

THE STUDY GUIDE TO THE BROADWAY PRODUCTION OF  
**AN AMERICAN IN PARIS**

BIENVENUE  
WELCOME TO PARIS





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# SYNOPSIS

Struck by a mysterious girl and ready to rebuild his life at the end of WWII, American soldier, Jerry Mulligan, decides to stay in Paris and nurture his passion for painting. With a little help from kindred soul seekers Adam Hochberg, a composer and fellow veteran; and Henri Baurel, the son of wealthy French industrialists and wannabe song and dance man, they imagine a future brighter than the atrocities they've recently witnessed.

When Jerry is reconnected with the mysterious girl—a stunning French ballerina named Lise Dassin—he seems certain that he made the right decision. That is, until he discovers that she is the very same woman he and Adam have been encouraging Henri to propose to. Meanwhile Jerry makes the acquaintance of headstrong American philanthropist, Milo Davenport who, struck by his talent and good looks, ushers him into the Paris art scene exploding with new life and energy post-war.

Tension mounts as Lise struggles to choose between her obligations to Henri and what she thinks might be her true love for Jerry. As each man comes to terms with his own fate, Milo realizes that her passion might be better spent trying to help others than herself and, after it's revealed that Lise is beholden to Henri because he and his family saved her life during the occupation, both she and Henri realize that it is time to let go.

When the curtain falls on the opening night performance of the ballet that will allow Lise to claim her place as a free artist in France, she knows that she is meant to be with Jerry. They reunite at the River Seine and walk off into the Paris night.

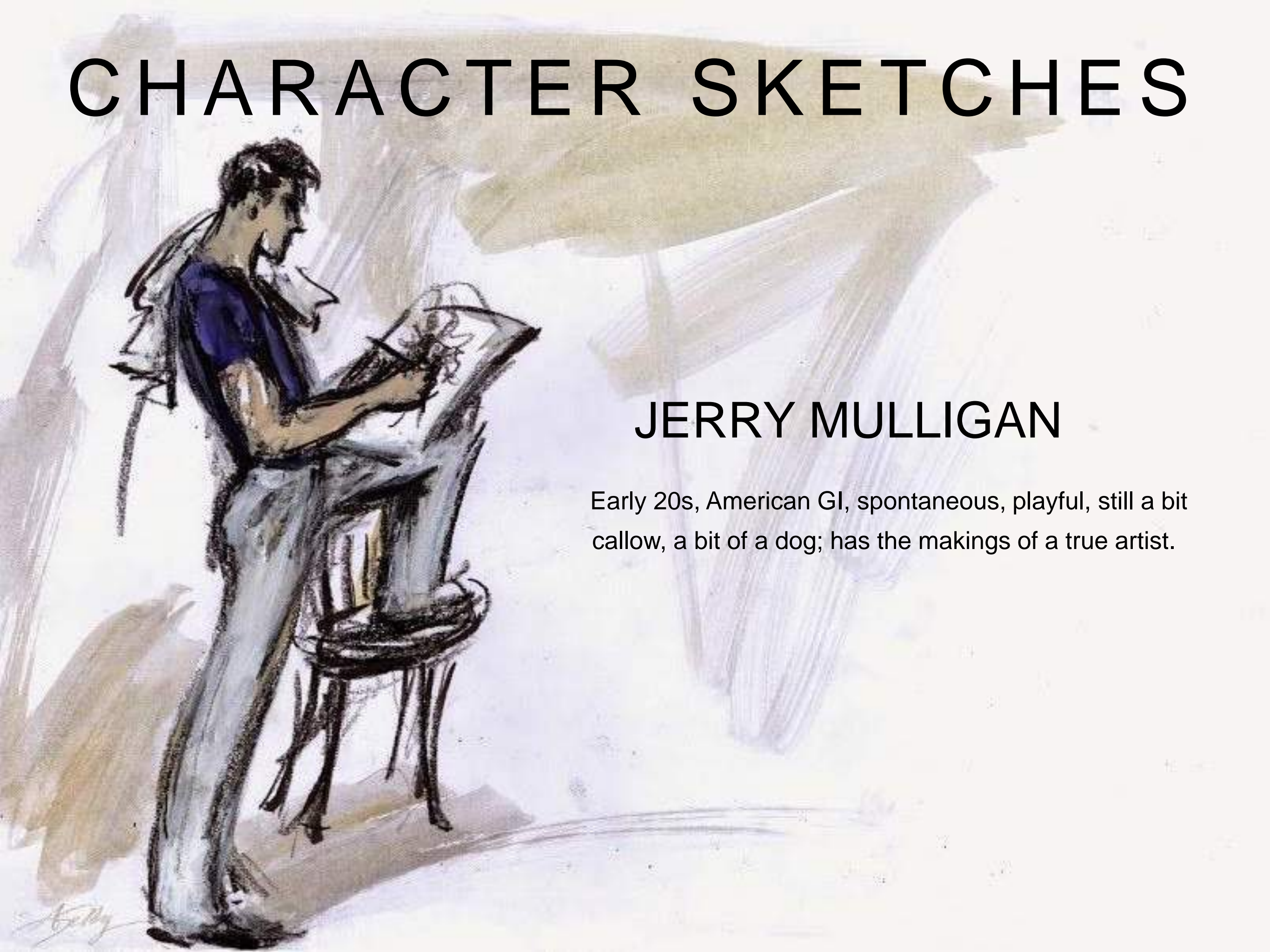




# CHARACTER SKETCHES

## JERRY MULLIGAN

Early 20s, American GI, spontaneous, playful, still a bit callow, a bit of a dog; has the makings of a true artist.





# LISE DASSIN

18, grieving, passionate, secretive. Ballet dancer.





# HENRI BAUREL

Approaching 30, scion of wealthy Parisians, light-hearted, raised to assume his father's position of power; deeply in love with Lise.







# ADAM HOCHBERG

Early 20s, American GI, wounded in the war, walks with a limp; struggles to find his authentic voice as an artist.



# MILO DAVENPORT

30, American heiress, a free spirit, knows what she wants if not how to get it.







# MADAME BAUREL

50s, Henri's mother, obsessed with appearances, wants the best for her loved ones.



