

# StageNOTES<sup>®</sup>

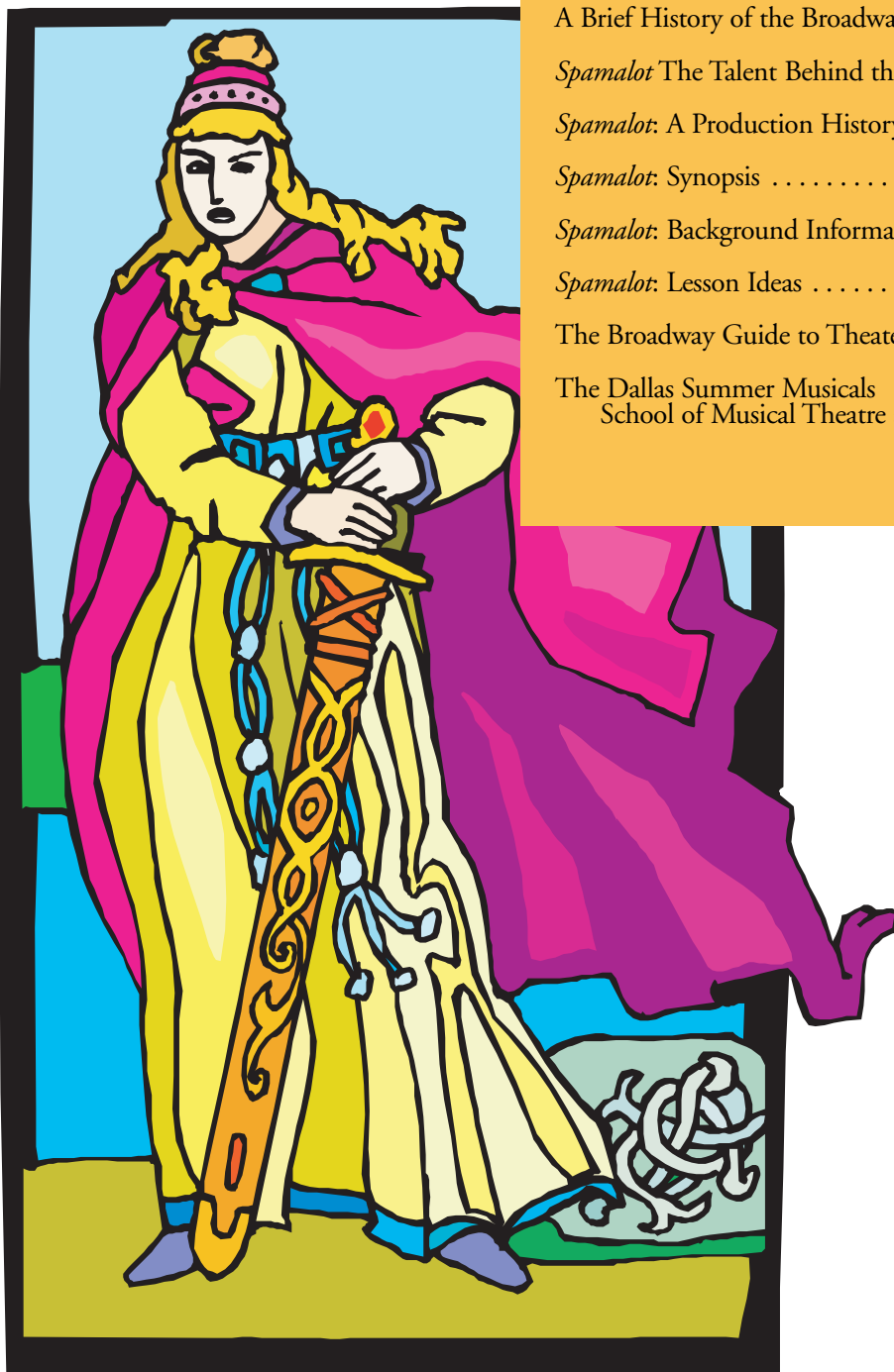
A FIELD GUIDE FOR TEACHERS



Summer 2007

CAMP BROADWAY LLC  
NEW YORK

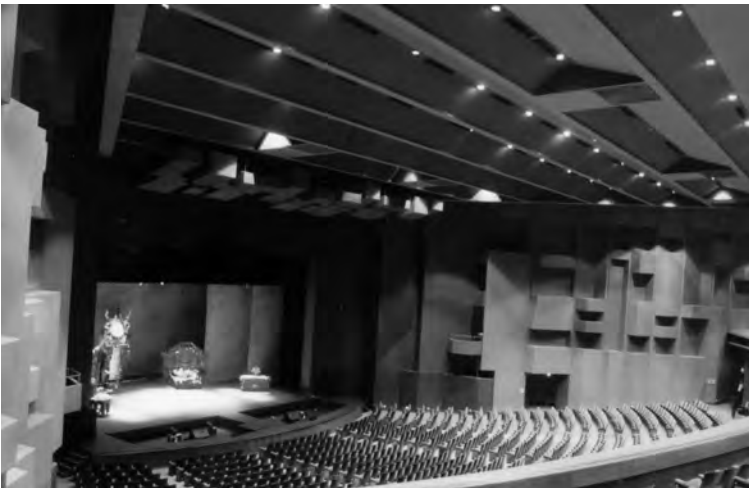
# Table of Contents



Welcome from Dallas Summer Musicals .....	3
Using the Field Guide .....	4
A Brief History of the Broadway Musical .....	5
<i>Spamalot</i> The Talent Behind the Show .....	8
<i>Spamalot</i> : A Production History .....	8
<i>Spamalot</i> : Synopsis .....	9
<i>Spamalot</i> : Background Information .....	10
<i>Spamalot</i> : Lesson Ideas .....	12
The Broadway Guide to Theatergoing Etiquette .....	14
The Dallas Summer Musicals School of Musical Theatre and Kids Club .....	16

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# Welcome from Dallas Summer Musicals



## Summer 2007

Welcome to Dallas Summer Musicals!

We're so glad you could join us! Musical theater is a unique American creation. It's also a joyful mixture of song and story, and, since 1945, Dallas Summer Musicals has brought the finest musicals to Dallas.

Want to know what goes into making a musical? Just two simple ingredients: singing and acting (song and story). There's just something about a song that makes a story mean more than just regular speech. It touches us in a different way.

Whether a show uses classical music or rock, a musical uses music to tell its story, to suggest feelings, emotions, and attitudes. As long as it mixes song and story, musical theater can be about literally anything, and this season's shows are great examples of the wide range of subjects. From the blockbuster musical *Wicked* to the sweeping epic of *Camelot*, each production reveals a different aspect of what makes musical theater so special.

The story of Dallas Summer Musicals is a long and honored one, and by learning about and attending one of our shows, you are now part of that story too!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael A. Jenkins".

