



THE JOHNNY MERCER  
FOUNDATION

# An Incomplete History of Broadway



Learning Companion for Educators

vala

# About The Program

An Incomplete History of Broadway follows high school besties Claire, Marcus, and T.J. as they explore the history of musical theatre in song.



## Meet The Cast

**Xavier McKnight** (Marcus) is psyched to be a part of this epic project! Credits: How The Grinch Stole Christmas The Musical (Boo Who - National Tour), The Cat's Pajamas Vocal Band (Lead Vocalist - National Tour), Spelling Bee (Leaf Coneybear - The Theater Barn), Bring It On The Musical (Twig - Black Spectrum Theatre), 1776 (Courier - Waterfront Playhouse). Much love to my family, friends and Tommy!

**Indigo Blu** (Claire) is a singer, songwriter, actress and dancer. She has been electrifying audiences since 2015 in the Inaugural production of Vanguard's Theater Company's A Portrait of Ray. As a Raelette she reprised that role in the 2017-2019 Off-Broadway premiere. Other roles include: Two Gentlemen of Verona (Sylvia), "In the Heights" (Vanessa), The Drowsy Chaperone (Janet Van DeGraff). Her first independent movie credit was the indie film "Sunset Prayers" (Erin Gonzalez). Currently Indigo Blu is recording her first solo project.

**Victoria Alex Duffy** (TJ) is a NYC based actor. She is a recent graduate of Fordham University's Theatre program at Lincoln Center. Thanks to Daryl for including her in this project! [www.victoriaalevduffy.com](http://www.victoriaalevduffy.com)



## The Characters

**CLAIRE** - female, 15, the ringleader. Soft and sweet, but firm when she needs to be.

**TJ** - female, LGBTQ+, 15, the skeptic. Can be hot headed at times.

**MARCUS** - male, 15, goofy & affable.



# Songlist - Episode 1 - 2

## **EPISODE ONE: THE BROADWAY MELODY (1920-1930)**

Second Hand Rose - Ziegfeld Follies (1921)

Someone to Watch Over Me - Gershwin (1926)

Anything Goes - Cole Porter

Plenty o Nuttin from Porgy & Bess - Gershwin

## **EPISODE TWO: THE GOLDEN AGE (1943-1959)**

“THE R&H SUITE”

Oh What a Beautiful Morning - OKLAHOMA!

Wash that Man - SOUTH PACIFIC

Favorite Things - SOUND OF MUSIC

Something's Coming - WEST SIDE STORY

# Songlist - Episode 3

**EPISODE THREE: CHANGING TIMES (1960-1980)**

“THE CONCEPT MUSICAL SUITE”

If I Were a Rich Man - FIDDLER ON THE ROOF

Let the Sun Shine - HAIR

Brand New Day - THE WIZ

# Songlist - Episode 4

## EPISODE FOUR: MILLENNIUM APPROACHES (1980-2000)

Dreamgirls - DREAMGIRLS

“THE MEGA MUSICAL/BRITISH INVASION SUITE” -

Jellicle Songs for Jellicle Cats - CATS

Masquerade- PHANTOM

On My Own - LES MIS

Seasons of Love - RENT

Circle of Life - THE LION KING

# Songlist - Episode 5

## **EPISODE FIVE: POP! GOES THE MUSICAL (2000-2020)**

Good Morning, Baltimore- HAIRSPRAY

The Wizard and I - WICKED (2004)

Can't Take My Eyes Off You- JERSEY BOYS (2005)

Ring of Keys - FUN HOME (2015)

Story of Tonight - HAMILTON (2015)

# Activities & Lesson Plan Ideas

# Lesson Plans

Each of these six lessons maybe completed independently or teacher directed.

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Lyrics and Language ... Page 26



## Activities & Lesson Plan Ideas

We have compiled our favorite activities and lesson plan ideas for taking a deeper dive into *An Incomplete History of Broadway*. We hope these examples will help you to create exciting pathways to engage your student(s). The lessons are designed to serve as a guide and should be modified to best serve your specific student population. Each of the lessons maybe completed independently or teacher directed.

# Lesson # 1 - Virtual Shopping Spree



Purpose of the Activity: The activity is designed to familiarize students with the value of currency.

Concepts taught: General Math, Economics, Currency, Research

Common Core Learning Standard(s): See page 16

1. Grant each student a lump sum of money to spend on a shopping spree for a worthy organization or cause. *ie: a church or religious organization, the local shelter, etc.* Encourage students to research.
2. Ask students to create a project (in digital or print) assembling all the “line items” they would purchase for the organization or charity of their choice. Be sure to remind them to include prices.
3. Once they have decided on the items they want to purchase, have the students assemble the items into a presentation to present. Prices should be included for every item on the list presentation.

# Lesson # 1 - Virtual Shopping Spree - Standards



Common Core Learning Standard(s):

CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.6.RP.A.3

Use rate reasoning to solve real-world and mathematical problems.

