

Baskerville Exploring Melodrama Pre-Show Curriculum		
<i>Length</i>	<i>Grade Level</i>	<i>Content Area</i>
1 class period (45 – 90 minutes)	Middle School & High School	ELA, Theatre
Objective		Materials Needed
Students will analyze the elements of melodrama, as demonstrated in video from Crash Course: Theatre, and create their own short Melodramatic scenes. Students will identify modern melodramas they are familiar with.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to the video from Crash Course Theatre (Melodrama) on Alley Re-Sourced • Whiteboard and markers • Space for performance • Elements of Melodrama handout
Activity Overview		
<p><i>NOTE: This activity has been aligned with TEKS and Universal Design for Learning. 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"> 1. Introduction What is Melodrama? 2. Group Discussion You’d Know it if You Saw It 3. Group Collaboration Creating Melodramatic Scenes 4. Performance Scene Showcase 5. Reflection What to Keep in Mind at the Show 		
1. Introduction What is Melodrama?		10 minutes
<p><i>Activity Steps</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Start out with a written description and a discussion of five key elements of melodrama from Alley Re-Sourced. b) Show the video from Crash Course. Encourage students to identify the key elements of melodrama in the clip. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What elements stood out to you the most? - Does it remind you of anything else you’ve seen? 		<p><i>Notes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key Elements of Melodrama on Alley Re-Sourced • An 8.5 x 11 printable version of Elements of Melodrama is included with this document.

<p>2. Group Discussion You'd Know It If You Saw It</p>	<p>10 minutes</p>
<p><i>Activity Steps</i></p> <p>a) Have students collaborate and list modern melodramas they know, or shows with melodramatic elements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Movies: The Notebook, the Twilight saga, The Greatest Showman, superhero movies - TV Shows: Bridgerton, Euphoria, Grey's Anatomy <p>b) Have students give a few examples. Lead a discussion to compare the shows to the elements of melodrama.</p>	<p><i>Notes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If students are stuck, have them think of thrillers or mysteries, then they can compare them to the elements in the discussion. • You have an opportunity to gamify if that works for your group: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ List with the most melodramas wins. Melodramas must be checked against the elements. ○ Each group just needs 1 melodrama example, the group with the strongest melodrama/most elements of melodrama wins.
<p>3. Group Collaboration Creating Melodramatic Scenes</p>	<p>15-20 minutes</p>
<p><i>Activity Steps</i></p> <p>a) Divide students into small groups. Each group will create (a rough, working draft) of a melodramatic scene that uses at least two elements of melodrama.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Your scenes should be set in a world you know, like home or school. - Each scene should have a beginning, middle, and an end. - Approach it with earnestness – melodrama isn't subtle, but it can easily cross into parody or comedy. The challenge (for this round) is to take it seriously (we'll embrace the comedy in the post-show version of this activity). 	<p><i>Notes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a visible timer while the students are creating and give them verbal warnings. • An alternative to performance: The students write scenes in small groups, pairs, or individually. • If students need extra guidance, use this prompt: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The hero (a student at your school) must stop the villain (a student at a rival school) from sabotaging the football team (the damsel) before the big game.

4. Performance Scene Showcase	5-10 minutes
<p><i>Activity Steps</i></p> <p>a) Designate a stage area and have each group present their scenes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "I will give you five counts to get into place for your scene. 5, 4, 3, 2, 1." <p>b) During presentations, use "See / Think / Wonder" to encourage reflection from the rest of the class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What did you see in this scene? Objectively, without interpretation. Just visual details. - What do you think is happening in this scene? What do you see that makes you think that? - What do you wonder? What questions come up for you as you look at this stage picture? Use "I wonder" to start your answer. 	<p><i>Notes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remind the students that plays and movies take years to develop, and they've just developed a scene in a matter of minutes. They won't be perfect. • "See / Think / Wonder" is an Artful Thinking routine. You can learn more about it and similar exercises here. • Alt question: What elements do you think they are focusing on in this scene?
5. Reflection What to Keep in Mind at the Show	5-10 minutes
<p><i>Activity Steps</i></p> <p>a) What's one element of melodrama that stood out to you today?</p> <p>b) Think about what you knew or thought of melodrama at the start of this lesson.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fill in the blanks: "I used to think _____. Now I think _____." 	<p><i>Notes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflections can be written in journals, as exit tickets, or shared in pairs or small groups before shared with the class. <p><u>BONUS - Reflections After the Show</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did you recognize any elements of melodrama? • Which moment of melodrama or melodrama parody did you like the most?

