

CLASSROOM STUDY GUIDE



Odysseus

Dear Educators –

Welcome to The Rose, where we strive to enrich the lives of children through live theater, dance and arts education. We're pleased you have chosen to make The Rose a part of your students' learning experience, and we will do our best to make it both meaningful and educational. This study guide has been created to help identify the themes and lessons from "Ancient Greek Heroes: Odysseus" and move them into your classroom where they can be further developed through discussions, activities and assignments. Please feel free to take the ideas we've suggested here and modify them to match your classroom's grade level and curriculum.

Sincerely,
Brian Guehring, Rose Education Director



Take A Look Inside!

- Page 1 – Pre-show activities and questions
- Page 2 – A behind-the-scenes look at the show
- Page 3 – Ideas for post-show activities
- Page 4 – References and additional information

Pre-Show Activities

Found Object Puppetry (Drama)

In-chair or out-of-chair activity • 10-20 minutes

Objective: Students will use their imaginations to create a character out of found objects.

Definition: A found object puppet is a puppet that is made of any object that you would find in everyday life.

Brainstorming: Students will brainstorm objects at their desk and around the room that could make a good puppet.

Activity: Choose a simple object you have with you (pencil, pen, notebook, stapler, shoe, hair clip) and explore all the ways it can move. Act out "A Day in the Life of Mr. (or Mrs.) Object." For example, how does the object wake up, move, face a problem, solve a problem, etc.

Side Coaching: *What would your object do? What would it be thinking? What kind of voice would it use? What personality would it have?*

Drama Extension: With a partner, students can create a short scene between two found object puppets. (The day Mrs. Pencil got in a fight with Mr. Notebook, the day Mr. Shoe fell in love with Ms. Hair Clip, the day Mr. Marker got caught putting graffiti on the Construction Paper twins, etc).

Art Extension: Build detailed junk puppets. Use recyclables such as old milk jugs, tin cans, and newspapers to create detailed found object puppets, and create a longer scene.

Behind the Scenes Spotlight on Playwriting

An Interview with Playwright Brian Guehring

Ancient Greek Heroes: Odysseus

Adapted for the stage
by Brian Guehring

Cast

Michael Harrelson . . . Lester Haus

Production Team

Eric VoecksSet Design

Helen Humble

Sherri GeerdesCostume Design

Eric Voecks

and Amanda KiblerProps

What do you do for a living?

I'm a member of the artistic staff at the Omaha Theater Company at The Rose. I am an actor, dancer, teacher and playwright for the company and contribute to approximately six of our nine shows each year.

How did you get your job?

I studied drama in college at Duke University, and then narrowed my focus to children's theater and playwriting while attending graduate school at the University of Texas.

I interned for the Omaha Theater Company for a couple of summers, and was hired as a member of the staff after graduation.

What else do you do at The Rose?

I teach classes and workshops about improvisation, playwriting and acting. I also act in shows such as *Old Yeller* and *Miss Bindergarten*, dance in ballets such as *The Nutcracker* and direct plays such as this one.

What drew you to playwriting?

I started in theater as an actor. I enjoy the applause and performing for a live audience. But once the show is over, my work is gone. In playwriting, when a show is over, my work is still there for other actors to perform.

What's the best part about playwriting?

For me, the best part about playwriting is the audience reaction. It's an amazing feeling when you can have an impact on an audience: make them laugh, cry, feel good or even learn new things. I also really enjoy working together with actors, directors and designers to make my script into a better play.

What was the hardest part of writing this play?

Playwriting requires a vast amount of rewriting, and I find this to be the hardest part of writing a play. I am a perfectionist and there is always more work to be done. There are always more lines for me to rewrite.

What else have you written?

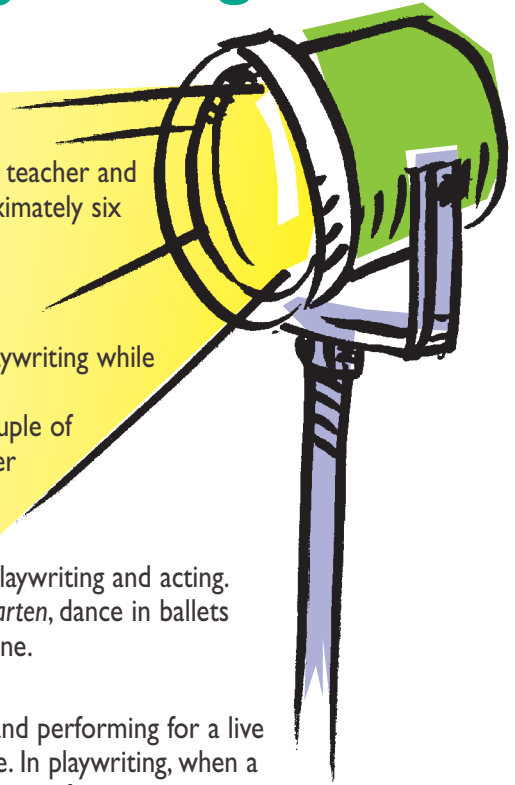
I've written over 25 plays including *Old Yeller*, *Where the Red Fern Grows*, *Julie of the Wolves*, *The Bully Show*, and *Miss Bindergarten*.

Do you have any advice for students who want to write plays?

See lots of plays and write every day. Take a playwriting class and write about what you know.

If you're not writing plays, what are you doing?

Playing Frisbee with my dogs Beau (a beagle/lab mix) and Nero (a German Shepherd).



Explore Playwriting with a Post Show Activity

Writing For A Character (Drama, Writing & Playwriting)

In-chair activity • 10-20 minutes

Objective: Students will write a paragraph (or monologue) from the point of view of a character from *Odyssey*.

