story through song?

“Heartland” is a song that the main character Dusty sings in *Pure Country*. It’s about all of the things that make up the heartland, an area of America also known as the Midwest. Dusty sings about “a place where mornings are an endless blue and you feel mother nature walk along with you,” making wonderful use of descriptive language, metaphor, and rhyme.

Songwriting is a very poetic way of writing down your thoughts or feelings on a particular topic. Here is some advice from popular songwriters:

UNPACK YOUR ADJECTIVES

Songwriter Jimmy Robbins: “Country music loves adjectives. They love interesting, quirky adjectives. I wrote a song called ‘Sure Be Cool If You Did,’ that Blake Shelton did. ‘You don’t have to throw back your pretty pink lemonade shooter,’ instead of saying, ‘You don’t have to drink your drink.’ Four words to describe that drink instead of one.”

WRITE WHAT YOU KNOW

Songwriter Craig Wiseman: “All I want to do is capture one moment, some slice of life, even if it’s riding around in a pickup truck. Brooks & Dunn’s ‘Hillbilly Deluxe’ came from me waiting for my wife in the grocery store and watching a country town go by on a Friday night.”

TWO LEARNING OBJECTIVES

To create a narrative song expressing your background or dreams and goals.
To use rhyming and verse to write a song.

ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

1. Distribute the lyrics to “Heartland” from *Pure Country*, as well as a separate blank sheet of paper.
2. Explain to the students that they must rewrite this song to be about their life. The first thing they should do is retitle the song to make sense with their personal theme or story.
4. Remind students to unpack their adjectives and write what they know.
5. Use the original melody and original song as the foundation for the students to create new lyrics. Try a few lines together as a class until the students are comfortable enough to complete the project independently or in groups as the teacher sees fit.
6. Finally, each artist will perform their song for the class. This could be done as a reading, a sing-a-long, or sung with a karaoke track. Whatever fits the students and classroom best.

REFLECTION/DISCUSSION

Who did you learn more about through this process and how? Yourself?
A classmate? Songwriters?

What lyrics were the hardest to write? Why?

How did adding music enhance or change the meaning of the story?

LESSON 2: Cowboys ain't afraid to dance



Line Dancing Source Unknown

VOCABULARY WORDS

Choreography
Grapevine
Line Dance
Rocking Step

KEY SUBJECTS

Dance
Theater Arts

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How do you create your own personal point of view for a fictional character?

In *Pure Country*, Earl and Mama Ivy's honkytonk is a place where people in the town gather to celebrate and have a good time listening to music and dancing.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

To explore movement and expression by performing a choreographed line dance.

To use steps from a dance they learned to choreograph a new dance.

ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

1. Space everyone out arms-length apart to help avoid any collisions.
2. The following are steps for the "Boot Scootin Boogie" line dance. Feel free to break these up as you see fit for your class. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gsWZBLzawjc>
 - a. Start by kicking your right foot in front of you and tapping your heel on the ground twice, then do the same with your left foot.
 - b. Kick your right foot out again, but this time only tap it once. Do the same with your left foot.
 - c. Facing forward, pick up your right foot and pivot ninety degrees to your left. Then stomp your right foot down on the ground.
 - d. Grapevine to your right, then grapevine to your left.
 - e. Take two rocking steps forward, then two rocking steps backward.
 - f. Repeat, beginning with step A.

GO DEEPER

Teach a circle dance, such as the Horah, and discuss the cultural importance of these dances.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pGTho2a9t9k>

REFLECTION

How was practicing the dance different when music was playing vs. when there was no music?

What was the most difficult part of choreographing your own dance? Why?

How does dance bring people together?

Line dancing is a traditional country-western dance. Can you think of any traditional dances from another culture?

LESSON 3: The only place I feel like home



ESSENTIAL QUESTION

What is your classmates background and how is knowing other cultures important?

Dusty sings a lot about the place he grew up in, but now his audience and production team don't understand him the way the people in his hometown do. But when Dusty returns home, his friends at home reject him because they think he's changed. It takes a lot of work for Dusty to get back the trust and comfort he felt at home.

Often times, the places and people we feel the most "at home" around are people who have a similar ethnicity, religion, or culture as us. Sometimes people who are different than us can challenge our viewpoints and make us uncomfortable. In the end, we are all just humans trying to feel at home in the world. If we all take time to understand each other despite our differences, then we can feel at home no matter where we are

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

To interview a classmate and record information about the classmate's background and culture.
To adapt the interview into a short written biography.

ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

1. Have students work in pairs.
2. Students will take turns interviewing each other, using the list of questions below. The questions are more of a guide to start conversation; they don't need to all be answered as long as an informative conversation has taken place.
3. Students will need to take detailed notes during the interview process. Interviews can be recorded, if technology is available.
4. Once the interviews have taken place, the students should return to their own desks and organize their thoughts to create an outline of a biography for their classmate.
5. The next part can be as in-depth or laid back as you see fit. Students can jump right into their final draft, or do a rough draft and a peer editing session. This can be in-class or homework.
6. Once the biography is finished, the students should read their biographies aloud to the class.
7. As an added bonus, combine the biography from this lesson with the songwriting lesson and have the students turn their biographies into songs about their classmates.

STUDENT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

What is your birthday?
Where were you born?
Were your parents born in the same place? If not where were they born?
Do you have any siblings? If so - how many and where in birth order are you?
What is your favorite family time activity? Why?
If you could go anywhere in the world - where would you go? Why?
If you had to describe yourself in five words, what would they be?
What is your favorite thing about yourself?
What language(s) do you speak? Does anyone in your family speak another language?
What does your day look like after school ends?
What is your favorite TV show or movie? Why?
What is something you eat for dinner a lot?
What is your favorite holiday? What traditions do you have surrounding this holiday?
What are some traditions your family has?

REFLECTION

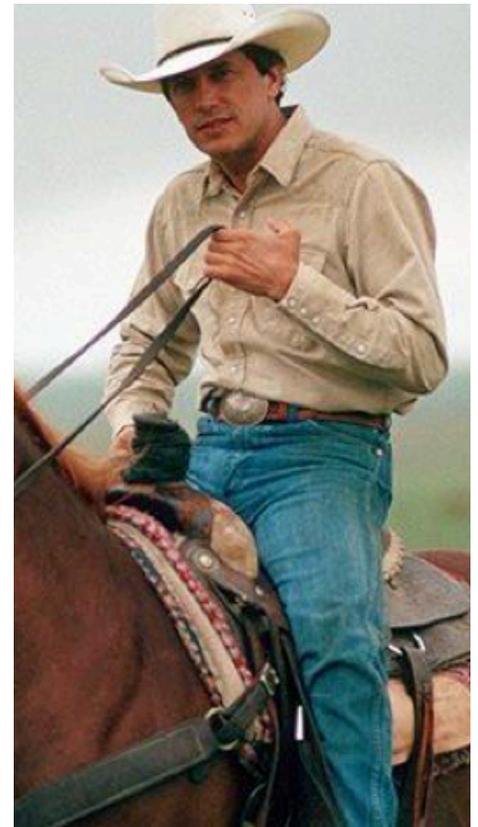
What is something new you learned about your classmates?
How was it difficult to write a paper about someone else?
Is there anything that you think is important about yourself that was left out of your biography?
What can we do to get to know and understand people of different cultures better in our daily lives?

VOCABULARY WORDS

Autobiography
Biography
Culture
Heritage

KEY SUBJECTS

English Language Arts
Social Studies



George Strait, Photo Warner Bros

TEKS

Lesson 1 “Songwriting”

English Language Arts	Elementary	ELA.K.B.6B&E, ELA.K.8B, ELA.K.B9A&B, ELA.K.B10A&E, ELA.K.B11A, ELA.1.B1A,C,D,&E, ELA.1.B6E, ELA.1.B7E, ELA.1.B8A&D, ELA.1.B9B, ELA.1.B10A,B&D, ELA.1.B11A&E, ELA.1.B12A, ELA.2.B6E, ELA.2.B7A&E, ELA.2.B10A,B,D,&F, ELA.2.B11A&E, ELA.2.B12A, ELA.3.B6E, ELA.3.B7A&E, ELA.3.B9B, ELA.3.B10A,D,&F, ELA.3.B11A&E, ELA.3.B12A, ELA.4.B1A,C,&D, ELA.4.B6E, ELA.4.B7A,B,&E, ELA.4.B9B, ELA.4.B10A,B,D,E,&F, ELA.4.B11A&E, ELA.4.B12A, ELA.5.B1A,C,&D, ELA.5.B6E, ELA.5.B7A&E, ELA.5.B9B, ELA.5.B10A,D,E,&F, ELA.5.B11A&E, ELA.5.B12A
	Middle	ELA.6.B4, ELA.6.B9, ELA.6.B15Bi&ii, ELA.6.B28, ELA.7.B9, ELA.7.B15Bi&ii, ELA.8.B4, ELA.8.B9, ELA.8.B15Bi&ii, ELA.8.B16
	High	ELA.6.B4, ELA.6.B9, ELA.6.B15Bi&ii, ELA.6.B28, ELA.7.B9, ELA.7.B15Bi&ii, ELA.8.B4, ELA.8.B9, ELA.8.B15Bi&ii, ELA.8.B16
Theatre	Elementary	THEATRE.K.B1C, THEATRE.K.B2A, THEATRE.1.B2A&D, THEATRE.1.B4A, THEATRE.1.B5A, THEATRE.2.B2A, THEATRE.2.B2D, THEATRE.2.B4A, THEATRE.3.B2A, THEATRE.3.B4A, THEATRE.3.B5A, THEATRE.4.B2A, THEATRE.4.B4A, THEATRE.4.B5A, THEATRE.5.B2A
Social Studies	Elementary	SS.K.B14A, SS.1.B17A, SS.2.B15A&B, SS.2.B19A, SS.3.B18A&B, SS.4.B22C, SS.5.B25C
Music	Elementary	MUSIC.K.B2A, MUSIC.K.B3A, MUSIC.K.B4A, MUSIC.1.B1C, MUSIC.1.B3A, MUSIC.1.B4A&C, MUSIC.1.B5A&C, MUSIC.2.B3A, MUSIC.2.B4B&C, MUSIC.2.B5A,B&C, MUSIC.2.B6A&D, MUSIC.3.B3A&B, MUSIC.3.B.4A&B, MUSIC.3.6A, MUSIC.4.B3A&B, MUSIC.4.B4A&C, MUSIC.4.B6A, MUSIC.5.B3A&B, MUSIC.5.B4A&C, MUSIC.5.B5C&D, MUSIC.5.B6A

