



# STUDY GUIDE

# THE BIG ONE-OH! JR.

- a musical in 1 Act, based on the popular children's book by Dean Pitchford.  
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## THEMES

- Making new friends
- Change and transition
- Being yourself
- Being the “new kid” at school

## SYNOPSIS

Charley Maplewood has never been one for parties—that would require friends, which he doesn't have. Well, unless you count his monster friends, but they're only imaginary. But now that he's turning ten—the big one-oh—he decides to throw a birthday party for himself, complete with a “House of Horrors” theme. Of course, things don't work out as he plans. Will Charley be able to pull it together before the big one-oh . . . becomes the big OH-NO!?

## PREPARING FOR THE SHOW

### Theatre Etiquette

Your class trip to KCP's Young Company production should be an enriching and memorable event. The following tips are suggested to ensure your students get the most out of their theater-going experience.

For many of your students, this class trip may be the first theatrical experience of their lives, which might be overwhelming. Take a few moments before the field trip to prepare your students as to what to expect. *Are there assigned seats? How long is the show? Can the actors see the audience?*

There are also things students should consider as to what is expected of them. Talking during movies is rude but talking during a play is unacceptable; unlike movies the performers can hear the audience, which also means... laugh when something is funny! Clap when you are wowed! Actors appreciate an enthusiastic (but focused) audience.

## Some things to keep in mind when you arrive at the theatre:

- Arrive on time so that you do not miss anything and so that you will not disturb the rest of the audience while trying to get comfortable in your seat. After the lights go out finding your seat is very difficult.
- It is easier for you (and the rest of the audience) to see and hear the performance if you stay in your seat and listen very carefully.
- In this theatre, you are not allowed to eat or chew gum, only bottled water is allowed. Not only does it ruin the theatre, but it also distracts from your concentration.
- Try your best to remain in your seat once the performance has begun. There is no intermission in a performance of KCP's Young Company productions.
- Although you may wish to say something to the actors while they are on stage, you need to hold your thoughts. You may disturb their concentration.
- Sing or participate *if and only if* you are invited to do so. Your participation is often very important.
- Listen to how the music sets the moods and affects your own feelings.
- Show the cast and crew your appreciation for their hard work with applause or laughter. Do this when you like a song or dance or joke at the end of the show.

## Pre-Production Questions

- Pay attention to the various settings of the show. How do the colors and textures differ in each setting?
- Pay close attention to the characters and their descriptions before the production. How does the actor's performance match the character description? What does the character's costume tell you?
- How many of you have experienced a live theatre performance? What did you see?
- What are some of the differences between going to the theatre and watching television or going to a movie?
  - *Theatre features live on-stage actors. They have spent many weeks rehearsing for the performance.*
  - *The audience is a very important part of the performance. Appreciation for the performers is shown by close attention, participation, and applause at the proper times. The success of the production often depends on the audience.*

- *The theatre is a very special place. Its atmosphere is entirely different from your home, where the television is always available.*
- *It is easy to identify with live actors. You can see how they use their bodies and voices to convey different emotions.*

Introduce your students to the following theatrical terms:

- |                            |                     |                       |                          |
|----------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| • <i>Box Office</i>        | • <i>Program</i>    | • <i>Props</i>        | • <i>Stagehand</i>       |
| • <i>Reserved Seats</i>    | • <i>Overture</i>   | • <i>Director</i>     | • <i>Lobby</i>           |
| • <i>Acts &amp; Scenes</i> | • <i>Spotlights</i> | • <i>Stage</i>        | • <i>Usher</i>           |
| • <i>Producer</i>          | • <i>Costumes</i>   | • <i>Curtain Call</i> | • <i>Musical Theatre</i> |

## **AFTER THE SHOW**

Young people need time to unpack and process an artistic experience to solidify what they've learned. It's important that you devote some time for reflection once you are back at school. Many of the activities in this guide can be used as post-theater reflection and assessment tools, but a simple conversation can work well, too. Start by soliciting overall impressions from the group. What did they think? What did they like? How did the activities they participated in before they saw the show influence their experiences? From there, ask students what they noticed about each element of the play (script, music, staging, choreography, design, performance). Finally, devote some time to field remaining questions from your students. Is there anything they are still wondering about?

### **Post-Production Questions**

- Was the music used in the performance live or recorded? How could you tell? Did it help develop the plot?
- What types of music was used? Were different styles used?
- Can you describe how different kinds of music might make you have different kinds of feelings?
- When a play is a musical, an actor must have additional skills. What skills might they need to be successful? What skills did you see in the performers?
- Describe the sets used in the show you just saw. What props or details were used to suggest specific times or settings? How was the lighting changed to create a mood, season, time of day, etc.?
- What materials might have been used in building the sets?
- How were the sets and props moved on and off the stage?

