



The Lit Experience: ACT, SING, WRITE!

Theatre Under The Stars (TUTS) is dedicated to helping Houston and the Greater Houston area bring quality enriching programming to schools. TUTS offers an extensive curriculum for schools, community organizations, and medical facilities. These programs make musical theatre accessible to children of all abilities.

As an arts educator, TUTS believes in the power of the arts to help educate and bring curriculum to life for the students. Below you will read an interactive approach that was created to help students gain a better understanding and appreciation of literary pieces. This program was also designed to assist teachers really understand literary pieces and bring a new innovative approach that teachers can apply when teaching pieces of literature.

This outreach can be used for any piece of literature that the students are studying. TUTS will meet with the teachers ahead of time to decide which literature the teachers would like TUTS to teach. Then TUTS creates the outreach with that piece of literature in mind.

The following is a sample lesson plan based on the play, “The Crucible.” This lesson plan was used at Westside High School’s AP English classes and Wheatley High School AP English and Junior English classes.

This outreach is a three- pronged program

Part One:

ACT: A scene is created from the literary work chosen. If the work is already a play like “The Crucible”, then the scene will be adapted to allow for all the students to take part in the scene. If the piece of work is not already a play, for example “In Cold Blood” or “The Great Gatsby” or “The Things They Carry” or “The Outsiders” or “Holes” then TUTS will create a scene from the literary work for the outreach. In this lesson plan, the scene chosen from “The Crucible” was the courtroom confrontation scene between John Proctor and Abigail. The purpose of the acting portion of the piece is to let the students learn through the Kinesthetic approach to learning – carrying out the physical action rather than listening or watching. When students are a part of the scene and acting it out, they feel more connected to the piece.

Part Two:

SING: A song is created by the students with help from TUTS musical directors. The students are encouraged to create a song lyric that reflects the themes of the literary work. TUTS provides a chorus and the students then work in individual groups to create the verses of the song. Even if a student has never written a single lyric before, they will find it easy to accomplish this part of the outreach. TUTS teaches them the use of rhyming words and alternate words to themes – for example in The Crucible, one of the themes was adultery – not an easy word to rhyme. However “cheating” was a good substitute and easier for the students to rhyme. At the end of the session, the student then present their verses and chorus. There is even choreography added. These songs then become completely unique to each class. There is a real sense of accomplishment at the end of the “Sing” session of the outreach.

Part Three:

WRITE: Working with the teachers, the student then have to write a timed essay response provided by the new STARR requirements that deals with all that they have learned through this outreach. The teachers have used the essay portion as a good gage to see if the students are able to grasp the themes of the literary work. Some teachers have used the essay as a form extra credit for the students, too.

SAMPLE SCENE FROM - THE CRUCIBLE

ACT II: Scene 2

The vestry room of the Meeting House where an examination is going on as curtain rises.

HALE:

(He cries out in anguish.) I believe him! I cannot turn my face from it no more. *(Pointing at Abigail.)* This girl has always struck me false! She... *(Abigail with a weird cry screams up to ceiling.)*

ABIGAIL:

You will not! Begone! Begone, I say! *(Mercy and Susanna rise, looking up.)*

DANFORTH:

What is it, child? *(She is transfixed—with all the girls, in complete silence, she is open-mouthed, agape at ceiling, and in great fear.)* Girls! Why do you...?

MERCY:

It's on the beam!—behind the rafter!

DANFORTH:

ABIGAIL:

Why...? Why do you come, yellow bird?

PROCTOR:

Where's a bird? I see no bird!

ABIGAIL:

(To ceiling, in a genuine conversation with the "bird" as though trying to talk it out of attacking her.) My face? My face?! But God made my face; you cannot want to tear my face. Envy is a deadly sin, Mary.

MARY:

Abby!

ABIGAIL:

(Unperturbed, continues to "bird.") Oh, Mary, this is a black art to change your shape. No, I cannot, I cannot stop my mouth; it's God's work I do....

MARY:

Abby, I'm here!

PROCTOR:

They're pretending, Mister Danforth!

ABIGAIL:

(Now she takes a backward step, as though the bird would swoop down momentarily.) Oh, please, Mary!—Don't come down....

ANN:

Her claws, she's stretching her claws!

PROCTOR:

Lies—lies—

ABIGAIL:
(Backing further, still fixed above.) Mary, please don't hurt me!

MARY:
(To Danforth.) I'm not hurting her!

DANFORTH:
Why does she see this vision?!

MARY:
(Rises.) She sees nothin'!

ABIGAIL:
(As though hypnotized, mimicking the exact tone of Mary's cry.) She sees nothin'!

MARY:
Abby, you mustn't!

ABIGAIL:
(Now all girls join, transfixed.) Abby, you mustn't!

MARY:
(To all girls, frantically.) I'm here, I'm here!

GIRLS:
I'm here, I'm here!

DANFORTH:
Mary Warren!—Draw back your spirit out of them!

MARY:
Mister Danforth...!

GIRLS:
Mister Danforth!