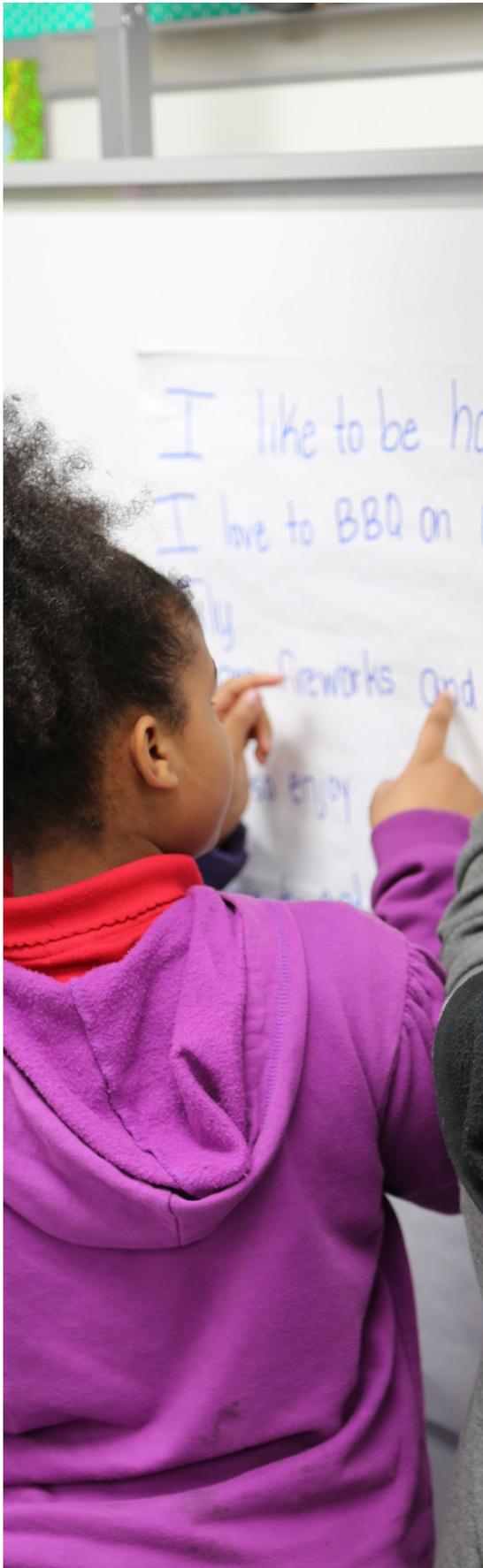
Lesson 2 “Line Dancing”

Physical Education	Elementary	PE.K.B1A, PE.K.B3A, PE.K.B7A&B, PE.1.B1B,C,E,&F, PE.1.B6A&B, PE.1.B7A&B, PE.2.B1K&L, PE.2.B2A, PE.3.B1H&I, PE.3.B2B, PE.4.B1H&I, PE.4.B7D, PE.5.B1I
Music	Elementary	MUSIC.1.B3C, MUSIC.1.BB5A, MUSIC.2.B3C, MUSIC.2.B5A,B&C, MUSIC.2.B6A&D, MUSIC.3.B3C&E, MUSIC.3.B5A&B, MUSIC.3.6A, MUSIC.4.B3C&D, MUSIC.4.B6A, MUSIC.5.B3C&D, MUSIC.5.B5A,C&D, MUSIC.5.B6A
Theatre	Elementary	THEATRE.K.B1A, THEATRE.K.B4A, THEATRE.1.B1B, THEATRE.1.B5A, THEATRE.2.B2A, THEATRE.2.B4A, THEATRE.3.B1B, THEATRE.3.B2A, THEATRE.3.B5A, THEATRE.B4A, THEATRE.4.B2A, THEATRE.4.B4A, THEATRE.4.B5A, THEATRE.5.B2A
Social Studies	Elementary	SS.1.B17A, SS.1.B18B, SS.2.B15A&B, SS.2.B18A, SS.2.B19A, SS.3.B18A, SS.4.B22C, SS.5.B21B, SS.5.B25C