- Choose a simple scene (a day in school, a trip to the mall, a ride in the car or on the bus), ask students to describe a possible set for the scene.
- What would you need to know to create costumes for a show (Historical research, sewing, theatrical effects, etc.)? What do you think the creative team needed to know to create the costumes you saw?
- Why is the right costume important to the character in the play?
- Describe the kind of dancing you saw in the production. How is it different from the kinds of dancing that the class might know?
- What purposes could dance have in a play?
- Make a list of all the personnel needed for a play. (Director, Music Director, Producer, Actors, Musicians, Author, designers-set, costumes, lights & sound, stagehands, choreographer, etc.) What might their responsibilities be in a production? Why is it important for the entire team to do their job? What would happen if they didn't?

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### Lesson Activities

*NOTE: Our lessons have suggested grades, but can be modified for younger classes through teacher led or working with older reading buddies etc.*

## Your Students as Audience

### THEATER VOCABULARY

TEACHER OBJECTIVE To be able to discuss theatre through a common, shared vocabulary.

STUDENT GOAL To understand that the most effective way to discuss theatre and new ideas is through a shared vocabulary.

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OVERTURE: An orchestral piece at the beginning of an opera, suite, play, oratorio, or other extended composition.

**GHOST LIGHT:** An electric light that is left energized on the stage of a theatre when the theatre is unoccupied and would otherwise be completely dark.

**PROLOGUE:** A separate introductory section of a literary or musical work.

**VOICE OVER:** A piece of narration in a movie or live performance, not accompanied by an image of the speaker.

**REPRISE:** A repeated passage in music.

**NARRATOR:** A person who delivers a commentary accompanying a movie, broadcast, piece of music, etc.

**CURTAIN CALL:** The appearance of one or more performers on stage after a performance to acknowledge the audience's applause.

**FICTION:** Literature in the form of prose, especially short stories and novels, that describes imaginary events and people.

**GENDER NEUTRAL CASTING:** Casting which allows actors to portray any character, irrespective of gender.

**CHARACTERS:** Individuals the audience learns about from their actions and reactions.

**ENSEMBLE:** A group of performers working together to create a complete production.

**DIALOGUE:** The exchange of speech between two characters that reveals the feelings of the character as well as the story of the play.

**MONOLOGUE:** A speech by one actor on stage that is intended to reveal the inner thoughts of the character the actor plays.

**CHARACTER ARC:** The change produced in a character by the events and other characters in the play.

**MOOD:** The overall feeling the play evokes.

**COSTUME:** The clothes, boots, etc., worn by the actors based on their character.

**PROP:** Objects used by an actor to enhance their character.

**SET:** The constructed environment of a play within which the action takes place.

**SOUND:** Noises and music used in the play.

## VOCABULARY FROM THE BIG ONE-OH!

**TABLEAU:** A group of people in a frozen image representing a scene from a story or history.

**SPECIAL EFFECTS:** An illusion created in theatre or film using props, makeup, or computer graphics.

## Your Students as Actors

### READING A SCENE FOR UNDERSTANDING

GRADES 5+

#### TEACHER OBJECTIVE

To introduce the Practical Aesthetics “tools” for breaking down a scene. To understand the character and the story of the scene by relating the character’s actions to the student’s own life.

**STUDENT GOAL** To understand that an important part of creating a simple, honest character involves knowing what that character wants.

#### THE EXERCISE

**STEP ONE** Divide the students in pairs. Ask the students to select which character they want to portray.

**STEP TWO** Allow the students time to read the scene silently to themselves.

**STEP THREE** Ask the students to read the Introduction to the Practical Aesthetic Introduction sheet and have the students answer the four questions on the Scene Analysis Worksheet.

***NOTE:** The four questions and the students’ answers to them form the basis for the Practical Aesthetics scene analysis; and enables the actor to create a simple, honest character. They’re simply being honest to their own experiences!*

**STEP FOUR** After the students have completed the question worksheet, ask each pair of actors to read the scene in the front of the classroom for an audience. The students should incorporate the ideas from the worksheet as they read the scene.

THE BIG ONE-OH! SCENE:

VINCE Wait! Is that a hairnet?! (to MOM) Why is he wearing a hairnet?

MOM He takes his cooking seriously.

VINCE The kid cooks? That's not normal.

MOM Are you saying my son isn't normal?