DANFORTH:
Have you compacted with the Devil? Have you?

MARY:
Never, never!

GIRLS:
Never, never!

DANFORTH:
(Growing hysterical.) Why can they only repeat you?!

PROCTOR:
Give me a whip—I'll stop it!

MARY:
They're sporting...!

GIRLS:

(Cutting her off.) They're sporting!

MARY:

(Turning on them all, hysterically and stamping her feet.) Abby, stop it!

GIRLS:

(Stamping their feet.) Abby, stop it!

MARY:

(Screaming it out at top of her lungs, and raising her fists.) Stop it!!

GIRLS:

(All raising their fists.) Stop it!!

(Mary, utterly confounded, and becoming overwhelmed by Abigail—and the girls'—utter conviction, starts to whimper, hands half raised, powerless—and all girls begin whimpering exactly as she does.)

DANFORTH:

A little while ago you were afflicted. Now it seems you afflict others; where did you find this power?

MARY:

(Staring at Abigail.) I... have no power.

GIRLS:

I have no power.

PROCTOR:

They're gulling you, Mister!

DANFORTH:

Why did you turn about this past two weeks? You have seen the Devil, have you not?

PROCTOR:

(Seeing her weakening.) Mary, Mary, God damns all liars! *(Mary utters something unintelligible, staring at Abigail who keeps watching the "bird" above.)*

DANFORTH:

I cannot hear you. What do you say? *(Mary utters again unintelligibly.)* You will confess yourself or you will hang!

PROCTOR:

Mary, remember the angel Raphael... do that which is good and...

ABIGAIL:

(Pointing upward.) The wings! Her wings are spreading! Mary, please, don't, don't...! She's going to come down! She's walking the beam! Look out! She's coming down! *(All scream. Abigail dashes across the stage as though pursued, the other girls streak hysterically in and out between the men, all converging.—and as their screaming subsides only Mary Warren's is left. All watch her, struck, even horrified by this evident fit.)*

PROCTOR:

(Leaning across the table, turning her gently by the arm.) Mary, tell the Governor what they...

MARY:

(Backing away.) Don't touch me... don't touch me!

PROCTOR:

Mary!

MARY:

(Pointing at Proctor.) You are the Devil's man!

PARRIS:

Praise God!

PROCTOR:

Mary, how...?

MARY:

I'll not hang with you! I love God, I love God—

DANFORTH:

(To Mary.) He bid you do the Devil's work?

MARY:

(Hysterically, indicating Proctor.) He come at me by night and every day to sign, to sign, to...

DANFORTH:

Sign what?

PARRIS:

The Devil's book? He come with a book?

MARY:

(Hysterically, pointing at Proctor.) My name, he want my name; I'll murder you, he says, if my wife hangs! We must go and overthrow the court, he says...!

PROCTOR:

(Eyes follow Mary.) Mister Hale...!

MARY:

(Her sobs beginning.) He wake me every night, his eyes were like coals and his fingers claw my neck, and I sign, I sign....

HALE:

Excellency, the child's gone wild.

PROCTOR:

Mary, Mary...!

MARY:

(Screaming at him.) No, I love God; I go your way no more, *(Looking at Abigail.)* I love God, I bless God.... *(Sobbing, she rushes to Abigail.)* Abby, Abby, I'll never hurt you more! *(All watch, as Abigail reaches out and draws sobbing Mary to her, then looks up to Danforth.)*

DANFORTH:

What are you! You are combined with anti-Christ, are you not? I have seen your power, Mister, you will not deny it!

HALE:

This is not witchcraft! Those girls are frauds! You condemn an honest man!

DANFORTH:

I will have nothing from you, Mister Hale! (*To Proctor.*) Will you confess yourself befouled with hell, or do you keep that black allegiance yet? What say you?

PROCTOR:
I say... God is dead!

PARRIS:
(*Crossing L. toward door.*) Hear it, hear it!

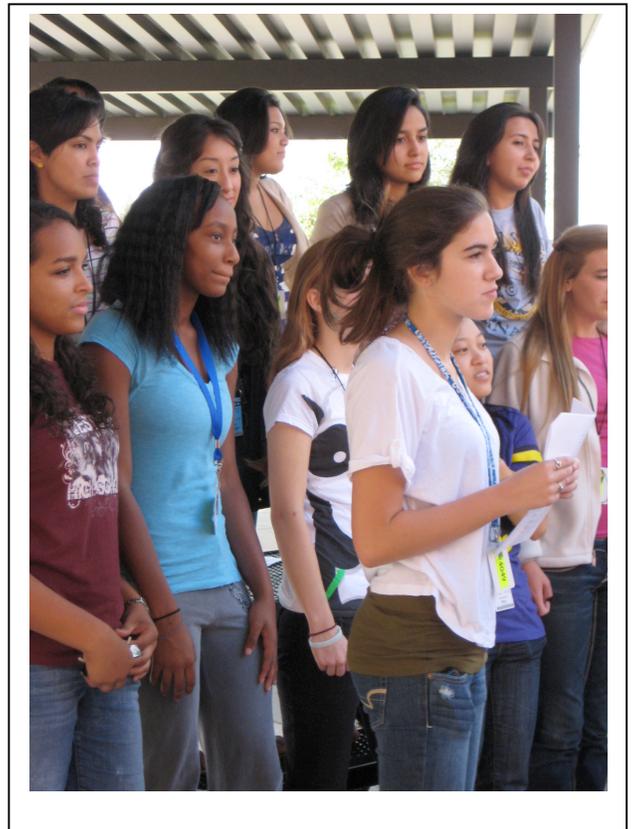
PROCTOR:
A fire, a fire is burning! I hear the boot of Lucifer, I see his filthy face. And it is my face and yours, Danforth. For them that quail now when you know in all your black hearts that this be fraud. God damns our kind especially, and we will burn, we will burn together!