Michael A. Jenkins  
President and Managing Director



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# Using The Field Guide

Camp Broadway® is pleased to bring you the Dallas Summer Musicals edition of **StageNOTES®**, the 22nd in our series. We are proud to be affiliated with this presenter and offer a comprehensive guide that incorporates their entire season of musical theater. This guide

has been developed as a teaching tool to assist educators in the classroom who are introducing their students to the stories in conjunction with the musical theater productions.

The Camp Broadway creative team, consisting of theater educators, scholars, researchers, and theater professionals, has developed a series of lesson plans that, although inspired by and themed around the musicals, can also accompany class study of the periods and other related literary works. To assist you in preparing your presentation of each lesson, we have included: an **objective** and **teaching tips** along with each lesson unit. There are four types of lesson ideas including a **written exercise**; a **discussion activity**; an **experiential exercise**; and an **"after hours activity"** that encourages students to interact with family, friends, or the community at large.

The curriculum categories in this guide have been developed in accordance with Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). The division provides information to school administrators, counselors, parents, and students on course offerings and meeting the learning needs of students through 19 TAC Chapter 74. In cooperation with the divisions of Instructional Materials and Educational Technology and Student Assessment, the goal of the Division of Curriculum provides information and resources to ensure academic success of all students in Texas public schools.



