

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) About Historical Theater

Question 1: What is Historical Theater?

Answer: This lesson was developed in a school with a high percentage of traditionally underserved students. As an alternative to traditional lecturing, this lesson was designed to give students the ability to interact with the material in a hands-on way.

The intentional multiple perspective design of the lesson helps give students content and analytical skills for the Point of View criteria for the Document Based Question (DBQ). Each of these characters were chosen because of the likelihood that they will appear on a DBQ. The multiple perspectives will allow for students to have a memorable and easily accessible bank of data to explain the blind spots/privileges of a presented author by providing a different figure as a counter perspective.

Question 2: How do you give credit to students involved in the historical theater activity?

Answer: These Historical Theaters were developed as instructional tools for Mano Koa Enterprises' AP US History curriculum. That curriculum has several opportunities for extra credit in order to boost students' grades if they demonstrate exemplary skills in the class. An added benefit of this method is that the points boost a students' grade above "the dreaded bubble" of 69.9, 79.9, or 89.9 percent. (This keeps the helicopter parents off your case).

Under the original design, **4 extra credit points** are awarded if a student successfully satisfies the following criteria:

- **1 Point:** Participating in the theater.
- **1 Point:** Effectively improvising their argument when it's time for the characters to debate (ACT 2). This can include but is not limited to:
 - Creating their own arguments beyond the provided script.
 - Standing up and using maps and blackboards in a class appropriate way.
 - Linking the presented argument to another event in American history.
- **1 Point:** Committing to Character by coming in **a class appropriate** costume (as simple as a drawn-on mustache or as complex as an authentic costume), bringing a class appropriate prop (examples are listed on most scripts), or moving about the classroom in an appropriate way.
- **1 Point:** Students write their own script which still hits the necessary details on the provided script but adds more details about the historical figure's life. **The script must be approved by the teacher before the student performs it.**

If a teacher buys the Magnum Opus, they will obtain **20 Historical Theaters** which contains between 2 to 8 different characters per theater. If a teacher chooses, he/she/they can assign students a role per semester and grade them on a Check/Check Plus/Check Minus standard.

Under this system, the following grading criteria can be implemented:

- **A Check Plus:** Student satisfies **at least three** of the four criteria. (Teacher's discretion)
- **A Check:** Student satisfies **between two and three** of the four criteria. (Teacher's discretion)
- **A Check Minus:** Student **satisfies less than two** criteria.

Question 3: What should I do if a student is a no-show for a theater?

Answer: Always print extra scripts before the theater in case a student forgets his/her/theirs. If a student is a no-show, offer a student from the audience at least 3 points (a check) extra credit for filling in for the missing student. **The extra scripts can also help IEP and ELL students with processing the information.**

Question 4: What do the students do with their Historical Theater handouts?

Answer: They should staple them to their notebook as lecture notes.

Question 5: How do I determine whether a student's costume/behavior is "school appropriate?"

Answer: Consult your student handbook/climate guide as every school has different guidelines and enforcement.

If a student's creativity borders on --or crosses the line of--insensitivity (including, but not limited to, changing the color of one's face, bringing revealing clothing, trivializing the culture of origin with possibly offensive imitations --i.e. cheap warbonnets or cheap hula girl skirts, etc.), his/her/their costume should **not** be on display.

In this event, teachers are encouraged to collaborate with students before their performance on a more appropriate substitute. **Remember:** Students still get the point for committing to character if they bring a class appropriate prop and most scripts have examples for each character.

Also remember: If the behavior of a student in an historical theater becomes inappropriate, the Teacher simply needs to say the word "scene" to pause the theater and reorient the students to the expectation.

Mano Koa Enterprises is not responsible for **any** mishaps involving the inappropriate appearance or behavior of students during the Historical Theater Activity. The responsibility for correcting such inappropriate student behavior falls squarely on the teacher facilitating the lesson.

Question 6: What is the CHAMP acronym on the PowerPoint?

Answer: The CHAMP acronym is part of the CHAMP model for classroom management. Teachers are encouraged to scaffold the CHAMP before any new activity before beginning.

The C stands for conversation: who should be talking and how loud?

The H stands for help: if a student needs help, what should he/she/they do?

The A stands for activity: usually this refers to the handout the teacher gives the student. It's a good idea to confirm that all students have the form before beginning the activity.

The M stands for movement: are students allowed to move and in what way(s)?

The P stands for participation: what is the expectation? What do students need to do to get points?