VINCE A nine-year-old kid in a hairnet, crying and cooking is... strange.

MOM So now he's strange?

VINCE People might think he's some kind of a-

MOM Some kind of a what?

VINCE Some kind of a freak!

## **ACTING TECHNIQUES**

### **ANALYSIS**

Script analysis is the process of breaking down a beat within a scene. We ask four questions in order to do this:

1. What is the character literally doing?
2. What does the character want?
3. What is the essential ACTION?
4. What is that action like to me? It is AS-IF...

**LITERAL:** In this step, the actor determines what the character he or she is playing is literally doing according to the text.

**PURPOSE:** An actor has to travel far—think of this preparation as the road map.

**WANT:** In this step, the actor identifies the goal of the character in the scene, specifically what the character wants from the other character/s in the scene. The given circumstances of the story inform the WANT.

**PURPOSE:** To focus the actor on the characters' interaction.



**ACTION:** Playing an ACTION is the physical pursuit of a goal. Defining the ACTION of the scene allows the actor to determine what result or CAP he or she is looking for from the other actor/s in the scene.

**EXAMPLES:** • Put someone in their place | • Beg someone for forgiveness. | • Get a favour. • Get someone to let me off the hook. | • Force someone to face the facts. • Inspire someone to greatness. | • Get someone to see the light.

**PURPOSE:** Using an action gives the actor a task and a specific point of view. The Atlantic Acting School teaches that the Action creates character.

**AS-IF:** In this step, the actor personalizes the action by finding a real-life situation in which they would behave according to the action they have chosen for the scene.

**EXAMPLE:** Get a favour. It's AS-IF I forgot to do my science homework and I'm asking my teacher for an extra day to hand it in.

**PURPOSE:** To gain personal insight and urgency to the scene or beat.

**TACTICS & TOOLS:** Different ways an actor goes about getting his action.

**EXAMPLE:** Plead, joke, demand, inspire, challenge, reason, encourage.

**LIVING IN THE MOMENT:** Reacting impulsively to what the other actor in the scene is doing, from the point of view of the chosen action.

## SCENE ANALYSIS WORKSHEET

Here are your "tools" for understanding your character:

	IF YOU'RE PLAYING VINCE...	IF YOU'RE PLAYING MOM...
WHAT IS MY CHARACTER LITERALLY DOING?	Vince is talking to Mom about how it is strange for a nine year old to wear a hairnet, cry and cook.	Mom is questioning Vince about his opinions on her son's behavior.
WHAT DOES MY CHARACTER WANT?	Vince wants to warn Mom that her son's behavior could get him labeled as a freak.	Mom wants Vince to realize her son's behavior is not strange or deserving of his judgement.
WHAT IS THE ACTION I'M GOING TO PLAY?	To get someone to face the facts	To put someone in their place
THE AS-IF...	It's as if your friend is not working hard at school and you are telling them they need to do their homework, otherwise they won't get good grades.	It's as if someone at school is bullying your friend about the clothes they are wearing and you are standing up to the bully.

# YOUR STUDENTS AS ARTISTS

Warm-up: I Am a Tree  
Explode the Moment!  
Drawing to Write Activity  
Thumbs Up Or Thumbs Down?  
Common Core & DOE Theatre Blueprint

## **WARM UP: "I AM A TREE"**

GRADES 2-5

### TEACHER OBJECTIVE

To understand tableau, to practice collaborative storytelling.

### STUDENT GOAL

To use our bodies in creative ways, to practice making tableaux.

### MATERIALS

Just our bodies!

### STEP ONE

Have students gather in a circle. Explain that the class will be making tableaux, or stage pictures, together three by three.

### STEP TWO

Have one student start in the center of the circle as if they were a tree and proclaim, "I am a tree." Prompt students to think of people, objects, animals, etc. to add to this stage picture that might make sense living near a tree. When one student has an idea, they may jump in the centre of the circle, make the object with their body, and proclaim, "I am a \_\_\_\_" (for example, "I am a squirrel," "I am an apple on the tree"). Have one more student do the same and jump into the stage picture.

### STEP THREE

The student playing the tree will leave the stage picture and choose one of the other objects to take with them by proclaiming, "I am a tree and I am taking the (squirrel, apple, etc.)." This will leave behind one object to create a new tableau.

### STEP FOUR

Repeat the pattern starting with the object that has been left behind, adding two more objects. Repeat for however many rounds you would like.

## **EXPLODE THE MOMENT!**

GRADES 3-5

### TEACHER OBJECTIVE

To engage students in lively writing on the topic of “the first time I felt different.”