The Dallas Summer Musicals study guide is for you, the educator, in response to your need for standards-compliant curriculum. We hope this study guide will help you incorporate musical theater into your classroom activities.

Philip Katz  
Producing Director  
Camp Broadway

# A Brief History of The Broadway Musical

The Broadway musical is one of the few genuinely American art forms; like America itself, the musical was formed from a collision of immigrant traditions. British operetta, African-American song and dance styles, the melodies and humor of Eastern European Jews: All contributed to the development of the Broadway musical.

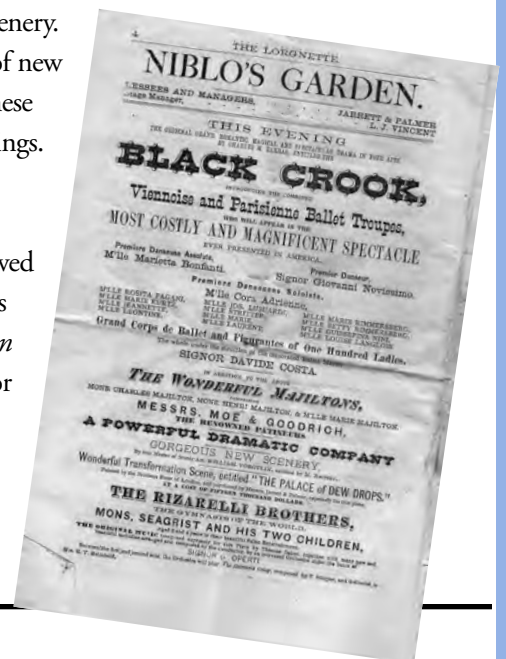


Just as America is described as a “melting pot,” the first American musical was a hasty melding of other works. In 1866, producers Henry C. Jarrett and Harry Palmer had brought over a French ballet troupe to perform in New York; however, the theater they had obtained for the performances was destroyed by fire. Trying to find a way to salvage their investment, they came to William Wheatley, the manager of Niblo’s Garden, a popular theater at Broadway and Prince Streets. He was about to open a production of a piece by Charles M. Barras, a version of von Weber’s Romantic opera, *Der Freischutz*. The two productions were combined, and audiences were treated to a five and one-half hour spectacle in which the French ballerinas performed amidst the slim plot of an evil alchemist who pursues two young lovers through a succession of elaborately designed scenes. *The Black Crook* was a success: The dancers in their pink tights entranced the

audience, as did the intricately painted scenery.

The plot was flexible enough to allow for changes and insertions of new material as the run continued; producers periodically advertised these “reconstructions” as a lure to bring audiences back for repeat viewings. *The Black Crook* ran for 475 performances, closing in 1868.

Crowds enjoyed not only romantic spectacles like those that followed in *The Black Crook*’s footsteps, but also knockabout-comedy shows that traded in ethnic humor like Harrigan and Hart’s *The Mulligan Guards Ball*. The team of Harrigan and Hart found inspiration for their comedy in the chaotic streets of New York of their day: a sea



# A Brief History of The Broadway Musical

of immigrants all trying to get along and get ahead in a strange new country.

By the turn of the century, opulent revues featuring statuesque chorus girls in breathtaking costumes were popular; the *Ziegfeld Follies* were producer Florenz Ziegfeld's showcase of elegant (but slightly naughty) entertainment. The first smash hit of the Twenties was *Shuffle Along*, with Eubie Blake's "I'm Just Wild



Florenz Ziegfeld

About Harry" as the standout song; the show was the first to have an all African-American writing team and cast. The pulse of the Jazz Age continued to beat in the fast-paced comedy of shows like *Lady, Be Good!*, the first of 14 musicals written by brothers George and Ira Gershwin; the plots of Twenties musicals were often loosely strung together vaudeville routines intermixed with snappy, danceable tunes.