Lesson 3 “Home”

Social Studies	Elementary	SS.K.B11B, SS.K.B12A&B, SS.1.B15A, SS.1.B18A, SS.2.B16A&B, SS.2.B19A, SS.3.B13A&B, SS.3.B18A, SS.4.B19A&B, SS.4.B22C, SS.5.22A&B, SS.5.B25C
	Middle	SS.6.15A-F, SS.6.19A&B, SS.6.22C&D
English Language Arts	Elementary	ELA.K.B1A,C,D&E, ELA.K.B10E, ELA.K.B11B, ELA.K.B12A,C,&E, ELA.1.B1A,C,D,&E, ELA.1.B11A&E, ELA.1.B12A, ELA.1.B13A,C,&D, ELA.2.B1A,D,&E, ELA.2.B.11A&E, ELA.2.B12A, ELA.2.B13A,C,E&G, ELA.3.B1A,C,D,&E, ELA.3.B11A&E, ELA.3.B12A, ELA.3.B13A,C,E,&H, ELA.4.B1A,C,&D, ELA.4.B11A&E, ELA.4.B12A, ELA.4.B13A,C,E,&H, ELA.5.B1A,C,&D, ELA.5.B.11A&E, ELA.5.B12A, ELA.5.B13A,C,E,&H
	Middle	ELA.6.B9, ELA.6.B16, ELA.6.B23C, ELA.6.B25, ELA.6.B28, ELA.7.B9, ELA.7.B25B&C, ELA.8.B9, ELA.8.B16, ELA.8.B22B, ELA.8.B25
	High	ELA.9.B8, ELA.9.B13A, ELA.II.B13A, ELA.III.B8, ELA.IV.B8

TUTS EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



TUTS 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.

Looking to bring a theatre artist into your classroom?

Drama and Discovery: Arts Integration Residencies: Bring curriculum to life by combining drama, dance, and musical techniques with core subjects, students have the opportunity to experience learning in a variety of ways, therefore deepening their understanding, emphasizing innovative thinking and building confidence.

Looking to make your theatre production shine?

Musical Theatre Artists in Residence: With the guidance of professional musical theatre artists and educators, students will sing, dance, and act, their way to a better understanding of creativity collaboration, and confidence. This program allows Teaching Artists and Classroom or Fine Arts Teachers to work together to create a musical theatre production.

Looking for Professional Development?

Great Ideas for Teachers (G.I.F.T.): TUTS' Teaching Artists work with school faculty to introduce innovative tools and skills that will incorporate the arts into their classroom-team building, adding arts to core curriculum, career skills for students and more!

For more information please contact community@tuts.com or call **713-558-8803**

TUTS NO BOUNDARIES

Looking for information regarding Accessibility programs and services?

No Boundaries: Theatre Under the Stars is committed to creating an environment where musical theatre can be fully enjoyed by all of our patrons. Through our No Boundaries program, we offer special events tied into each show such as Workshops and touch Tours. Working in tandem with the Hobby Center we are able to offer a variety of accessibility services and programming to our patrons.

For more information please contact Elizabeth England elizabeth@tuts.com or visit tuts.com/accessibility

TUTS THE RIVER PERFORMING AND VISUAL ARTS CENTER

Looking to bring an artist into your special education classroom?

Community Arts Residencies: Primarily for special education students or for combining general and special education classes together. These semester long TEKS based residencies available are available in ART, DANCE, MUSICAL, THEATRE, MUSIC & MME and MUSIC. These disciplines engage students through active learning, critical thinking and innovative problem solving. Each semester concludes with a demonstration and/or performance showcasing what students have learned over the course of the residency.

For more information please contact Eileen Edmonds eileen@tuts.com or call **713-558-8812**

2019/20 SEASON: STUDENT MATINÉES

At Theatre Under The Stars, the Musicals for Young Audiences Program is just one of the many ways we have to introduce the magic theatre to new audiences each season.



September 18, 2019 @ 10:00 AM
Recommended for grades 6-12



February 26, 2020 @ 10:00 AM
Recommended for grades 6-12



SPECIAL EVENING PERFORMANCE!
October 8, 2019 @ 7:30 PM
Recommended for grades 11-12

School groups are also eligible for \$30 seats for other performances.
For details please contact Courtney Wilson at courtney@tuts.com



April 22, 2020 @ 10:00 AM
Recommended for grades 6-12



December 18, 2019 @ 10:00 AM
Recommended for grades 3-12