# ADDITIONAL CHARACTERS

MONSIEUR BAUREL

50s, Henri's father, proper in all ways

OLGA

Dance teacher, Russian

MR. Z

A Russian exile, choreographer

ENSEMBLE

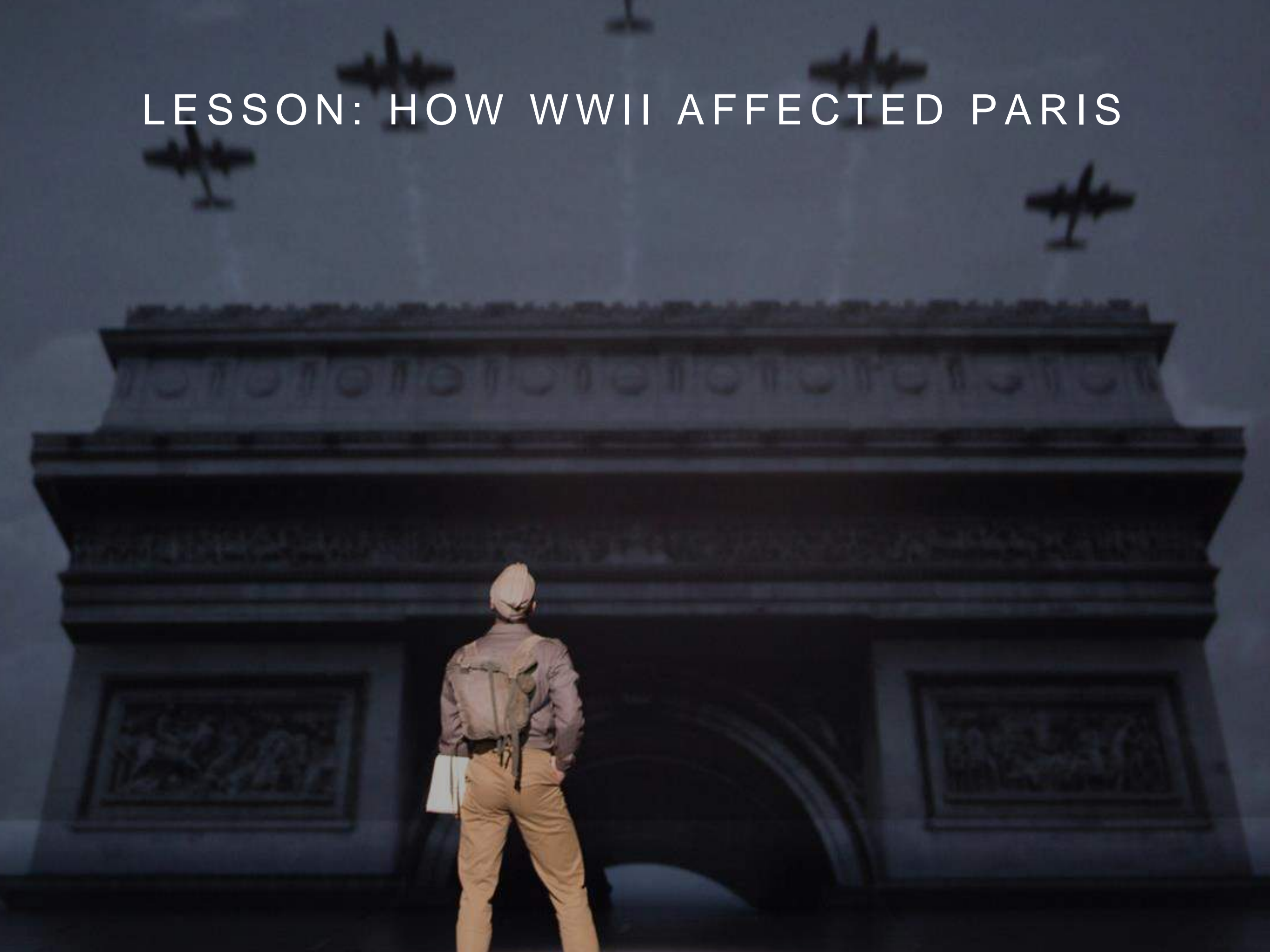




AN AMERICAN IN PARIS  
HISTORY



# LESSON: HOW WWII AFFECTED PARIS





# LESSON: WWII PARIS

**Objective:** Students will understand how Paris was affected by WWII and the Nazi occupation. Students also will focus on how the Broadway show, set on the day of the liberation of Paris, explores how this historical moment changes the attitude and atmosphere of the city and its people.

## **Procedures:**

1. Have students research the Internet for first person accounts of the history of the Liberation of Paris in August of 1944. This research should focus on five primary groups: the typical French citizen; the Allied soldier; the fleeing German soldiers; the French Resistance fighter, known as the *Maquis*, and those French citizens who cooperated and even collaborated with the Nazi occupiers.
2. Using at least 4-5 of those sources, write an analytic essay of 4-5 paragraphs on the impact of the Liberation on life in Paris.
3. In *An American in Paris*, we get a special focus on two of the groups mentioned above. On the one hand we learn how the Baurel family, who seemed to be indifferent to the presence of the Germans in Paris, actually were helping the *Maquis* at great personal risk. In the opening montage, we see the crowd on Liberation Day attacking a woman who was a Nazi collaborator. They make her wear a Nazi armband; in real life, many such female collaborators had their heads shaved and were imprisoned and even killed.
4. Further research the lives of *maquis* fighters and collaborators during the war. Then, as a creative writing assignment, write a diary entry using the voice of a member of either group dated August 26, 1944, the day of the Liberation.
5. Have students share out their diary entries with the class.

**Materials:** Access to the Internet for research

**Assessment:** The document-based question essay in Step 2 and the creative writing diary entry in Step 4.

**CCSS Standards Addressed:** RI.9-10.2, RI.9.10.6, W.9-10.2, W.9-10.3, W.9-10.7, W.9-10.8, SL.9-10.4



# LESSON: THE EFFECTS OF WAR

**Objective:** Students will understand how many of the soldiers who survived the Second World War faced great difficulty in adjusting to civilian life because of what they had witnessed in combat. This condition, originally referred to in the First World War as “shell shock” and known today as PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder), clearly affects Jerry and Adam, two men whom we gather have seen the war at its worst. But in AAIP, we also see the psychological toll the war takes on civilians, people such as Lise and the Baurels, whose worlds were also turned upside down by the war.

## **Procedures:**

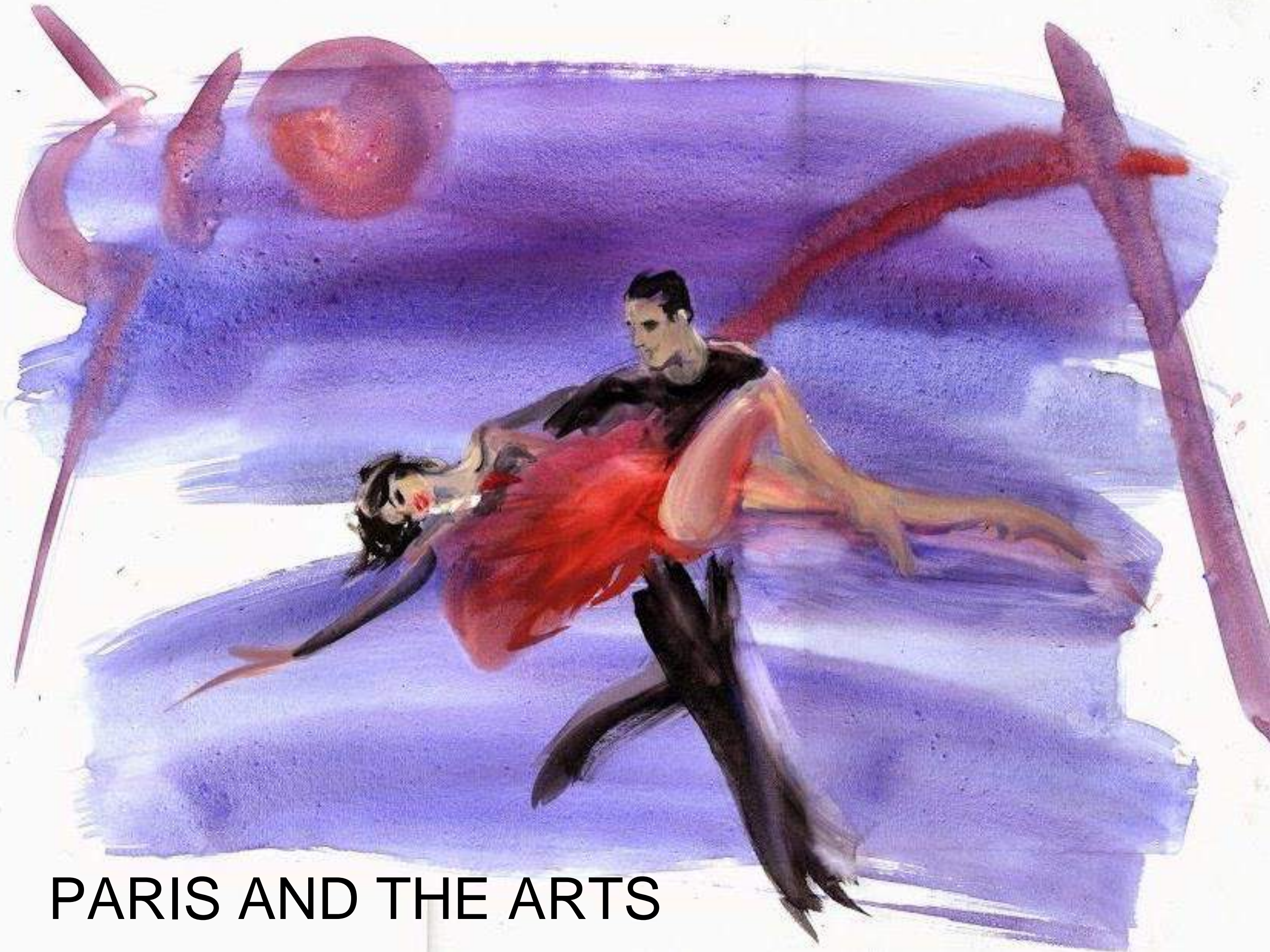
1. Have students watch John Huston’s famous documentary *Let There Be Light* about the psychological hardships faced by American survivors of combat in World War II. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uiD6bnqpJDE>). This film was banned from screening by the US government for nearly six decades.
2. Now have students watch Jayke Townsend’s brief documentary on PTSD on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=StJS-vQ6ByE>) where he describes the psychological toll of combat on US soldiers returning from Afghanistan and Iraq.
3. Have the students turn and talk with a partner and discuss how the two pieces were similar and different.
4. Then, have the students look up blog posts from soldiers in combat in Iraq and Afghanistan. Now, have students look up some of the personal descriptions of life after wartime by the soldiers returning home from World War II. A good place to start for this is the New York Times’ *At War* blog, which may be found at [atwar.blogsnytimes.com](http://atwar.blogsnytimes.com).
5. In addition or as an alternative, have students interview family or community members who are combat veterans.
6. As a class, discuss the following two ideas. First, talk about how the experience of the common soldier is similar regardless of the period or the particular war. Next, discuss how today’s soldiers returning from Afghanistan and Iraq have a different experience from soldiers like Jerry and Adam in the show, because as a result of the draft, a much larger percentage of Americans from all walks of life were involved in fighting World War II.
7. Have students research what kind of assistance is being offered to our soldiers today who suffer from PTSD, and where that support may be falling short.
8. As a final piece, write an editorial that lays out the problems faced by returning soldiers today and suggests some solutions for how to best help them.