The musical reached a turning point when Ziegfeld took a risk and produced something different – a musical adaptation of Edna Ferber's novel about generations of a theatrical family on the Mississippi, *Show Boat*. Ziegfeld hired Oscar Hammerstein to handle the task of reducing the novel's sprawling plotlines

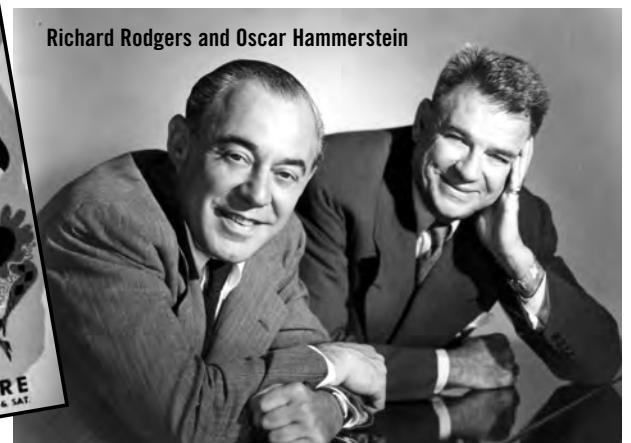


to a manageable few; composing the memorable music was Jerome Kern. In contrast to the bubble-headed plots of the musicals of the time, *Show Boat* dealt with serious themes such as racism, alcoholism, and racial intermarriage. It was an immediate popular and critical success, making it possible for musicals to take on subject matter of all kinds.

The Thirties were a time when a Depression-weary public went to the theater for frothy escapism, such as the elegant wackiness of Cole Porter's *Anything Goes*, featuring Ethel Merman singing "You're the Top" and "I Get a Kick Out of You."

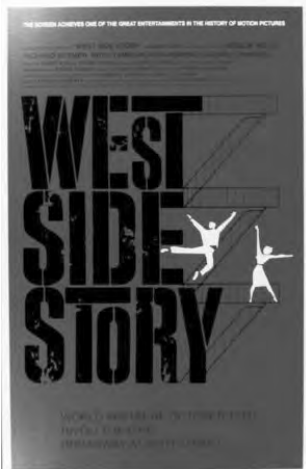
The patriotism of the World War II years made audiences respond emotionally to the heartfelt nostalgia of *Oklahoma!* Oscar Hammerstein and composer Richard Rodgers took the musical another step forward by creating a "musical play" in which dialogue, dance, and music were thoroughly integrated.

Because of this integration of all elements, director-choreographers such as Jerome Robbins soon came to prominence in musical theater. After honing his



Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein

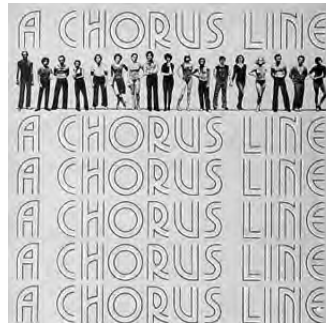
craft on a number of shows like *Peter Pan*, Robbins pushed the boundaries of musical theater yet again when he reinterpreted ballet steps to create a new dance vocabulary in *West Side Story*. In this modern retelling of Romeo and Juliet, dance was made even more central to the musical's structure.



Other director-choreographers like Bob Fosse and Michael Bennett began to move away from plot-driven shows, ultimately creating “concept musicals” like *Chicago* and *A Chorus Line*,

where dance was the dominant driving force. Deconstructing the standard “book musical” in another way was composer/lyricist Stephen Sondheim,

who



brought layers of dramatic irony and musical dissonance to the scores of his collaborations with director Hal Prince, such as *Company*, *Follies*, and *A Little Night Music*.

The opulent Eighties heralded the “British Invasion”: lavish pop-opera spectacles like *Cats*, *Les Miserables*, and *Phantom of the Opera*. The big-hair-and-shoulder-pads excesses of the decade were reflected in the lush music and over-the-top scenic effects of these

long-running hit shows.

The slacker Nineties brought *Rent*, a gritty rock reimagining of Puccini’s *La Boheme*. The decade also saw the emergence of Disney as a theatrical force with films reimagined for the stage like *Beauty and the Beast* and *The Lion King*.