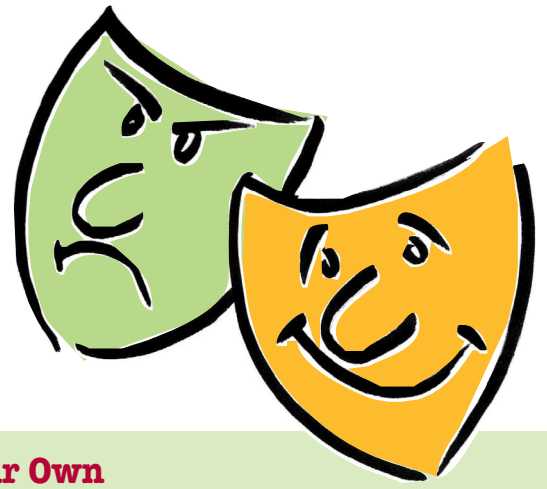
Definition: A playwright is an author of scripts who writes in the action and dialogue of a play. A monologue is a scene written for just one person.

Activity: Have the students choose a character from *Odysseus*. Write out three or four questions on the board.

These questions could range from "What is my name?" to "Why are you hiding inside the horse" to "How am I feeling right now?" Ask the students to answer these questions in a short paragraph (or monologue). They must write as their chosen character in first person. After the monologues have been written, ask one or two of the students to read theirs aloud, changing their body and voice to fit the character.

Post-Show Activities

These activities are designed to help the students further explore themes from the show through discussion, drama, art, and writing.



Build a Statue of a Hero

Out-of-chair activity • 10-20 minutes

Objective: Students will create a statue from Odysseus using their bodies.

Brainstorming: Students will brainstorm different Greek Gods and heroes from mythology.

Discussions: What is heroism? Who do you think of as a hero? What traits must a hero have? Is Odysseus a hero?

Definition: A statue is a form of a human, animal or other creature usually made of stone, wood or metal. A sculptor is an artist that creates a statue.

Activity: Have students break into groups of two. One student will be the sculptor and the other the statue. The sculptor will create a statue of a hero out of their partner. Once all the sculptors have finished their statues, have all the students view each other's work by going through the "statue museum." Do the activity twice so that each student gets to be the sculptor and the statue.

Thinking as a Character: Hot Seat!

In-chair and out-of-chair activity • 10-20 minutes

Objective: Students will use their acting tools (bodies, voices, imaginations) to explore the point of view of a character from the play.

Definition: Hot Seating, an informal interview conducted of a character

Brainstorming: List all the characters from the play.

Warm-ups: Ask each student to pick a character from the play. Each student should then walk around the room changing their body to become this character. Have each student say hello in their character's voice.

Activity: Ask a volunteer to sit in a chair (a hot seat) in front of the class. The audience and teacher can ask the character questions about the himself/herself. (How old are they? How did you feel when ____? Why did you do ____?) After the hot seating has been modeled once, then bring five chairs forward and interview five characters at a time in a talk show format.

Side Coaching: How does your character sit? What kind of voice would he/she have? Etc.

Create Your Own YouTube Video

In-chair or out-of-chair activity • 20-30 minutes

Objective: Students will create a found object puppet show of a Greek myth as part of this video project.

Definition: A found-object puppet is a puppet made of any object that you would find in everyday life.

Research: Ask the students to research Greek myths such as the Minotaur, the Golden Fleece, or Hercules.

Activity: Students will work in small groups to act out a short myth. Have each student choose one or two characters from the myth to portray. They have to design their puppet based on the characters.

Examples: Poseidon is the God of Water. The Poseidon puppet could be a blue towel or pen. Zeus is the King and has a lot of wisdom, so the puppet could be a gold coin or yellow pencil, etc.

Activity: Have the students rehearse and perform a short scene between two of the gods. After the scene has been rehearsed a few times, film the scene and post the scene on YouTube!



Bibliography

If you enjoyed the show, you might also like to explore these other sources:

Please
feel free to
contact us!

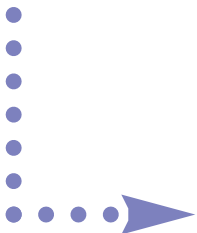
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Please
call James
Larson at
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for more
information.



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Resources for Students and Teachers

Books

Tales of the Greek Heroes by Roger Lancelyn Green

Hippolyta and the Curse of the Amazons by Jane Yolen

Odysseus in the Serpent Maze by Jane Yolen

Inside the Walls of Troy by Clemence McLaren

Waiting for Odysseus by Clemence McLaren
Troy by Adele Geras

Web Sites

<http://www.geocities.com/Broadway/Alley/3765/puppetfound.html>

This site features information on found-object puppets.

<http://www.geocities.com/Broadway/Alley/3765/puppets.html>

Learn about using puppets in the drama classroom.

<http://www.itdc.sbcss.k12.ca.us/curriculum/puppetry.html>

Puppets from around the world are featured on this site.

<http://www.thepuppetstudio.com>

Learn more about puppets.

<http://www.mythweb.com/odyssey/>

A short version of the *Odyssey* is featured on this site, along with fun pictures.

Educational Outreach Programs for Students in Grades 3 – 8

The Rose offers 3-10 day in-class residencies that use theater to teach grade-specific curriculum. Our educational staff will work with teachers to focus the residency to fit your group's needs. Popular topics include:

The American Revolution
Shakespeare

The Civil War
Playwriting

American Indians
And many more!

The Rose Educational Outreach department also offers **drama workshops** at The Rose, **dance workshops** at The Rose or at your school, **teacher enrichment workshops** on using drama in the classroom, and **touring productions**.