DANFORTH:
Marshal, take him and Corey with him to the jail!

HALE:
(*Crossing D.L.*) I denounce these proceedings! I quit this court! (*Hale EXITS.*)

PROCTOR:
You are pulling heaven down and raising up a whore.

DANFORTH:
(*Shocked.*) Mister Hale, Mister Hale!





CLASSES IN THE COMMUNITY

SAMPLE OUTLINE for Song Portion

The Crucible – A Song Element

When creating a song, first decide the message or emotion that you want the song to evoke in your audience.

Because you already know that the song you are creating is for *The Crucible*, you are ahead of the game. Now what you need to do is take a look at some themes from the play. Can you incorporate these themes into your writing?

Next take a look at some major scenes in the play - Scenes that took the emotion of the reader or audience to a different level.

THEMES or EMOTIONS:

Negative Themes/Emotions

1. Lies, deception
2. Mob mentality, mob rules
3. Hatred
4. Fear of unknown
5. Adultery
6. Greed
7. Intolerance
8. Hysteria
9. Reputation – Caring more about reputation, then anything else
10. Guilt by Association

Positive Themes/Emotions

1. Faith
2. Believe in "who you are?"
3. Strength to stand when all odds are against you
4. Love
5. Forgiveness
6. Holding true to "your name"

SOME IMPORTANT MOMENTS IN THE PLAY

1. Girls being caught dancing naked in the woods - All lies stem from that....
2. The girls all following Abigail's lead in saying "Who they saw with the Devil...." The list seems to go on and on
3. Danforth claiming "you are either with the court or you are against it" There is no gray area only black or white
4. First Elizabeth Proctor coming to court and then Mary Warren leading to Mary and the girls all turning on John Proctor
5. John Proctor saying "you'll not have my name" and then he and Rebecca Nurse heading to the gallows

Below is the provided chorus for the song. We will help you to create the verses that will go with this chorus. A Chorus is the part of a song that tends to be sung more than once in a song. It generally comes after the first verse.

A basic outline of a song is

- Verse
- Chorus
- Verse
- Chorus
- Bridge
- Chorus

Again this a basic outline of a song. You are the artist and can create your song anyway you wish. Using this basic format will help us to create the piece more easily for the sake of time.

CHORUS

**You wanna talk about my life – Well, listen to me
You better get your facts straight – 1-2-3
The problem with throwing ‘round judgment like you do
Is, where you gonna run when they’re coming for you?**

**Witch Hunt – Someone’s chasing after
Witch Hunt - Heading for disaster
Witch Hunt – Where you gonna hide?
Witch Hunt – When no one’s standing by your side**



BIOGRAPHIES

Rozie Curtis is the manager of education at Theatre Under the Stars. She has held this position for 7 years. In her current position, she has brought Theatre Under The Stars Classes in the Community programming to many school schools in the Houston and Greater Houston Area, reaching thousands of children every year. She has created TEKS based curriculum for all of her outreach programming. She even teaches top-rated In Service Workshops for teachers all over the Houston and Greater Houston area with the focus on creative classroom techniques based on TEKS CEDFA guidelines. Mrs. Curtis even served on the TEA Fine Arts review committee for High School Theatre and is helping to shape the new TEKS guidelines for Texas teachers. Her committee

Glenn Sharp received his musical training at Houston Baptist University. He has toured extensively across the country and overseas. He is a much sought after Musical Director, working in theatres, cabarets and even Amusement Parks! Glenn has been a part of the TUTS Education team for over 6 years now. He has helped worked with Rozie in creating many new programs for TUTS Classes in the Community. He has worked with Rozie on projects at MD Anderson Cancer Hospital, The YMCA's, After School Programming and now **“The Lit Experience: Act! Sing! Write!”**

Marilyn Hagans is an English Teacher. She has recently moved to the Tomball ISD. In Houston ISD she taught at Westside High School and HSPVA. She teaches both PreAP English and Advanced Placement English .She is an incredibly inspirational teacher. She challenges and excites her students about learning. It is because of this creative spirit that she was able to be the first school to help pilot **“The Lit Experience: Act! Sing! Write!”** with her students! Now **“The Lit Experience: Act! Sing! Write!”** has become a yearly part of her lesson plan.