At the turn of the Twenty-first century, it seems that Broadway has a little bit of everything. Classic vaudevillian humor lives on in *The Producers* while down the street you can find sing-your-guts-out pop opera like *Wicked*, dance-driven shows like *Movin’ Out*, and optimistic musical comedy like *Hairspray*. Each of the golden eras of Broadway’s past are reinvented for the audiences of today to discover and delight in.

## Broadway Timeline

- 1866 *The Black Crook*
- 1879 *The Mulligan Guards Ball*
- 1907 *First edition of the Ziegfeld Follies*
- 1924 *Lady, Be Good!*
- 1927 *Show Boat*
- 1934 *Anything Goes*
- 1943 *Oklahoma!*
- 1954 *Peter Pan*
- 1957 *West Side Story*
- 1970 *Company*
- 1971 *Follies*
- 1973 *A Little Night Music*
- 1975 *Chicago, A Chorus Line*
- 1982 *Cats*
- 1987 *Les Miserables*
- 1988 *Phantom of the Opera*
- 1994 *Beauty and the Beast*
- 1996 *Rent*
- 1998 *The Lion King*
- 2001 *The Producers*
- 2002 *Thoroughly Modern Millie*
- 2003 *Hairspray*
- 2004 *Avenue Q*
- 2005 *Monty Python’s Spamalot*
- 2006 *Jersey Boys*



A scene from the original Broadway production of *Hairspray*

# The Talent Behind Spamalot

## John Du Prez, Music and Lyrics.

He is a British musician and has often worked with Eric Idle on the music used in Monty Python's various comedic pursuits. He collaborated with Idle to write all the music for the stage musical Spamalot.

He composed music for the *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* movies, under the name "Orchestra On The Half Shell", as well as films such as *A Fish called Wanda*, *Once Bitten*, and *The Meaning of Life*. He has recently contributed to the soundtrack of the animated film *The Wild*.



## Eric Idle, Book and Lyrics.

He is a British comedian, actor, film director, author, and songwriter. He is best known for being a writer and performer for the Monty Python

Troupe. He was educated at Pembroke College at the University of Cambridge where he studied English.

## The History of Spamalot



The musical began previews on Broadway, at New York's Shubert Theatre on February 14, 2005, and after some changes, officially opened on March 17, 2005. The Broadway previews were practically sold-out, leaving only obstructed view tickets for sale.

A London production opened at the Palace Theatre on September 30th, 2006. Actor Tim Curry opened the London production, reprising his Broadway role as King Arthur. Christopher Sieber also reprised

his role as Sir Galahad.

The original Broadway production received fourteen Tony Award nominations, more than any other show in the 2004–2005 season. It won Best Musical, Best Performance by a Featured Actress in a Musical (Sara Ramirez), and Best Direction of a Musical (Mike Nichols).

Las Vegas - the newest location for Broadway - is now home to a shortened version of *Spamalot* at the Wynn Hotel.



# Spamalot Synopsis

As the play opens, the audience is welcomed to the golden days of Camelot in the lovely country of England (not Finland, as the first number, a Finnish dance in which the actors slap each other with fish, might seem to insinuate.) King Arthur travels the land with his servant Patsy (he bangs coconuts together to sound like the noble steed Arthur lacks) in order to recruit Knights of the Round Table to join him in Camelot. They meet Sir Bedevere, Sir Robin, and Sir Lancelot who join them in their quest.

On his travels, Arthur meets a peasant named Dennis and attempts to explain how he became the king of England when the Lady of the Lake gave him Excalibur, the sword given only to the man fit to rule England. When Dennis doesn't believe him, Arthur calls in the Lady of the Lake and her "Laker Girls." Cheered on by the girls, the Lady of the Lake turns Dennis into Sir Galahad. With the addition of the recently knighted Sir Galahad, and Sir Not-Appearing-In-This-Play, the ranks of the Knights of the Round Table are complete.

The five knights gather in Camelot, which bears striking resemblance to a certain casino city in Nevada, where they sing the number: "What happens in Camelot, stays in Camelot." In the middle of their partying, they are contacted by God (who sounds remarkably like John Cleese) who tells them to locate the Holy Grail. Emboldened by their new quest, they set off.