## *If I Were A Rich Man* *Virtual Shopping Spree*

In “If I Were a Rich Man” from Fiddler On The Roof, Tevye dreams of what it would be like to be rich. He sings that he wants three staircases – one going up, one for walking down, and one that is “just for show.” A person dreaming (or singing) of being something else is very common in musical theatre. Ask students to consider what they would do if they were rich. Use the virtual shopping spree to introduce them to the very real world of currency and money.



## Lesson # 2 - Persuasive Pen

Purpose of the Activity: This activity is designed to encourage students to think critically and to write persuasively.

Common Core Learning Standard(s): See page 19

In our series, the school musical is cancelled due to inclement weather. Controversial issues like cancelling the school musical still raise debate today in the political scene, religious world, and in everyday life.

Have students research an article about school cancellation, read it and reflect on the content.

Then, have your student(s) brainstorm controversial issues that interest them. They should do some research about the debate surrounding the issue and choose a side. Students will then write a “Letter-to-the-Editor” of their local newspaper or blog arguing their side and position. The letter should be persuasive and well-informed, using facts, not opinions to support their argument.

## Lesson # 2 - Persuasive Pen - Standards

Common Core Learning Standard(s):

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.7.5

Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.1.B

Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using accurate, credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.7

Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions for further research and investigation.



## Lesson # 3 - My Favorite Things

Objective: To introduce students to the importance of self care and emotional regulation

Core Standards: See page 21

Materials:

In the process of engaging young people in social and emotional learning (SEL) and mindful awareness practice, we naturally begin to teach them about self-care. One of the core competencies of SEL is “self awareness.” With increased self-awareness, students can begin developing practices and skills that they can employ to take care of themselves.

1. Ask student(s) to brainstorm what their favorite activities are?
2. What do they do to relax and cope when they are upset or feeling stressed?
3. Have them share out these ideas and best practices.
4. Introduce the concept(s) of self-care or emotional regulation (Social-Emotional Learning).
5. Have each student plan a Self-Care Day for Yourself (Expansion to Vacation or Retreat).
6. Students will have the opportunity to create a schedule for relaxation and de-stressing.



## Lesson # 3 - My Favorite Things - Standards



Common Core Learning Standard(s):

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.7

Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and refocusing the inquiry when appropriate.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.6.6

Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

National Core Arts Standards:

TH:Cn10.1.6.a - Explain how the actions and motivations of characters in a drama/theatre work impact perspectives of a community or culture.

## Lesson # 4 - Character Collage

Purpose: To reflect and process the series in an artistic way.

Common Core Learning Standard(s): See page 23

Materials: Printer, Scissors, Glue Stick, Tape, Colored Pencils,

Activity Instructions:

1. Pick your favorite character from the series
2. Brainstorm character traits of your favorite character.
3. Find words, phrases, playbills, colors, shows, lyrics, props, quotes and images that remind you of your favorite character.
4. Create a collage as artistic response to your favorite character.
5. Take a picture of your collage and post it on social media.

Hashtag it to share it with us using the hashtag  
**#AnIncompleteHistory of Broadway #JMF #vala**



# Lesson # 4 - Character Collage - Standards

Common Core Learning Standard(s):

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.7

Compare and contrast the experience of reading a story, drama, or poem to listening to or viewing an audio, video, or live version of the text, including contrasting what they "see" and "hear" when reading the text to what they perceive when they listen or watch.

National Core Arts Standards:

Creating: Anchor Standard 2: Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.

VA:Cr2.3.8.a Select, organize, and design images and words to make visually clear and compelling presentations.

Responding: Anchor Standard 7: Perceive and analyze artistic work.

TH:Re7.1.8.a Apply criteria to the evaluation of artistic choices in a drama/theatre work.

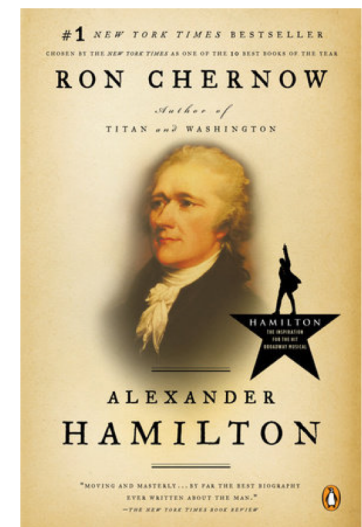
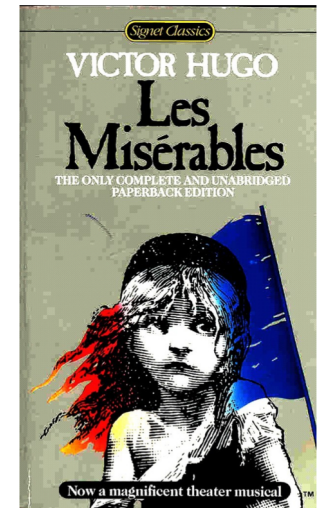
## Lesson # 5 - Who Wants To Be A Producer?

Many musicals are based off of books or written works. Books have served as source material for some of the world's best-loved musical theatre productions. From Gypsy to Wicked, Les Miserables to Hamilton books have served as source material inspiration for many years.