### STUDENT GOAL

To create a piece of writing about a personal experience with “the first time I felt different.”

### MATERIALS

Paper for writing, copy of Explode The Moment Planning Sheet (on the next page), pen or pencil. One tool in a writer’s toolkit is the “explode the moment” tool, in which the writer slows down the action of a particular moment to describe it in vivid detail.

### STEP ONE

Ask students to think of a moment when they realized that they were different from other people.

### STEP TWO

Instruct students to think about that experience for a moment and remember the details: specific things they heard, saw, said, felt, thought, and did.

### STEP THREE

Have students fill out the pre-writing worksheet. Encourage students to think of at least two examples for each category.

*NOTE:* It is alright if one or two categories has only one detail—each should have at least one, two at most, and in general as many more as they’d like.

### STEP FOUR

Once students have finished the pre-writing brainstorm, tell them to start writing. Encourage them to use all of the details they brainstormed and dive right in with a strong detail. For example, instead of “I realized I was different 24 one time when...” they might try starting with a quote or with something they saw, felt, or thought.

### STEP FIVE

If you’d like, as additional writing practice, have students revise their work to ensure that every sentence is active and the writing is rich and descriptive.

### STEP SIX

You may choose to take it to the publishing phase and put together an anthology of student stories.

**STEP SEVEN**

(Optional) Have students split into groups of 4-5. Have each student become the director of a tableau that tells the story of the first time they felt different. The director will play their own character, and the other group members will take on the roles of the other people, animals, objects, etc. that are included in the story. Each director will title their own piece. Share with the whole group.

**EXPLODE THE MOMENT PLANNING SHEET**

I SAW...

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I HEARD...

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I FELT...

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I THOUGHT...

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I DID...

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## **DRAWING TO WRITE ACTIVITY**

GRADES 2-3

### **TEACHER OBJECTIVE**

Facilitate the students' abilities to gather details by having them write a story based on an original drawing. Encourage the students to develop their own creative insight by using these drawings as triggers for short written scenes

### **STUDENT GOAL**

To understand that recalling vivid details of an experience is a great artistic "tool."

### **MATERIALS**

Pencils, crayons, markers, drawing paper, writing paper.

### **MOTIVATION**

Discuss the following concepts with your students: Does adding small details to your drawing make it more interesting to look at? Do these small details help your drawing tell a good story? Why? Do details in writing a story make it more interesting? Believable? Funny?

### **STEP ONE**

Using the art materials, ask students to draw their favorite scenes from The Big One-Oh! Feel free to mix the scenes and characters together.

### **STEP TWO**

Use the students' individual drawings to trigger ideas for a written story about the images in their drawing.

### **AT A LATER DATE: STEP THREE**

Have the students divide into small groups.

### **STEP FOUR**

Each student should create six lines of dialogue for their character. Check the vocabulary list for inspiration.

## **CREATING YOUR OWN REVIEW: THUMBS UP OR THUMBS DOWN?**

GRADES 3-5

### **TEACHER OBJECTIVE**

To introduce the critical thinking skills involved in expressing one's personal opinion.

### **STUDENT GOAL**

To understand that the 4Ws can be used to critically describe an artistic experience. To enhance the literacy skills of the 4Ws and sequencing in writing.

### **MATERIALS**

Paper, pen, copy of The Big One-Oh! program, attached worksheets.

### **STEP ONE**

Review the four W's (who, what, where, when). For example, who - Charley.

### **STEP TWO**

Review the "Thumbs Up or Thumbs Down" worksheet with your students. Remember there is no right or wrong response. Each student's review will be based on individual opinion.

### **STEP THREE**

Using the "Thumbs Up or Thumbs Down" worksheet, ask the students to write their review in three paragraphs - beginning, middle and conclusion.

### **STEP FOUR**

Post the reviews in the classroom.

## **THUMBS UP OR THUMBS DOWN?**

WHO:

WHAT:

WHERE:

WHEN:

## **THUMBS UP OR THUMBS DOWN?**

LIST SOME IMAGES THAT FIRST SPRING TO MIND WHEN YOU THINK

ABOUT THE PLAY:

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LIST SOME WORDS OR PHRASES THAT WILL REMIND YOU OF POINTS YOU WANT TO MAKE:

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WHAT DID YOU THINK OF THE PLAY? WHAT WAS YOUR OPINION?

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HOW DO YOU THINK THE COSTUMES, LIGHTS, AND MUSIC AFFECTED THE PERFORMANCE?

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HOW MIGHT YOU START YOUR PAPER?

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