**Materials:** Access to the Internet for research and the Times’ “At War” blog, access to YouTube for the clips

**Assessment:** The seminar discussion in Step 6 and the editorial created by the students in Step 8

**CCSS Standards Addressed:** RL.9-10.7, RI.9-10.1, RI.9-10.3, RI.9-10.6, RI.9-10.7, W.9-10.1, W.9-10.6, W.9-10.7, SL.9-10.2, SL.9-10.4





PARIS AND THE ARTS



# LESSON: PARIS AND THE ARTS

**Objective:** In the show, Jerry chooses to remain in Paris while the vast majority of American soldiers simply returned home. He chooses to remain because of his love for Lise and his friendship with Adam and Henri, but his desire to pursue his dream of becoming an artist also influences this choice. In the show, we first meet Jerry right after he sees Lise and he begins to sketch her. We see his art evolve from sketching Lise to depicting Parisian life. The audience sees the final evolution of his art in the AAIP ballet at the end of the show. Jerry grows as an artist with the help of Milo and her influential friends, and clearly the power of Lise's inspiration enables him to find his voice as an artist. But what about Paris itself? What is it about the "City of Light" that has drawn artists from all over the world for decades and even centuries? In this lesson students will look at some of the greatest paintings ever made of Paris and come to understand its attraction for Jerry and so many others like him.

## **Procedures:**

1. Have the students research one of the paintings listed below. They may also research what critics have said about their chosen painting throughout the years.
2. Put students in pairs. Have each pair create a PowerPoint presentation about the painting. The presentation should include a brief biographical sketch, some other examples of the painter's greatest work (which needs not be explicitly about Paris), what critics have said about the painting selected, and their analysis of the painting itself. Have the students give their presentation to the class.
3. Have each student create a journal entry using the "voice" of the artist who painted their selected painting. In their journal entry, they should describe what they (as the artist) were trying to capture, and what impact the physical beauty of Paris had on their work.

**Materials:** Access to the Internet to research the paintings and their artists

**Assessment:** A rubric for the PowerPoint presentation in Step 2 and one for the journal entry in Step 3

**CCSS Standards:** RI.9-10.7, W.9-10.2, W.9-10.6, W.9-10.7, W.9-10.8, SL.9-10.2, SL.9-10.4

# TEN PAINTINGS OF PARIS

Claude Monet – “Rue St. Denis in Paris, Celebration of 30 June 1878” (1878)

Pierre-Auguste Renoir – “Bal du Moulin de la Galette” (1876)

Camille Pissarro – “Rue Saint-Honoré, Effect of Rain” (1897)

Edgar Degas - “Dance Class at the Opera” (1872)

Vincent van Gogh – “View of Roofs and Backs of Houses” (1886)

Georges Seurat – “A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte” (1884)

Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec – “At the Moulin Rouge”

Pablo Picasso – “Notre-Dame” (1954)

Pierre Bonnard – “Morning in Paris” (1911)

Bernard Buffet – “Ile de la Cité” (1988)



# THE ARTS IN PARIS IN THE 1940s

# LESSON: THE ARTS IN PARIS

**Objectives:** Paris in the late 1940s, and to a lesser extent during the years of the Occupation, was a focal point not only for painters but for writers, intellectuals, and other artists looking for inspiration. During this time, Paris became home to the intellectual movement known as existentialism, which was popularized by Jean-Paul Sartre on the philosophical side and Albert Camus on the literary side. Simone de Beauvoir, whose book *The Second Sex* is a foundational text of modern feminism, was part of this intellectual scene as well. While many filmmakers and artists fled Paris when the Germans invaded, musicians like Edith Piaf and Maurice Chevalier and filmmakers like Marcel Carne continued their work in the City of Light. In this exercise, students will learn about some of the major figures in the artistic and intellectual life of Paris in the 1940s

## **Procedures:**

1. Have students research one of the figures listed below, focusing on their lives and work in the 1940s.
2. Using the voice of their subject, have students write a one to two-page essay talking about their life and work in the 1940s. How did that period, and the Occupation and its aftermath in particular, impact his or her career? How were their lives impacted by the tremendous changes happening among their artistic and intellectual colleagues during this period?
3. Put students in pairs, making sure that they are working with someone who wrote about a different figure than they did. Using the voices of their subjects, have them create a dialogue where the two historical figures discuss the intellectual and artistic life they shared in Paris during and after the war.
4. Have students perform their scenes for the class.

**Materials:** Access to the Internet to research the artists and writers of the period

**Assessment:** A rubric for the essay in Step 2 and one for the dialogue presentations in Step 4

**CCSS Standards:** RI.9-10.7, W.9-10.2, W.9-10.6, W.9-10.7, W.9-10.8, SL.9-10.2, SL.9-10.4



# SUGGESTED RESEARCH SUBJECTS FOR THE INTELLECTUAL AND ARTISTIC LIFE OF 1940s PARIS

Albert Camus (writer and philosopher)

Jean-Paul Sartre (writer and philosopher)

Simone Weil (writer and philosopher)

Simone de Beauvoir (writer and philosopher)

Edith Piaf (singer)

Maurice Chevalier (singer/music hall entertainer)

Marcel Carne (filmmaker)

Henri-Georges Clouzot (filmmaker)

Gertrude Stein (writer and salon hostess)

Jean Anouilh (playwright)

Colette (novelist)

Andre Gide (novelist and critic)

Jean Cocteau (filmmaker/writer/artist)

HISTORY  
THE  
BROTHERS  
GERSHWIN





# WORDS AND MUSIC:

# THE LEGACY OF GEORGE AND IRA GERSHWIN

**Objective:** Students will explore the work of brothers George and Ira Gershwin, one of the most celebrated songwriting duos in history, as well as how their work affects the storytelling of AAIP.

**Background:** The Gershwins are the lyricists and composers of all of the music in AAIP, and their songs have been used in over a dozen Broadway shows. As a composer, George's first hit was 1919's "Swanee", for which he wrote the music. In collaboration with his brother, George wrote several successful Broadway shows and, later on, movie musicals. George and Ira's first show together was 1924's *Lady Be Good*; several years later, they won a Pulitzer Prize for 1931's *Of Thee I Sing*. During this period, George also found his greatest success as a classical composer, creating such masterpieces as *Rhapsody in Blue*, the *Concerto in F*, the three brief *Piano Preludes* and, of course, the evocative program music of *An American in Paris*. Many critics believe that the high point of the Gershwins' work was their one full-length opera, the ambitious and brilliant *Porgy and Bess* from 1935. Two years after *Porgy*, at the age of 38, George died suddenly from a brain hemorrhage, leaving a legacy unequaled in the history of American music. Ira continued working as a lyricist for some of Broadway and Hollywood's greatest composers; he died in 1983 at the age of 86.

The creators of AAIP were allowed to look through the entire Gershwin catalog to find music that best fit the story adapted from the 1951 film. This long and exacting process resulted in a mixed selection that includes some of Ira's most famous lyrics in songs like "I Got Rhythm," "They Can't Take That Away from Me," and "S Wonderful," as well as George's orchestral compilations like the *American in Paris* ballet, the *Second Rhapsody* and the *Cuban Overture*.

