

TDF CURIOUS INCIDENT PRE-SHOW WORKSHOP

LESSON PLAN for a 45 (forty-five) minute long session

Teaching Artists:

Alexandria Wailes

J.W. Guido

Photos/Video: <http://www.curiousonbroadway.com/>

1. Introduction/Prior experiences of seeing Broadway shows (5 minutes)

- A. Teaching artist's name and intention of visiting school.
- B. Has anyone seen a Broadway show? If so, which show(s)?
- C. What's the difference between plays and musicals? What is Broadway?

2. Characters and storyline discussion (20-30 minutes)

A. Has anyone read the book *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*?

-If so:

- Do you think the Broadway show will be similar? Why or why not?
- What differences do you think the Broadway show will have from the book?

B. Characters

(Share list of characters on regular or smartboard and briefly discuss who they are)

Main Characters:

Christopher Boone

Ed Boone (father)

Judy Boone (mother)

Siobhan (primary teacher at school)

Secondary/ Supporting:

Mrs. Shears

Mr. Shears

Mrs. Alexander

Wellington (dog)

Toby (pet rat)

Ensemble (including): Woman on train, Woman on Heath, Shopkeeper, Duty Sergeant, Mr. Wise, Man behind the counter, Policeman, Mr. Thompson, Lady in Street, Punk Girl, Reverend Peters, uncle Terry.

Note: Actors playing the secondary characters also play some of the ensemble parts.

Plot points:

Christopher discovers his neighbor's dog, Wellington, has been murdered and wants to solve the mystery.

Christopher decides to write a book about his findings, which Siobhan, his teacher, narrates throughout the play.

Christopher's father, Ed, does not like it that Christopher has chosen to look into Wellington's murder and forbids him from looking further into it, Christopher does it anyway.

Ed takes Christopher's notebook away and hides it to try and prevent Christopher from continuing to investigate Wellington's murder.

Christopher finds his notebook in a toolbox while his father is away. He also finds lots of unopened letters from his mother addressed to him. Ed told Christopher that his mother died years before which confuses Christopher.

Christopher decides to read the letters and learns that his mother is not dead, but in fact living in London with his neighbor's ex-husband.

Christopher decides to travel to London to live with his mother because he is angry at his father.

Christopher makes it to London, not without struggles, and finds his mother but then decides he needs to go back to Sunderland to take his final exams at school.

Christopher and his mother go back to Sunderland so Christopher can take his exams and mend his relationship with his father.

Possible Questions to encourage discussion:

- Throughout the show you will notice Christopher is different than a typical 15 year old. What are some of the differences you discover?
- What is it like navigating through a busy city like London (or NYC) and how would this be difficult for someone with Christopher's qualities?
- Christopher's favorite subject in school is math. What are some favorite subjects of the students in the class?
- Christopher talks about taking his A-Level math test (normally taken when you are 17) and getting an A* on the exam. This is like taking a standardized test and getting top marks. Why would this be so important to Christopher?
- Christopher has an abnormal knowledge of prime numbers. Who remembers what prime numbers are? Prime numbers will occur often (even when they sit down in their seat all the prime number seats will be specially marked) so it is a good review.
- Choreography is generally thought of as only being when you dance, like in musicals, however Curious Incident was nominated for an award for "Best Choreography." What are ways you think a play might use choreography?

3. **General Theatre going etiquette** (5 mins)
 - A. Ethel Barrymore Theatre
 - a. Make sure to take a good look at the theatre-beautiful! It's almost 90 years old, built in 1928 for the actress Ethel Barrymore who performed in shows in the theatre for almost 20 years. It was the last theatre that the Shubert family built themselves. It was renovated in 2004. It is a medium sized theatre with 1,096 seats.
 - B. Show Running time (2 hours and 30 minutes including one 20-minute intermission)
 - C. What's appropriate?
 - a. Different from watching a movie at home
 - i. No talking (including ASL!)
 - ii. No phones, texts, pictures, filming
 - iii. No kicking (Why? People who are sitting in the front will feel your kick!)
 - b. Use the restrooms if needed; before the show, during intermission and/or after (Why? Don't want to miss out on the experience!)
 - c. When's the right time to applaud? (When the show starts, intermission, and of course, curtain.)
 - D. Note: Christopher has a little part after the final curtain call that you can stay to watch if you would like. He will make reference during the play to his post-curtain call portion.

Background Info about the theatre (not mandatory to share, but good to know)

From the Shubert Organization website:

The Ethel Barrymore Theatre is the only surviving theatre of the many Lee and J.J. Shubert built for performers who were affiliated with them. Ethel Barrymore was part of the renowned Barrymore acting dynasty, and her tremendous popularity in New York and London society established her as a household name in the US and England. She had achieved stardom under the management of producer Charles Frohman beginning in 1901. In 1928, the Shuberts offered to build her a theatre and commission a play for her to premiere in her namesake house.

ARCHITECTURE

The Barrymore is the last theatre Lee and J.J. Shubert built. Designed by Herbert Krapp, its exterior was modeled on the design of public baths in Rome, with a two-story terra-cotta grillwork screen. The interior decor combines Elizabethan, Mediterranean, and Adamsesque styles. The most elaborate interior element is the boxes, which feature a sunburst pattern over a columned portico.

If there is time remaining:

Discuss the length of typical Broadway process from rehearsals to final production meaning eight shows weekly 5 mins

Activity (only if have time) 5-10 mins

Draw the 3 faces Christopher draws on the stage (2 eyes with a straight mouth, 2 eyes with a squiggle mouth, 2 eyes with a sad frown) and ask the students what those faces mean to them. How are these different from the way Christopher views them? (hate, crazy, sad) What are other ways the students would draw expressive faces?