Purpose: to introduce students to the field of creative producing and directing.

Common Core Learning Standard(s): See page 25

Activity Instructions: *Who Wants To Be A Producer?* Theatre Producer - A theatrical producer is a person who oversees all aspects of mounting a theatre production. Have your student(s) pick a book or a piece of formal written material to adapt into a dream musical for stage. Then have students create a digital presentation pitching their unique version of the show. Presentation should include the title, a dream cast with headshots, a short description of the show and any key collaborators (musical director, choreographer, etc). **Taking It Further:** Have students vote on the top 3 dream show ideas and award the winners with a prize.



# Lesson # 5 - Who Wants To Be A Producer? - Standards

Common Core Learning Standard(s):

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.1

Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.3

Describe how a particular story's or drama's plot unfolds in a series of episodes as well as how the characters respond or change as the plot moves toward a resolution.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.9

Compare and contrast texts in different forms or genres (e.g., stories and poems; historical novels and fantasy stories) in terms of their approaches to similar themes and topics.

National Core Arts Standards:

Creating: Anchor Standard 1: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.

TH:Cr.1.1.7.a Investigate multiple perspectives and solutions to staging challenges in a drama/theatre work.

Creating: Anchor Standard 2: Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.

TH:Cr2-7.a Examine and justify original ideas and artistic choices in a drama/theatre work based on critical analysis, background knowledge, and historical cultural context.



# Lesson # 6

## Lyrics & Language

Purpose: To introduce students to lyrics as an important part of storytelling.

Common Core Learning Standard(s): See page 27

Materials: Music playback, pen/pencil, writing pad.

Listening Activity: Have student(s) pick one song from each episode from the series song list. Ask them to listen to it a few times. Then, have them consider the following questions for reflection/discussion.

Taking It Further: Have student(s) select one song to learn and to perform. Have students dissect the song lyrically before learning it musically.

What are the lyrics suggesting?

What do we know about the story based on the lyrical content?

What message is the character trying to convey?

Based on the lyrics what might be happening in the actual play?

Can you identify the verse, chorus, hook and/or bridge of the song?

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## Lesson # 6 - Lyrics & Language - Standards

Common Core Learning Standard(s):

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.5

Analyze how a particular sentence, chapter, scene, or stanza fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the theme, setting, or plot.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.6

Explain how an author develops the point of view of the narrator or speaker in a text.

National Core Arts Standards:

Responding: Anchor Standard 8: Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.

TH:Re8.1.6.c Identify personal aesthetics, preferences, and beliefs through participation in or observation of drama/theatre work.

TH:Re8.1.8.a Recognize and share artistic choices when participating in or observing a drama/theatre work.

# Glossary

#AnIncompleteHistoryofBroadway



# Glossary

Brice, Fanny - Fania Borach, known professionally as Fanny Brice or Fannie Brice, was an American comedienne, illustrated song model, singer, and theater and film actress who made many stage, radio, and film appearances.

Costumes - A set of clothes in such a style, as worn in a play or at a masquerade.

Director - The director is in charge of orchestrating the entirety of the production. They lead the actors, designers, and production crew to put the show on its feet.

Downstage - Toward, at, or on the front part of a stage.

Gershwin, George and Ira - George and Ira Gershwin are brothers who combined their musical talents to become major musical talents on both Broadway and in Hollywood.

## Glossary (cont.)

Ghostlight - A ghost light is an electric light that is left energized on the stage of a theater when the theater is unoccupied and would otherwise be completely dark.

GSA - Gay-Straight Alliances, or GSAs, are student-led and student-organized school clubs that aim to create a safe, welcoming, and accepting school environment for all youth, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.

Hamilton, Alexander - Alexander Hamilton was an immigrant turned American statesman, politician, legal scholar, military commander, lawyer, banker, and economist. He was one of the Founding Fathers of the United States. The musical Hamilton is based on his life.

JukeBox Musical - a musical that features hit songs of a popular music group or genre.

Musical Theatre - Musical theatre is a form of theatrical performance that combines songs, spoken dialogue, acting and dance.

Playbills - a piece of paper advertising a play and giving information about where and when it is being performed.

## Glossary (cont.)

Props - A prop, formally known as (theatrical) property, is an object used on stage or screen by **actors** during a **performance** or **screen production**.

Rodgers and Hammerstein - Rodgers and Hammerstein refers to the duo of composer Richard Rodgers (1902–1979) and lyricist–dramatist Oscar Hammerstein II (1895–1960), who together were an influential, innovative and successful American musical theatre writing team.

Sondheim, Stephen - Stephen Sondheim is an American composer and lyricist known for his work in musical theatre.

Tin Pan Alley - Tin Pan Alley was the publishing center for the musical world from the late 1800s through the 1920s.

World War II - World War II, also known as the Second World War, was a global war that lasted from 1939 to 1945.

Ziegfeld Follies - The Ziegfeld Follies was a series of elaborate theatrical revue productions on Broadway in New York City by Flo Ziegfeld.



# Bibliography

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www.corestandards.org

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## *Resource Guide Content*

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