# LESSON: THE BROTHERS GERSHWIN

## Procedures:

1. Have students listen to a recording of Ravel's *La Valse* and Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*.
2. Have students create a T-chart with Ravel on the left and Gershwin on the right, and have them jot down their thoughts as they listen to each piece.
3. Have the students turn and talk with a partner and discuss how the two pieces were different.
4. With the class, discuss how Gershwin created truly American classical music by adding elements of popular American songs as well as jazz to the traditional orchestral piece.
5. As a creative assignment, have students listen to Gershwin's *Second Piano Prelude*, a piece which is prominently featured in AAIP. Have them jot down the images that the pieces inspires in their minds. Then have them share out their thoughts with the class in any creative way they see fit; they may draw a picture, write a short story or poem, or even present something using dance or movement.
6. Now, let's examine Ira's work as a lyricist. Have students look up the lyrics to three of Ira's greatest lyrics: "Embraceable You", "Someone to Watch Over Me", "The Man I Love" and "They Can't Take That Away from Me."
7. Have students, with a partner, discuss how Ira uses literary elements like tone, mood, rhyme and different kinds of repetition to emphasize the power of love in these songs.
8. Have students write a brief constructed response describing Ira's views on love and how he uses literary elements to bring those points across to the reader/listener.

**Materials:** Access to the Internet for research, recordings of the Gershwins' music as listed above

**Assessment:** The T-chart in Step 2, the seminar discussion in Step 4, the creative piece in Step 5 and the essay in Step 8

**CCSS Standards Addressed:** RL.9-10.1, RL.9-10.6, RL.9-10.7, W.9-10.1, W.9-10.3, W.9-10.8, SL.9-10.1, SL.9-10.4, SL.9-10.6



HISTORY

# AAIP AND DANCE ON BROADWAY







**Objective:** Students will learn how AAIP uses dance and ballet as a unifying storytelling device. When people think about musical theatre, they often consider three main elements: **singing, acting, and dancing**. The origins of modern musical theatre go back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Since the inception of “the musical,” shows have evolved even though you can still see some of the fundamentals of Gilbert and Sullivan’s hugely successful operettas of the late 1800s in contemporary Broadway shows and on stages all over the world today. *An American in Paris* utilizes all three elements in very special ways, but perhaps the most notable aspect of the show is the classical ballet that appears onstage. Throughout the show, dance serves as a way to communicate emotions as well as to advance the plot and to move sets on and off the stage. Due to the show’s very physical nature, the casting process had to include highly trained ballet dancers.

As a result of the brilliant choreography by Christopher Wheeldon and the extraordinary precision and dedication of the cast, AAIP won the 2015 Tony Award® for Best Choreography.

According to the review in the *Wall Street Journal*, “*An American in Paris*, a new theatrical version of Gene Kelly’s Gershwin-themed 1951 screen musical, instantly catapults Mr. Wheeldon into the ranks of top-tier director-choreographers, by which I mean Robbins and Bob Fosse.”



# LESSON: AAIP AND DANCE ON BROADWAY

## Procedures:

1. Have students watch the video spotlighting AAIP's choreographer Christopher Wheeldon at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gXvX9ebyHwc>
2. Have the students create a table with room for five names and descriptions. Have them entitle the chart "A Brief History of Dance on Broadway." Have them put Christopher Wheeldon in the bottom box, and describe how Wheeldon uses a style imported directly from ballet to help tell the story and build the characters from AAIP.
3. Now, show them the YouTube clip featuring Agnes de Mille, one of America's greatest choreographers of the 1940s and 1950s. Have them fill out the top box of the chart with their observations of de Mille's work. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iV35nQUZdk4>
4. Next, show them the YouTube clip featuring Jerome Robbins, one of America's greatest choreographers of the 1950s and 1960s. Have them fill out the second row of the chart with their observations of Robbins' work. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bxoC5Oyf\\_ss](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bxoC5Oyf_ss)
5. Next, show them the YouTube clip featuring Bob Fosse, one of America's greatest choreographers of the 1960s and 1970s. Have them fill out the third row of the chart with their observations of Fosse's work. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7uIPkwCYxKU>
6. Then, show them the YouTube clip featuring Susan Stroman, one of America's greatest choreographers of the new century. Have them fill out the fourth row of the chart with their observations of Stroman's work. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cttf\\_IN5jkQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cttf_IN5jkQ)
7. Now that students have a complete chart, have them turn and talk to a partner, and discuss which of the choreographers he or she enjoyed most, and why. Then have them share out their answers in a class discussion, focusing on the different styles of these artists.
8. Have students write a response to the following prompt: How does Christopher Wheeldon's choreography for AAIP both honor the traditions of dance on Broadway while also changing those traditions in a revolutionary way?

**Materials:** Access to the Internet for YouTube videos and a blank chart for recording notes on the videos

**Assessment:** The chart as completed in Step 6 and the written response to the prompt in Step 8

**CCSS Standards Addressed:** RL.9-10.7, W.9-10.1, W.9-10.2, W.9-10.8, SL.9-10.1, SL.9-10.2, SL.9-10.4

# A BRIEF HISTORY OF DANCE ON BROADWAY THROUGH FIVE CHOREOGRAPHERS

Name	Signature elements of their choreography
Agnes de Mille	
Jerome Robbins	
Bob Fosse	
Susan Stroman	
Christopher Wheeldon	



HISTORY

# FASHION IN THE 40s



**Objective:** Students will learn about the popular fashion styles in the 1940s. This exercise will place a specific emphasis on wartime, and how certain fabrics were rationed or banned altogether and how this changed the face of fashion for the foreseeable future. There will be photos of sketches as well as stills of AAIP costumes with references to how they represent the fashion of that time period.