TEKS			
TEKS – MS ELA	TEKS – HS ELA	TEKS – MS Theatre	TEKS – HS Theatre
<p>Reading/Comprehension of Literary Text/Fiction: - 110.5(b)(6)(A): Analyze the elements of plot, character, and setting in literary texts. - 110.5(b)(6)(B): Identify the themes and central ideas of literary texts.</p> <p>Writing/Writing Process: - 110.5(b)(10)(A): Plan a first draft by selecting a genre appropriate for conveying ideas. - 110.5(b)(10)(B): Draft and revise a written work by focusing on the purpose and audience.</p> <p>Listening and Speaking/Listening: - 110.5(b)(12)(A): Listen actively to interpret and evaluate information. - 110.5(b)(12)(B): Speak clearly and to the point, using appropriate language.</p>	<p>Reading/Comprehension of Literary Text/Fiction: - 110.6(b)(6)(A): Analyze how authors use literary elements to create meaning. - 110.6(b)(6)(B): Evaluate how different perspectives influence the interpretation of a text.</p> <p>Writing/Writing Process: - 110.6(b)(10)(A): Create a draft to develop complex ideas. - 110.6(b)(10)(D): Revise drafts for clarity, engaging language, and effective organization.</p> <p>Listening and Speaking/Listening: - 110.6(b)(12)(A): Listen to and evaluate a variety of speakers. - 110.6(b)(12)(B): Participate in collaborative discussions about literary texts.</p>	<p>Theatre/Foundations: - 117.5(b)(1)(A): Demonstrate an understanding of the elements of drama and theatre. - 117.5(b)(1)(B): Identify and describe the roles of theatre artists in the production process.</p> <p>Theatre/Creating: - 117.5(b)(2)(A): Create original scenes and plays using improvisation and scripted material. - 117.5(b)(2)(B): Develop characterizations that reflect an understanding of character motivations.</p>	<p>Theatre/Foundations: - 117.6(b)(1)(A): Analyze the elements of theatre production, including acting, directing, and design. - 117.6(b)(1)(B): Examine the historical context of theatrical works and their impact on society.</p> <p>Theatre/Creating: - 117.6(b)(2)(A): Create and perform original works that explore themes, characters, and settings. - 117.6(b)(2)(C): Collaborate effectively in the creative process, demonstrating respect for all participants.</p> <p>Theatre/Responding: - 117.6(b)(3)(A): Analyze and critique live performances. - 117.6(b)(3)(B): Reflect on personal experiences in theatre and how they relate to other disciplines.</p>



01. Big Feelings

The feelings are broadcast for all to see – there is no subtlety. Characters have big reactions to what is happening and make declarations of love, fear, revenge, etc.

02. Good vs Evil

There are no moral gray areas in classic melodramas. The hero is good, the villain is evil, and the audience is there to see the heroes win.



03. Spectacle

Go big or go home doesn't just apply to the feelings. Melodramas are made to keep the audience hooked with chases, escapes, fights – even the setting is dramatic.



04. Archetypes

Every melodrama would have characters people could recognize – the Hero, the plotting Villain, the damsel in distress that the hero has to save, and the trusty sidekick.



05. Dramatic Sound

The music and sound cues of melodrama underscores the black and white nature – think trumpets for the good guy, violins for the scary bits.

