

Noises Off Exploring Farce Pre-Show Curriculum		
Length	Grade Level	Content Area
1 class period (45 – 90 minutes)	Middle School & High School	ELA, Theatre
Objective	Materials Needed	
Students will analyze the elements of farce, as demonstrated in the clip from <i>The Play That Goes Wrong</i> , and create their own short farcical scenes. Students will identify modern farces they are familiar with.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to the clip from The Play That Goes Wrong on Alley Re-Sourced • Whiteboard and markers • Space for performance • Elements of farce 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 Farce? 2. Group Discussion You’d Know it if You Saw It 3. Group Collaboration Creating Farcical Scenes 4. Performance Scene Showcase 5. Reflection What to Keep in Mind at the Show 		
1. Introduction What is Farce?	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 farce from Alley Re-Sourced. b) Show the clip from <i>The Play That Goes Wrong</i>. Encourage students to identify the key elements of farce in the clip. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What elements stood out to you the most? - Did the comedy remind you of anything else you’ve seen? 	<p><i>Notes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key Elements of Farce on Alley Re-Sourced • An 8.5 x 11 printable version of Elements of Farce 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> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Have students collaborate and list modern farces they know, or shows with farcical elements. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Movies: Jojo Rabbit, Chip 'n Dale: Rescue Rangers, The Mitchells vs. The Machines - TV Shows: The Great, What We Do in the Shadows, Ted Lasso, the Simpsons b) Have students give a few examples. Lead a discussion to compare the shows to the elements of farce. 	<p><i>Notes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If students are stuck, have them think of any comedies 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 farces wins. Farces must be checked against the elements. ○ Each group just needs 1 farce example, the group with the strongest farce/most elements of farce wins.
<p>3. Group Collaboration Creating Farcical Scenes</p>	<p>15-20 minutes</p>
<p><i>Activity Steps</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Divide students into small groups. Each group will create (a rough, working draft) of a farcical scene that uses at least two elements of farce. <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. - Lean into the comedy – the situation is funny to the audience, but really matters to the characters. 	<p><i>Notes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep the elements visible or distribute copies for students to refer to. • 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.

<p>4. Performance Scene Showcase</p>	<p>5-10 minutes</p>
<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?
<p>5. Reflection What to Keep in Mind at the Show</p>	<p>5-10 minutes</p>
<p><i>Activity Steps</i></p> <p>a) What's one element of farce that stood out to you today?</p> <p>b) Think about what you knew or thought of farce 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 or 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"> • Which part made you laugh the hardest? • What element of farce can you identify in that part?

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>

ELEMENTS OF FARCE

Noises Off, Alley Theatre, 2012



1 EXAGGERATED SITUATIONS

Farces are built on improbable and often ridiculous situations. As the characters react to these situations, the level of confusion and silliness builds and builds.

Lend Me A Soprano, Photographer Lynn Lane, Alley Theatre, 2017



2 PHYSICAL COMEDY

Farce relies on physical comedy like chases, slamming doors, funny falls, and big physical reactions. They add to and often escalate the chaos (and the laughter).

The 39 Steps, Alley Theatre, 2017



3 FAST PACE

People in farces talk fast, move fast, and act fast. It definitely adds to the sense of urgency, and definitely leads to more confusion among the characters.

Lend Me A Soprano, Photographer Lynn Lane, Alley Theatre, 2017



4 CONFUSION

Farces are full of misunderstandings, disguises, and mistaken identities. There are moments when the only people who know what's really going on is the audience.

The 39 Steps, Alley Theatre, 2010



5 STOCK CHARACTERS

Characters in farce are over-the-top and built on recognizable types. Audiences are in on the joke: they recognize the bit and anticipate their actions - which are usually exaggerated.