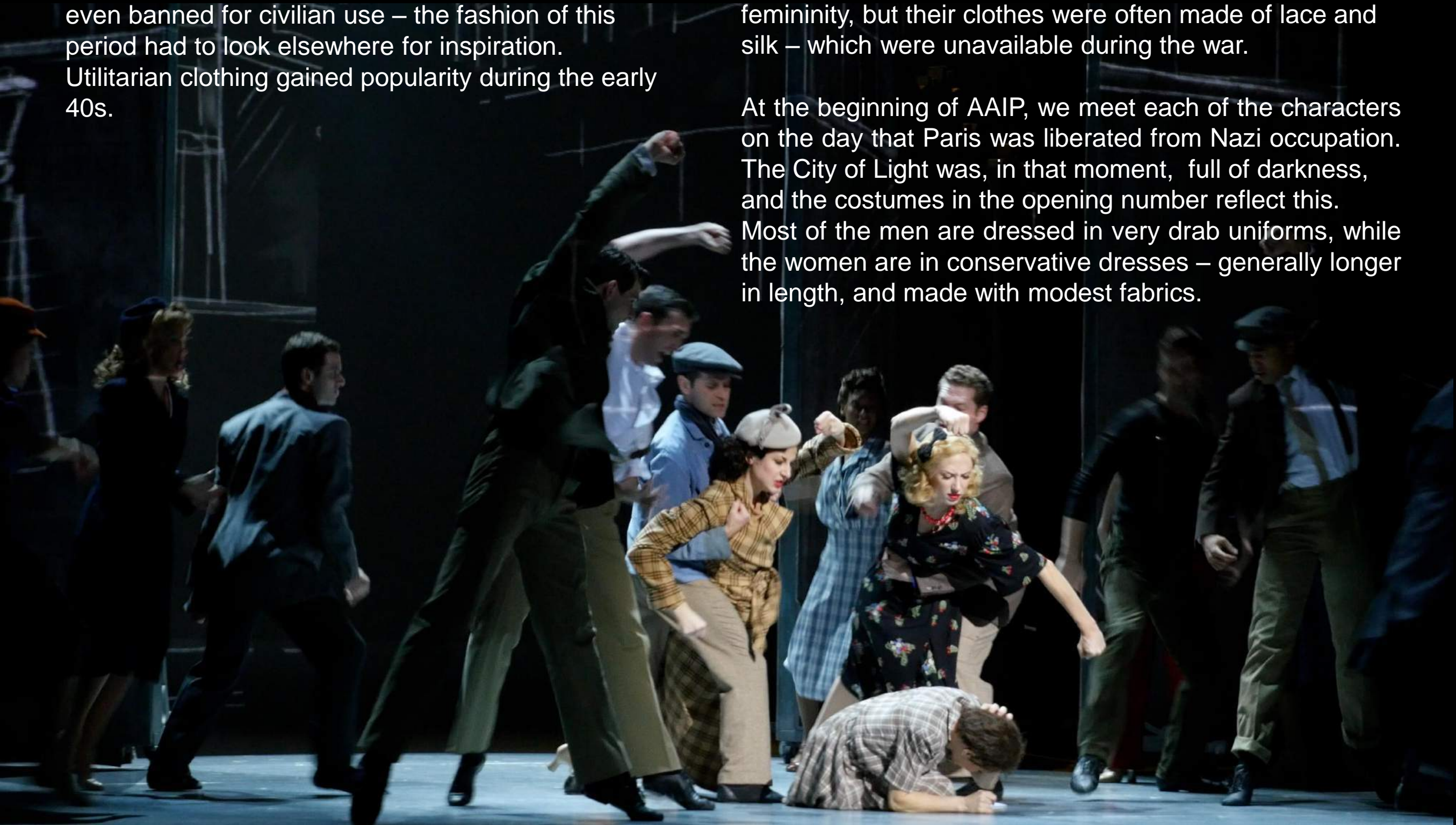




**Background:** The 1940s were a time of great change. World War II had grave affects on every aspect of life, including fashion. French designers had an extremely heavy hand in influencing American designers and fashion before WWII. Women looked to the iconic “City of Light” for the latest trends in both style and fabric. Because the war brought restrictions on fabrics – some were even banned for civilian use – the fashion of this period had to look elsewhere for inspiration. Utilitarian clothing gained popularity during the early 40s.

Women began wearing slacks and jackets with padded shoulders. Anything that was extravagant was cast aside as frivolous, and fashion became more centered around functionality. Women in the United States were required to work while thousands of men were enlisted to fight overseas. As in the United States, fabrics were rationed in Paris during the war. French women’s fashion had long been known for its extreme femininity, but their clothes were often made of lace and silk – which were unavailable during the war.

At the beginning of AAI, we meet each of the characters on the day that Paris was liberated from Nazi occupation. The City of Light was, in that moment, full of darkness, and the costumes in the opening number reflect this. Most of the men are dressed in very drab uniforms, while the women are in conservative dresses – generally longer in length, and made with modest fabrics.



Fashion after WWII changed quite a bit in both Paris and the United States. In 1947, Christian Dior debuted The “New Look.” This was extremely different from the fashion seen during the war. It was notable for marking the return of femininity to fashion. Some of the most distinguishable things about the line were: exaggerated bust lines, drop waists, padded hips, and long/full skirts. Most of the characters in AAIP come from very humble backgrounds. They tend to wear simple cotton dresses with side zippers – something that was very popular in the 1940s. There is one character, however, who represents this feminine “New Look.” Milo Davenport is an American heiress who longs to make a name for herself in Paris. She has the money and resources to buy dresses made of bold silk fabrics, trousers, turbans, and fabulous lace frocks.







Milo Davenport may be the most fashionable character in AIP. Here's a glimpse at some of her lavish costumes designed by Bob Crowley.

Learn more about Milo's character and look <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G8LAo7rKWi8>



# LESSON: FASHION

## Procedures:

1. Have the class learn more about fashion and costumes by watching the video at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3yfUus\\_48KY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3yfUus_48KY)
2. Have the class research some of the materials used by fashion houses both during and after the war. Students should be familiar with materials like lace, silk and the more utilitarian fabrics of the early 1940s. If possible, have students bring in examples of as many of the fabric types as they can to demonstrate to the class.
3. Have the class, in partner groups, make a collage of magazine cutouts that represent the utilitarian look of fashion in the 1940s during WWII. As a follow-up, have students create a collage of contemporary fashion looks that resemble the utilitarian look of the World War II era.
4. Research the work of Christian Dior in the postwar period, focusing especially on the historic unveiling of the revolutionary “New Look” in 1947. Examine why the style was such a revolution in its day; focus as well on how the New Look was received when it was unveiled nearly seven decades ago.
5. As a follow up, students should complete one of the following three activities:
  - Draw copies of some of your favorite pieces from Dior’s “New Look” collection
  - Make a second collage of looks that fit more into the fashion influence of Christian Dior’s “New Look” of 1947
  - Imagine that you are a fashion reporter in 1947 and write a review of Dior’s “New Look”

**Materials:** Use of the Internet for research, materials for the collages, drawing materials for fashion sketches, examples of fabrics used in fashion in the 1940s

**Assessment:** Rubric for the collages in Step 3 and for the projects in Step 5

**CCSS Standards:** RI.9-10.7, W.9-10.2, W.9-10.7, W.9-10.8, SL.9-10.1, SL.9-10.2



HISTORY  
POP CULTURE  
IN THE 1940s



# POP CULTURE IN THE 1940s: AN OVERVIEW

**Objective:** Students will learn what popular culture was like in the 1940s, focusing in particular on film, literature, and music. They will also gain an understanding of how the popular culture of the day influenced the characters and setting of AAIP.

## Background:

### FILM

- ♣ Memorable American films of the 1940s included *Casablanca*, *The Grapes of Wrath*, *It's a Wonderful Life*, *Citizen Kane*, *The Maltese Falcon*, *The Big Sleep*, *Red River*, *Notorious*, *Gaslight*, *Sullivan's Travels*, *Gentlemen's Agreement*, and *The Best Years of Our Lives*.
- ♣ One particular style of filmmaking, dark both in terms of its look and subject matter, gained prominence in Hollywood as the war was coming to an end. This style was known as *film noir*; among the best examples of noir are Billy Wilder's *Double Indemnity*, Otto Preminger's *Laura*, and Fritz Lang's *Scarlet Street*, all from 1944.
- ♣ The Disney Studio came to prominence in the 1940s, producing some of its greatest masterpieces, including *Pinocchio*, *Dumbo*, *Bambi*, and the groundbreaking *Fantasia*.
- ♣ It should also be noted that among the many directors who got their start in the 1940s in Hollywood was Vincente Minnelli, who directed such great musicals as *Cabin in the Sky* and *Meet Me in St. Louis*. Minnelli would go on to direct the original film of *An American in Paris* in 1951, which would become the basis of this Broadway musical.
- ♣ European film was dominated by two distinct styles. In England, directors like Michael Powell, David Lean, and Carol Reed created beautifully produced and handsomely crafted productions like *The Red Shoes*, *Oliver Twist*, and *The Third Man*. Meanwhile in Italy, a group of young directors, led by Roberto Rossellini and Vittorio De Sica, took their cameras into the rubble-strewn streets of Rome and told real stories of real people in films like *Rome: Open City* and *Bicycle Thieves*. This hugely influential movement was known as Italian neo-realism.
- ♣ In postwar France, two films stand out. One is Marcel Carne's epic theatre story *Children of Paradise*, which was largely filmed in secret during the Occupation. The other is Jean Cocteau's magic realist take on the old story of *Beauty and the Beast* from 1946.



## LITERATURE

- ♣ Some of the greatest American and European novelists created some of their most important work in the 1940s. Among the great novels of the era were Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Camus' *The Stranger*, Rand's *The Fountainhead*, Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, Richard Wright's *Native Son*, and John Steinbeck's *Cannery Row* and *The Pearl*.
- ♣ Two of the greatest playwrights in American history exploded onto the scene during the period immediately following the war. These were Arthur Miller, whose work of the period included *All My Sons* and *Death of a Salesman*, and Tennessee Williams, whose plays of the 1940s included *The Glass Menagerie* and *A Streetcar Named Desire*.
- ♣ As mentioned earlier, the most important intellectual movement outside the United States in the years immediately following the war was French existentialism, as expressed by writers like Jean-Paul Sartre, Albert Camus, and many others. A fascinating and brief summation of the ideas of existentialism may be found in two short pieces: Sartre's "Existentialism is a Humanism" and Camus' "The Myth of Sisyphus." (It should be noted that in AAIP, Milo mentions both Sartre and Camus in her song "Shall We Dance?").

