

Noises Off Exploring Themes   Post-Show Activity		
Length	Grade Level	Content Area
1-2 class periods (45 – 90 minutes each)	Middle School & High School	ELA, Theatre
Objective	Materials Needed	
Students will identify and analyze the themes present in <i>Noises Off</i> , using various modes of expression to showcase their understanding.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whiteboard and markers</li> <li>• Chart paper or poster boards</li> <li>• Art supplies</li> <li>• Access to digital tools</li> <li>• Story Map (included)</li> </ul>	
Activity Overview		
<p><i>NOTE: This activity has been aligned with TEKS and <a href="#">Universal Design for Learning</a>. TEKS can be found at the end of this document. Check out the “Notes” section for ideas on how to expand activities or provide additional scaffolding.</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Introduction   <a href="#">Themes in Noises Off</a></li> <li>2. Group Discussion   <a href="#">Themes and Scenes</a></li> <li>3. Group Work Time   <a href="#">Creative Expression</a></li> <li>4. Presentations   <a href="#">Sharing and Feedback</a></li> <li>5. Reflection   <a href="#">Making Connections</a></li> </ol>		
1. Introduction   Themes in Noises Off	10 minutes	
<p><i>Activity Steps</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Start with a brief discussion about the concept of themes in theatre. Explain how <i>Noises Off</i> addresses various themes such as the complexity of relationships, the nature of performance, and the fine line between reality and illusion.</li> <li>b) Ask students to brainstorm any themes they observed during the play. Write their ideas on the whiteboard.</li> </ol>	<p><i>Notes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A printable story map is included with this document. Encourage students to use this outline to organize their notes during the discussion and group work time.</li> <li>• Guide them to consider specific scenes.</li> </ul>	

<p><b>2. Group Discussion   Themes and Scenes</b></p>	<p><b>10-15 minutes</b></p>
<p><i>Activity Steps</i></p> <p>a) Divide students into small groups and assign each group a specific theme from the play. Possible themes could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The chaos of communication and misunderstandings.</li> <li>- The blurred lines between reality and performance.</li> <li>- The dynamics of teamwork and collaboration in theatre.</li> </ul> <p>b) Have each group discuss how their assigned theme was portrayed in the play by analyzing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Key scenes that highlighted the theme.</li> <li>- Character interactions that exemplified the theme.</li> <li>- Any comedic elements that contributed to their understanding of the theme.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Notes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bridge the language of the students (the way they phrased their ideas) with any academic or formal variations you wish to support. “Things get weird when people don’t talk to each other” would be another way of saying “the chaos of communication and misunderstandings.” Learn more about UDL guidelines for language and symbols <a href="#">here</a>.</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Group Work Time   Creative Expression</b></p>	<p><b>25-30+ minutes</b></p>
<p><i>Activity Steps</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each group will create a visual representation of their assigned theme. They can choose from various formats, including:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A poster that includes memorable quotes from the play, visuals, and explanations of the theme.</li> <li>- A collage using magazine cutouts, drawings, or digital images that symbolize the theme.</li> <li>- A short multimedia presentation that combines images, text, and audio to convey the theme.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><i>Notes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use a visible timer while the students are creating and give them verbal warnings.</li> <li>• Keep the list of themes visible if possible.</li> <li>• Encourage the use of their story map and discussion notes as needed.</li> </ul>

4. Presentations   Sharing and Feedback	15-20+ minutes
<p><i>Activity Steps</i></p> <p>a) Designate a stage area and have each person or group present their work, explaining their theme and how it was expressed in <i>Noises Off</i>.</p> <p>b) During presentations, use <b>“See / Think / Wonder”</b> to encourage reflection from the rest of the class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What did you <b>see</b> in this visual? Objectively, without interpretation. Just visual details.</li> <li>- What do you <b>think</b> is happening in this visual? What do you see that makes you think that?</li> <li>- What do you <b>wonder</b>? What questions come up for you as you look at this stage picture? Use “I wonder” to start your answer.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Notes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If time allows, students can display their work in gallery walk format.</li> <li>• “See / Think / Wonder” is an Artful Thinking routine. You can learn more about it and similar exercises <a href="#">here</a>.</li> </ul>
Reflection   Making Connections	5-10 minutes
<p><i>Activity Steps</i></p> <p>a) Think about what you knew or thought of the themes in <i>Noises Off</i> before your exploration.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Fill in the blanks: “I used to think _____. Now I think _____.”</li> </ul> <p>b) How did the themes enhance your understanding or enjoyment of the play?</p> <p>c) Can you relate any of the themes to your own experiences or to current events?</p>	<p><i>Notes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflections can be written in journals or as exit tickets, or shared in pairs or small groups before shared with the class.</li> </ul>