After an encounter with some terribly rude French soldiers at a castle, the Knights split up. Sir Robin and his minstrels follow King Arthur and Patsy into a "dark and very expensive forest" where King Arthur meets the Knights Who Say Ni who demand Arthur find them a shrubbery. After a brief period of low spirits, Patsy helps Arthur to locate one. The Knights accept it, but his tasks are not yet fulfilled. They then demand King Arthur create a Broadway musical. After a brief and gory encounter with the Black Knight, King Arthur reunites with Sir Robin

who insists that it would be impossible for them to put on a Broadway Musical because you need Jews to do so and there are none in medieval England. King Arthur and Patsy promptly set off in search of Jews. While the Lady of the Lake laments her lack of stage time, Sir Lancelot receives a



letter from who he suspects to be a young damsel in distress. He attempts to rescue her and is a little surprised to find that the damsel is actually a young man named Herbert who is being forced to marry against his will. All the same, he defends Herbert from his

continued on page 15

# Spamalot

## *Background Information*

### **Holy Grail**

According to a Welsh poem, the Grail was a "magic cauldron" for which King Arthur and his men searched. Later, the story became identified with the Silver Chalice that Christ used at the Last Supper. According to legend It was capable of "enlightening the masses". As history progressed the Holy Grail came to represent the cup or platter that, according to medieval legend, Christ used at the Last Supper and also caught his blood as he hung from the cross. It was said to have been brought to Britain, and later became the object of knightly quests--only those godly enough, noble enough, and those with a true heart were said to be



worthy of finding the Grail. It remains a mystery, even today, though it is clear from history that the quest for the Holy Grail makes up an important segment of the Arthurian cycle.

## The Knights of the Roundtable

The knights were usually of noble birth: and were usually kings and princes, dukes, counts (or earls) and barons. They formed the backbone of the army, since they were the only ones who could afford expensive armor and weaponry. When the knights attended a festival or council at King Arthur's castle, those who sat at the head of table, usually had precedence over others. Those not at the head would feel envy or jealousy. Sometimes, the knights would fight each other over who would take the seat at the head of table. To resolve these problems, King Arthur resorted to having his table constructed in a rounded shape. The ingenuity of this design, made all the knights equal, regardless of stature. The knights in Arthur's company became known as the "Knights of the Round Table". These knights were heroes, renowned for their strength and courage, and for their skill in combat and warfare. They swore to protect the king and the kingdom.

## The Legend of the Lady of the Lake

According to legend, the Lady of the Lake is best known for presenting King Arthur with his magic sword, Excalibur. She does so at the request of Merlin who, as Arthur's advisor, fears for his safety in battle. Later in the legend, the sword is returned to her.

While Arthur is off battling the Saxons,

his illegitimate son Mordred raises an army against him. He engages Arthur in battle upon his return and both Mordred and Arthur are mortally wounded. As he draws his last breaths, Arthur asks his most loyal knight, Bedevere, to throw his sword, Excalibur into the lake, and then to return and tell him what he sees. Bedevere tries, two times, to throw the sword into the lake and each time he thinks of what a faithful sword it has been and finds he cannot bear to do it. Each time he hides the sword and then tells Arthur he has done his bidding. Each time Arthur accuses Bedevere of lying and sends him back to throw in the sword. On his third attempt, Bedevere finally

manages to throw the sword in the lake. He returns to Arthur and tells him that as he threw the sword he saw a hand (undoubtedly belonging to the Lady) emerge from the lake and take it down into the water. At this, Arthur nods, and closes his eyes. As Arthur passes away, Bedevere sees the ghosts of past kings and queens appear, and carry his body out over the lake.



# Spamalot LESSON IDEAS

## WRITING

### Objective:

Students will research various class roles and responsibilities pertaining to medieval times.

### Exercise:

What are the different classes in mediaeval times? What were the occupations of the peasants? The story is about King Arthur and his court. What do you know about him and his Knights of the Roundtable? Write an essay about the relationships that existed during those times.