## MUSIC

- ♣ Popular music was dominated by the big bands led by musicians like Glenn Miller, the Dorsey Brothers, Count Basie, Duke Ellington, Cab Calloway, Artie Shaw, and Louis Jordan. The style of music these bands and others like them played was often referred to as Swing.
- ♣ Among the most popular vocalists who sang with the big bands were legends like Frank Sinatra, Ella Fitzgerald, Billie Holiday, Bing Crosby, Louis Armstrong, Nat King Cole, and the most popular American singer of the 1940s, the "crooner" Bing Crosby.
- ♣ Several things that occurred in the 1940s set the stage for the explosion of rock and roll in the 1950s. This included the construction in 1941 of the first solid body electric guitar. Musically, both Louis Jordan's "jumping jive" and Bob Willis' western swing music were pointing in new directions. Most importantly, the arrival with the Great Migration of blues from the South to cities like Chicago and Detroit in the North paved the way for the evolution of what would become rock.
- ♣ Artists like trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie and saxophonist Charlie Parker were pushing jazz into new and unexplored areas of improvisational brilliance with the movement known as "be-bop."

# LESSON: POP CULTURE IN THE 1940s

## Procedures:

1. As an outside reading task, or perhaps in class as a workshop-style unit, have students read one of the novels or plays listed above.
2. Have them write an essay that focuses on the theme of the book that they found most interesting and/or most relevant to their lives and experiences.
3. Watch any of the great *film noir* movies of the mid-to-late 1940s.
4. Have students write a review of the film and discuss the overall darkness of the work. Among the questions to address is: Why did such a dark vision in film become so popular at a time when postwar America was flush with victory and prosperity?
5. Have students listen to some of the music listed above.
6. Have them write a piece responding to the music that focuses on any influences they can find from music in the 1940s on the music that their parents listen to and the music that they listen to as well.

**Materials:** Several copies each of the novels and plays mentioned above; DVD copies of examples of film noir from the 1940s; recordings of some of the music of the era

**Assessment:** The essay in Step 2; the review in Step 4 and the response piece in Step 6

**CCSS Standards:** RL.9-10.1, RL.9-10.2, RL.9-10.5, W.9-10.1, W.9-10.2, W.9-10.4, W.9-10.7, W.9-10.8



# LESSON: SPOTLIGHT ON RADIO

**Objective:** In the 1940s, television was still in its infancy. The television networks we know today were just starting out, and until the end of the decade, relatively few American households had a television set. As it had been for the previous three decades, the primary medium of popular culture was radio. Although it may be hard to imagine for a generation raised on watching screens, the radio was a central feature of life in the 1940s. Families would gather around the radio every night and listen to their favorite shows: comedies, dramas, adventure tales, horror and science fiction and many other genres were featured as weekly series. The radio was also a critical source of information, as Americans would listen to news and interview programs, reports from the battlefields of the war and even the famous “fireside chats” given weekly by President Franklin Roosevelt. To truly understand popular culture of the 1940s, one must truly appreciate the experience of listening as opposed to watching.

## **Procedures:**

1. Listen to a recording of one of FDR’s “fireside chats.”
2. Have students write a piece comparing that experience to watching a political speech today. How are the experiences different? How are they the same? Why might it be argued that radio was actually a more powerful medium for communication than images and sound together?
3. Now let’s take what is perhaps the most famous example of the power of radio. To begin, have students read Chapters 1-5 of H.G. Wells’ classic sci-fi novel *The War of the Worlds*. (Available for free at [http://www.planetpublish.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/The\\_War\\_of\\_the\\_Worlds\\_NT.pdf](http://www.planetpublish.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/The_War_of_the_Worlds_NT.pdf))
4. Now listen to the famous broadcast of the novel by Orson Welles and the Mercury Theater on the Air from October 30, 1938. (Available for free at [http://www.openculture.com/2007/07/the\\_war\\_of\\_the\\_worlds\\_on\\_podcast\\_how\\_hg\\_wells\\_and\\_orson\\_welles\\_riveted\\_a\\_nation.html](http://www.openculture.com/2007/07/the_war_of_the_worlds_on_podcast_how_hg_wells_and_orson_welles_riveted_a_nation.html))
5. Have students, with a partner, research some of the accounts of people’s reactions to the Mercury’s presentation. What techniques did the Mercury use to make the story so persuasive.
6. Have students write a reflection piece on the differences between reading the story and listening to it.

**Materials:** Internet access for the recordings of the radio programs and to the Wells text

**Assessment:** The comparative writing piece in Step 2 and the reflection piece in Step 6

**CCSS Standards:** RL.9-10.2, RL.9-10.5, RL.9-10.7, RI.9-10.7, W.9-10.1, W.9-10.2, W.9-10.7

LANGUAGE ARTS

# THE LANGUAGE OF DANCE





# LESSON: THE LANGUAGE OF DANCE

**Objective:** Through the lens of the production of *An American in Paris*, students will learn how dance and movement can be used as vocabulary, by itself and/or in addition to spoken language, to communicate different themes and ideas. They will then explore the possibilities of dance as a means of storytelling. The exercise will reinforce the idea that dance can be used when words are not powerful enough. Students will understand that dance can command heightened focus and engagement to understand a message or a story, that it can keep an audience more engaged and attentive. Just as poetry is a form of art used to express ideas through words, dance is a form of art used to express ideas through movement.

## **Procedures:**

1. Show students a video recording of the *pas de deux*. Have them take notes about specific moments, movements, and connections between Lise and Jerry, and what they think those moments/movements mean. When the number is over, have a class discussion centering around their ideas on what the story the dance told was about. Have students say what emotions they felt were conveyed during the number.
2. Now, get students up and out of their seats. Write a list of emotions and actions on the board. Ask different students to show movements they think would communicate these feelings and actions. For example: If the word is “stay,” the student might choose to reach out as if he or she is grasping someone to keep the person from leaving. If the word is “anxious,” have the student demonstrate a movement he or she thinks would express this feeling without words.
3. After students complete this exercise, have them “hold a conversation” without using words. Begin by pairing students in groups of two. Make a strict no-talking rule. You can choose to give the students a topic of conversation, or let them choose their own topic. Encourage the students to use facial expressions, eye contact, and body movements to communicate. Encourage them to take turns “speaking” so that they may “listen” by watching and understanding what the other person is communicating.
4. Once they have had their conversations, conduct an open dialogue. Did the students understand each other? What were their conversations? What was difficult about the exercise? What helped during the exercise?
5. Allow students to recount and share times that they were able to understand someone or something else through movement. This may be a dance concert they attended, someone using ASL, animals or pets for example.
6. Discuss the question: “Why use dance as a language when we are able to speak?”

**Note:** Since this activity is focused almost entirely on kinesthetic learning, assessments and standards are not really applicable. If you choose to do so, you may assess the activity by having students write about the process of learning the basics of communicating through movement.

# SUPPLEMENTAL ACTIVITIES FOR DANCE AS LANGUAGE

1. Research dance concerts or ballets in your local area (a community theatre performance, a professional ballet production, SYTYCD live on tour, local universities' dance program showcases etc.) Suggest that students attend and write a brief report of the movement and storytelling for extra credit in class.
2. With the class, watch recordings of ballets and talk about how the choreographer and the dancers used movement to convey emotion and to tell a story.
3. Allow students to bring in examples from film where dance is used as a language and means of expressing emotion and communicating ideas.





AN AMERICAN IN PARIS

# BEHAVIORAL STUDIES

BEHAVIORAL STUDIES:



BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES OF THE CHARACTERS IN AAIP



# JERRY MULLIGAN



### **The Character:**

Jerry Mulligan is an American soldier who fought against the Nazis in WWII. After Paris is liberated from the Nazi occupation, he is expected to return home to the US. He is, however, extremely unsettled by the things that happened during the war, and wants to stay in Paris to pursue a career as an artist. He knows that if he returns home, he will be celebrated as a hero, but he feels a deep sadness about what he witnessed during the war and does not want to be commended for fighting. When the audience first meets Jerry, we see him sketching the very first moments of Paris being liberated. He is clearly delighted and happy while doing this. Shortly after the curtain rises, he runs into Lise and he is changed for the rest of the show. He loves her and actively pursues her, until he ultimately finds out that she is with Henri. While he is pursuing Lise, he meets Milo – a wealthy American heiress who is trying to make a name for herself among the Paris elite. She has a number of resources to help Jerry, and he begins seeing her. This becomes complicated for Jerry, because although Milo falls in love with him, his heart remains with Lise. Jerry is a deeply complicated and passionate character. He loves deeply, works incredibly hard, and is haunted by the demons of the war. Seeing him evolve throughout the show is one of the greatest joys of AAIP.