TEKS			
TEKS – MS ELA	TEKS – HS ELA	TEKS – MS Theatre	TEKS – HS Theatre
<p>(6.9) - Students analyze, make inferences, and draw conclusions about expository text and provide evidence from text to support their analysis.</p> <p>(7.5) - Students analyze, make inferences, and draw conclusions about persuasive texts and provide evidence from text to support their analysis.</p> <p>(8.6) - Students analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of text features, including print and digital sources, to gain information.</p>	<p>(9.6) - Students analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the author's use of literary devices in various texts.</p> <p>(10.8) - Students analyze how authors use literary elements and literary devices to create meaning and effect in various genres.</p> <p>(11.10) - Students analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of a variety of texts, including plays, to interpret themes, character development, and author's purpose.</p>	<p>(117.4) - (1) Foundations: Inquiry and understanding in theatre. Students develop theatre skills through inquiry, research, and experimentation.</p> <p>(117.4) - (2) Creative expression: Performance. Students perform in a variety of contexts to communicate ideas, emotions, and themes.</p> <p>(117.4) - (3) Historical and cultural relevance. Students examine the historical and cultural context of theatrical works to understand their significance.</p>	<p>(117.5) - (1) Foundations: Inquiry and understanding in theatre. Students engage in critical analysis of theatrical works, understanding the role of various elements in performance.</p> <p>(117.5) - (2) Creative expression: Performance. Students refine performance skills through rehearsal, performance, and reflection on their work.</p> <p>(117.5) - (3) Historical and cultural relevance. Students analyze the impact of historical and cultural factors on theatrical works, including themes, styles, and conventions.</p>

## Story Map – *Noises Off*

Title: *Noises Off*

1. Characters
  - a. List of Main Characters:
  - b. Lloyd Dallas (the director)
  - c. Dotty Otley (the aging actress)
  - d. Garry Lejeune (the leading man)
  - e. Brooke Ashton (the young actress)
  - f. Frederick (the nervous actor)
  - g. Poppy (the stage manager)
  - h. Tim (the stagehand)

*Character descriptions are available in printable format on Alley Re-Sourced*

2. Setting
  - a. Location: A theater stage and the backstage area.
  - b. Time Period: Modern day (the play was written in the 1980s).
  - c. Description of the Setting: Briefly describe the physical layout of the stage and how it changes between acts.
3. Plot
  - a. Exposition: Introduce the characters and the premise of the play within a play, where the actors are preparing for a performance of "Nothing On."
  - b. Rising Action: Highlight key events leading up to the first performance, including character conflicts, romantic tensions, and comedic mishaps.
  - c. Climax: Identify the peak moment of chaos during the final act of "Nothing On," where everything goes wrong on stage.
  - d. Falling Action: Describe how the characters deal with the aftermath of the performance, including personal revelations and relationships.
  - e. Resolution: Summarize the conclusion of the original play and any final comedic moments that wrap up the story.
4. Types of Conflict
  - a. Character vs. Character (e.g., romantic tensions between Garry and Brooke)
  - b. Character vs. Self (e.g., Lloyd's struggle with directing and managing the cast)
  - c. Character vs. Society (e.g., the pressures of theater and performance expectations)
5. Major Themes
  - a. The chaos of theater and the nature of performance.
  - b. Relationships and misunderstandings.
  - c. The thin line between reality and acting.

6. Personal Reflection:

- a. What moments from the play resonated with you?
- b. What did you find funny or impactful?
- c. This play has been produced *thousands* of times globally in the 40 years since its debut. Why do you think the show is so popular among theatres and audiences alike?