### Teaching Tips:

- Use the Internet to research who the Knights of the Roundtable were, and when they purportedly lived. Honor, duty, and service were important parts of being a knight. How does that echo in today's world?

### Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) guidelines addressed:

#### Social Studies Standard 113.22:

Student communicates in written, oral and visual forms. The student is expected to A) use social studies terminology correctly, and D) Create written material such as reports and outlines.

## DISCUSSION

### Objective:

Students will explore and discuss the role of comedy in their everyday lives.

### Exercise:

*Spamalot* is based on the movie Monty Python and the Holy Grail. Brainstorm their own definitions of comedy with the students. Discuss how and why comedy affects us. Why are comedies popular?

### Teaching Tips:

- What is your definition of comedy? What are different types of comedy? What role does comedy play in your life? What are some of your favorite comedies? What makes them funny to you? Do you think you have a similar sense of humor to most other people, or do you find other things funny?



# Spamalot LESSON IDEAS

## EXPERIENTIAL

### Objective:

Students will explore satire through parody.

### Excercise:

Monty Python was an English comedy troupe who used parody to create their comedy. Have your students create their own short parody of a favorite movie or TV show and perform it for the class.

### Teaching Tips:

- Where else do we see parodies today (movies such as *Not Another Teen Movie* or *Scary Movie*, television shows like *Mad TV* and *SNL*)? Does someone watching a parody have to be familiar with the original in order to understand the humor? How different can a parody be before it is too different from the thing it is satirizing? How can you recognize parody?

### Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) guidelines addressed:

English Language Arts Standard 110.22(b)(15)

Writing/purposes. The student writes for a variety of audiences and in a variety of forms. The student is expected to D) write to entertain such as to compose humorous poems or short stories (grades 4-8).

## AFTER HOURS

### Objective:

Students will become aware of how sense of humor differs among generations.

### Excercise:

Each student should interview their parents, grandparents, or other adults of similar age. Have them find out what these people's favorite comedy film, TV show, or stand-up comedian. If your students can find a tape or DVD, they should watch it and compare it with their own favorites. Ask your students to write down their opinions on why different people laugh at different things. Do different generations like different kinds of comedy?

### Teaching Tips:

- Ask the people you are interviewing what they found funny about their favorite comedy or comedian. Do they find your favorites as funny, or do they not connect with the humor? Are these things you both find equally funny?

# The Broadway Guide to Theatergoing Etiquette

In the early part of the nineteenth century, theatrical performances usually began at six o'clock. An evening would last four or five hours, beginning with a short "curtain raiser," followed by a five-act play, with other short pieces presented during the intermissions. It might be compared roughly to today's prime-time television, a series of shows designed to pass the time. With no television or radio, the theater was a place to find companionship, light, and warmth on a cold winter's evening.

As the century progressed, the theater audience reflected the changing social climate. More well-to-do patrons still arrived at six o'clock for the full program of the evening, while half-price admission was offered at eight or eight-thirty to the working class. This allowed for their longer workday and tighter budgets. Still, the theaters were always full, allowing people to escape the drudgery of their daily lives and enjoy themselves.

Because of this popularity, theaters began to be built larger and larger. New progress in construction allowed balconies to be built overhanging the seats below — in contrast to the earlier style of receding tiers. This meant that the audience on the main floor (the section called "the orchestra") were out of the line of sight of the spectators in the galleries. As a result, the crowds became less busy people-watching and gossiping among themselves, and more interested in watching the performance. The

theater managers began the practice of dimming the lights in the seating area (called the "house lights"), focusing the attention of the audience on the stage. The advent of gas lighting and the "limelight" (the earliest spotlights) made the elaborate settings even more attractive to the eye, gaining the audience's rapt attention.

By the 1850s, the wealthier audiences were no longer looking for a full evening's entertainment. Curtain time was pushed back to eight o'clock (for the convenience of patrons arriving from dinner); only one play would be presented, instead of four or five, freeing the audience for other social activities afterward. Matinee (afternoon) performances were not given regularly until the 1870s, allowing society ladies, who would not have ventured out late at night, the opportunity to attend the theater.