### **What We Learn from Him:**

You must pursue what you are most passionate about. Jerry was very shaken by his experiences in the war and did not wish to return to the United States. He was persistent and followed his passion for painting and for Lise, and he ended up making both of his dreams come true through hard work and love.

### **Video:**

Jerry Mulligan Character Sketch - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HvY3a9IUzM>

The Quest for Love - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VF6sAllw4dk>



# LISE DASSIN



**The Character:**

Lise is a Jewish young woman living in France during WWII. The Baurels took her in as their own and raised her in hiding in order to avoid the Nazi occupation. In doing this, she was given a home and a family, albeit not her own. At multiple points in the show, the audience is informed that the whereabouts and safety of Lise's parents are unknown. When the show begins, we see Lise step out into Paris for the first time as a free woman. It is on this day that she meets Jerry and falls in love for the first time. Lise has a strong sense of commitment to Henri and his parents because of all they did for her during the war. However, she does not love Henri the way she loves Jerry. We see her struggle to put herself first. She is able to express herself through dance, and when she imagines herself dancing in the final ballet with Jerry, the audience knows that this is where her heart truly lies.

**What We Learn from Her:**

It is important to have your own voice and express yourself. True love and following your heart is important.

**Video:**

Lise Dassin Character Sketch - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RUK6nVhs\\_3U](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RUK6nVhs_3U)



# HENRI BAUREL





### **The Character:**

Perhaps the most complicated of all the characters in *An American in Paris*, Henri faces a difficult choice. On the one hand, he can do what he knows to be right based on what his parents and culture have taught him, which for him is working for the very successful family textile business. The other, more risky option, would be to follow his true passion of performing. He has a strong sense of duty to his family and Lise, and is constantly striving to maintain their respect and happiness while ultimately sacrificing his own. At first, Jerry and Adam, while they are clearly fond of Henri, seem to view him as a soft and spoiled dilettante. However, they learn quickly that they have underestimated his inner strength and resources.

### **What We Learn from Him:**

You should always be true and honest to yourself. Follow your passion.

### **Video:**

Henri Character Sketch - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Eed16sE3Lc>



# MADAME BAUREL





**The Character:**

Madame Baurel is the toughest character in AAIP. She has lived through two wars, and they have greatly affected her. When we first meet her, we see her as a harsh, no-nonsense mother who has a very strong belief that one should do what they are told. As the show progresses, we learn that the Baurels hid Lise from the Nazis at great risk to themselves. For the first time, the audience is able to see this harsh character become humanized. We see her go through a distinct transformation into a supportive and understanding mother who shows compassion towards her son, who has struggled to share the truth with his parents.

**What We Learn from Her:**

It is important not to judge a book by its cover. Mme. Baurel is a very complicated woman because of all the turmoil she has witnessed. Ultimately, she recognizes Henri's struggle and the audience sees that she wants the best for her son.

**Video:**

Madame Baurel Character Sketch - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1I9InM\\_lzSw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1I9InM_lzSw)



# ADAM HOCHBERG



### **The Character:**

Adam Hochberg is in many ways the heartbeat of *An American in Paris*. He speaks the first and last lines of the show, and narrates throughout. Adam is an American soldier and composer who decides to stay in Paris after suffering an injury in WWII. Jerry, his fellow expatriate and artist, happens upon Adam at the Café Dutois. We see him forge friendships with Henri and Jerry, and soon our three leading men have become the “Three Musketeers.” Early in the show, Adam meets and falls in love with Lise. This love is what drives his character for the majority of the show. On the surface, Adam’s personality, aside from his interactions with Lise, is incredibly sarcastic. The audience is able to tell that the war deeply affects him. He wants to focus on his art, but is in a very dark place after experiencing the horrible years fighting in Europe. Milo, the beautiful and strong heiress making a name for herself in Paris, hears Adam’s music at the ballet auditions in Act I. She immediately commissions him to write the score for the ballet within the show. He is an extremely talented composer, but we see him struggle as he tries to find inspiration to finish the work before opening night. The turning point for Adam happens when he realizes that “love is more important than art.” Although he does not end up with Lise, during a very poignant moment at the end of the show, he addresses the audience and says that he got the girl by putting her in the music, where she belonged for him.

### **What We Learn from Him:**

True love is more important than art. There are moments in life where you have to open your eyes and be willing to accept heartbreak and pain as part of the human experience. Often, Adam uses sarcasm as a mechanism for dealing with pain, but he finally allows himself to be vulnerable when he lets Lise into his life. His reward for this is the inspiration he gets from Lise that enables him to finish the ballet score.

### **Video:**

Adam Hochberg Character Sketch - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TzohUNq033A>



# MILO DAVENPORT



**The Character:**

Milo begins as tough, confident young woman who knows what she wants and how to get it. Throughout the course of the show, however, she encounters a few unexpected obstacles, particularly when she meets Jerry. Milo uses her influence to help Jerry get a start in Paris as an artist. This gesture, though not completely fraudulent, is influenced by Milo's desire for Jerry's company. Although he warns her that he has a girlfriend, Jerry plays along in hopes that Milo will advance his career as an artist. What starts as a casual flirtation turns into Milo's genuine affection for Jerry. Though he pushes her away, she continues to support and encourage Jerry in his art. When Jerry reveals that he is through seeing Milo, she confesses that she never planned to fall in love with him. This point in the show serves as the ultimate judgment of Milo's character. She must decide how she will react and treat the people around her. With a grace and strength we haven't seen in her until this moment, Milo endures the heartbreak and continues to help Jerry and those around her. She even makes friends of Lise and Henri by reaching out to both of them to offer encouragement and support.

**What We Learn From Her:**

Milo teaches us that we must bring grace, strength and dignity to everything we do. We also learn from her that it is important to accept both triumph and heartbreak in stride. Most of all, Milo's growth as a character teaches us that the empathy required to put the needs of others above your own is one of the most important requirements for happiness in life.

**Video:**

Milo Davenport Character Sketch - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G8LAo7rKWi8>



# LESSON: BEHAVIORIAL STUDIES

**Objective:** Now that students have a deeper knowledge of the diverse group of men and women who are part of the *American in Paris* universe, they will apply some of the lessons learned from the characters to examine their own lives and their responses to the challenges they face.

## **Procedures:**

1. Having read the character bios and watched the accompanying videos, have the students write a journal entry that addresses the following questions: of all the characters in *An American in Paris*, which one is the most similar to you, and why? Which character is the most different from you, and why?
2. The characters in the show deal with the obstacles they face in many different ways. Based on what they have learned, have the class discuss the ways in which we deal with obstacles in life, and which of these methods are most effective in the short run and the long run.
3. Have students break into pairs, and focus on one of the important choices that one of the characters makes during the course of the show. Discuss whether or not you would have made the same choice as the character does, and why.
4. Have students create a journal entry based on this discussion.
5. In their pairs, have students complete the following assignment. Imagine that Facebook existed in the Paris of 1945. After reviewing the essential elements of a Facebook profile, have the pairs create a mock Facebook page for one of the characters in *An American in Paris*. An interesting variation might be to create a Facebook page for a modern version of the characters in the story: a struggling artist like Jerry, a man devastated by the horrors of war like Adam, a wealthy socialite like Milo, a young woman torn between different obligations like Lise, or a young heir struggling to forge an identity for himself like Henri.

**Materials:** Access to the Internet and to this study guide

**Assessments:** The journal entry in Step 1, the journal entry in Step 4, and the mock Facebook page in Step 5

**CCSS Standards:** RL.9-10.3, RL.9-10.6, W.9-10.3, W.9-10.7, SL.9-10.1

THE ARTS

# THE HEALING POWER OF ART





# BACKGROUND: THE HEALING POWER OF ART

Human beings may experience physical, mental or emotional pain causing wounds that may be difficult to heal.

Art gives the possibility of healing these wounds. Whether through music, dance, painting, design, photography, or another form of creativity, putting heart and soul into creating something beautiful allows for the possibility of healing. Art can be a way to escape problems as well as a coping mechanism. It can allow people to face painful past experiences, bring them to light, and overcome them.

Every primary character in *An American in Paris* takes this journey of creating art in the midst of struggle, confusion, and hurt. By the end of the show, each character uses art to elevate themselves to a higher place; a place of love, acceptance, and understanding. It positively impacts them, and those around them.

Take a look at how these characters used art to overcome adversity.



# USING ART TO HEAL: JERRY AND LISE

Jerry:

What he is healing from?