Now in a new millennium, many of these traditions are still with us. The theater is still a place to "see and be seen"; eight o'clock is still the standard curtain time; and the excited chatter of the audience falls to a hush when the house lights dim and the stage lights go up, and another night on Broadway begins.

You can make sure everyone you know has the very best experience at the theater by sharing this Theater Etiquette with them. And now, enjoy the show!

## Being a Good Audience

Remember, going to the theater isn't like going to a movie. There are some different rules to keep in mind when you're at a live performance.

Believe it or not, **the actors can actually hear you**. The same acoustics that make it possible for you to hear the actors means that they can hear all the noises an audience makes: talking, unwrapping candy, cell phones ringing. That's why, when you're at a show, **there is no food or drink at your seats** (eat your treats at intermission; save the popcorn-munching for the multiplex)

**No talking** (even if you're just explaining the plot to the person next to you)

Always **keep cell phones and beepers turned off** (This even means no texting your friends during the show to tell them how great it is...)

Of course, what the actors like to hear is how much you're enjoying the performance. So go ahead and laugh at the funny parts, clap for the songs, and save your biggest cheers and applause for your favorite actors at the curtain call. That's their proof of a job well done.

## Spamalot Synopsis

continued from page 9

terrible father, causing many to suspect Sir Lancelot is homosexual.

Just as King Arthur gives up hope of ever making a Broadway Musical, The Lady of the Lake appears and tells Arthur that he and the Knights were in a Broadway Musical all along. There is not much more for him to fulfill his quest: all that's left is for King Arthur to find the Grail and then to marry. After some helpful hints from the Lady, Arthur realizes he is in love and agrees to marry the Lady of the Lake once he finds the Grail.

The Knights are all united when they happen upon Tim the Enchanter who warns them of an evil rabbit lurking in the vicinity. Suddenly the rabbit attacks, and bites one knight's head off. Arthur must use the Holy Hand Grenade of Antioch against the bunny, which knocks it down a nearby hill and reveals that it was merely puppet employed by one of the Frenchman from earlier in the play. A large stone block showing a combination of letters and numbers is also revealed. Arthur finds himself stumped by the code and asks God for one final bit of help. A large hand points to the audience and Arthur realizes that the letters and numbers refer to a seat number in the audience. The grail is found under the seat (D101) and the person sitting in the seat is rewarded. Arthur marries the Lady of the Lake (who reveals that her name is Guinevere), Lancelot marries Herbert, and Sir Robin decides to take up writing Broadway musicals.



## School of Musical Theatre

**The Dallas Summer Musicals School of Musical Theatre** (<http://www.dsmschool.org>) provides fun, disciplined, and professional training for students 7 to 17 years of age, as well as continuing education for adults in the musical theater arts.

The School's goal is to help students integrate the disciplines of singing, dancing, and acting into the unique genre of musical theater. The result is a well-rounded performer—a "triple threat"—comfortable and confident as a singer, dancer, and actor. Students are grouped according to a combination of experience and training, providing a challenging, but comfortable environment to investigate and practice their craft.

Besides teaching the essential skills for becoming a well-rounded performer, our unique curriculum exposes students to material from the season's performances of the Dallas Summer Musicals, as well as other popular and age-appropriate musicals and plays. Preparation for the audition process is also an important part of our program.

The DSM School of Musical Theatre offers its students exciting special events, gifted and talented guest speakers, and professional staff members.

For more information, please call 214/969-7469

## The Dallas Summer Musicals Kids Club

**The DSM Kids Club** is a free program for our youngest patrons through High School introducing them to musical theatre. Upon registration, Kids Club members receive a passport to keep track of the shows they attend, and to earn special prizes. We also plan special events for the Kids Club members with opportunities to meet cast members, take backstage tours, and a variety of other events throughout the season.

For more information on the Dallas Summer Musicals Kids Club, please call Judi Wheeler at 214-421-5678, extension 159, or email her at [kidsclub@dallassummermusicals.org](mailto:kidsclub@dallassummermusicals.org).