- ♣ Serving in the war
- ♣ Watching his friends and fellow soldiers die “why I had to catch my buddy’s brains in my lap is something I’ll never understand.”
- ♣ Reluctance to return home and be glorified for his actions “I don’t want to be a war hero.”
- ♣ Feels obligated to be with Milo despite not having feelings for her
- ♣ Has seen things that can’t be unseen

How does he use art to heal?

- ♣ Stays behind to let Paris (and love) inspire his art
- ♣ Paints and designs sets for the ballet
- ♣ Uses Lise’s dancing and Adam’s music for inspiration
- ♣ Falls in love with Lise by meeting to sketch her
- ♣ Ultimately finds his own voice through his relationship both with Lise, Milo and how they affect his art (Lise’s inspiration and Milo’s connections)

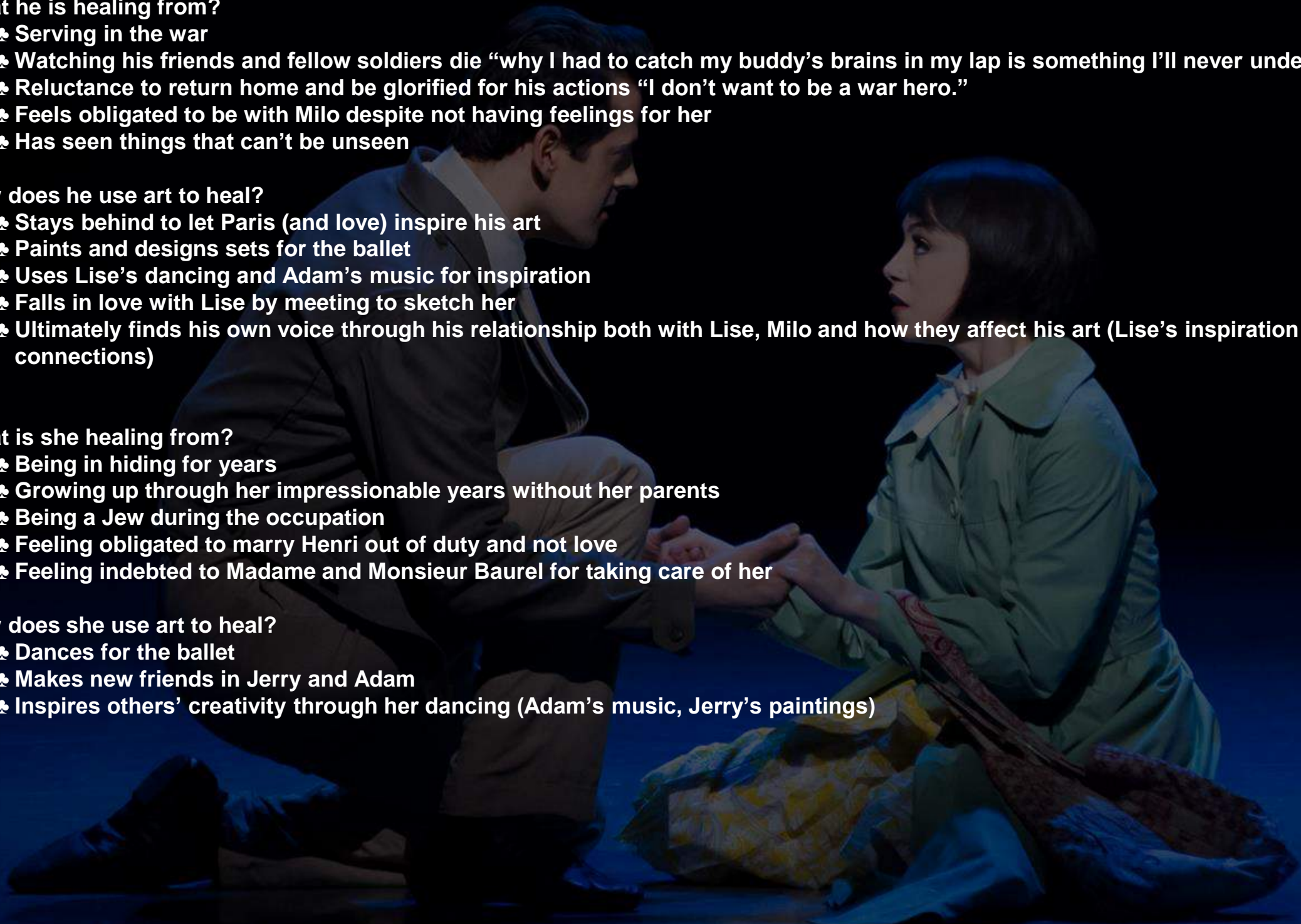
Lise:

What is she healing from?

- ♣ Being in hiding for years
- ♣ Growing up through her impressionable years without her parents
- ♣ Being a Jew during the occupation
- ♣ Feeling obligated to marry Henri out of duty and not love
- ♣ Feeling indebted to Madame and Monsieur Baurel for taking care of her

How does she use art to heal?

- ♣ Dances for the ballet
- ♣ Makes new friends in Jerry and Adam
- ♣ Inspires others’ creativity through her dancing (Adam’s music, Jerry’s paintings)





# USING ART TO HEAL: HENRI AND ADAM

Henri:

What is he healing from?

- ♣ Insecure/Unsure of his sexuality
- ♣ Not accepted by his parents for who he is
- ♣ Internal conflict of responsibility/duty vs. pursuing his passion and dreams
- ♣ Resistance from Lise – no real passion in their relationship

How does he use art to heal?

- ♣ Uses performance to express himself
- ♣ Finally pursues his passion
- ♣ Through performing and finding an honest version of himself, he ultimately realizes he must allow Lise to be free and make her own decisions
- ♣ He is at an honest place with his parents and finally accepted by them for who he is

Adam:

What is he healing from?

- ♣ Pain from war both physical and emotional – his injury/limp
- ♣ Jaded world view/cynical
- ♣ Unrequited love – his feelings for Lise are not mutual
- ♣ Watching his best friend fall in love with the woman he loves

How does he use art to heal?

- ♣ Puts Lise “in the music” so she is always with him
- ♣ Makes his music a celebration of life
- ♣ Achieves his dream of composing a ballet
- ♣ Makes friends of Jerry through their collaboration on the ballet



# USING ART TO HEAL: MILO

**Milo:**

**What is she healing from?**

- ♣ Having money but never being truly happy
- ♣ Not having found love
- ♣ Possible family issues
- ♣ Unrequited love – has feelings for Jerry that aren't reciprocated
- ♣ Jerry leaving her to be with Lise

**How does she use art to heal?**

- ♣ Funds the ballet
- ♣ Gives Jerry a start as a young and inexperienced artist/believes in him/fights for him
- ♣ Gives Lise a chance to be a star dancer
- ♣ Gives Adam a chance to compose the ballet
- ♣ Supports and encourages Jerry and influences his work despite him admitting that he doesn't love her – treats him with respect and is able to move on
- ♣ Makes a friend out of Henri through working with the Baurels on the ballet





# LESSON: USING ART TO HEAL

**Objective:** Sigmund Freud, the father of psychoanalysis, once suggested that the best way to deal with mental pain and anguish is through what he referred to as “sublimation.” In one way, sublimation is the process of taking this pain and transforming it via the creative process into art. Now that your students have an understanding of the very specific ways in which art can be used in a therapeutic way, they will come to learn more about art therapy and to apply the process to their own lives.

## **Procedures:**

1. Have students watch this YouTube video that introduces the ideas of art therapy. It may be found at:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BN2rTaFUlxs>
2. Have students create a journal entry in which they address the following questions: In your life, was there ever a time when you used art or creative expression to handle a situation, cope with a problem or alleviate pain? Did the results of your creativity surprise you?
3. Using available art supplies, have each student create a painting or drawing that expresses an emotion that they are feeling. It may be representational or abstract. The point is not the quality of the work produced, but the expression involved.
4. Have each student write a brief paragraph about the process of creation. What was going through their minds as they created their work?
5. If students are comfortable with the process, put up their paintings around the room and stage a gallery walk. Put up a blank piece of paper where students can write positive and constructive comments for each work.
6. As a concluding piece, have students think about the importance of art in schools. For various reasons, art programs are being reduced or even eliminated altogether in schools across the country. Have students write a “letter to the editor” making the argument for the importance of the arts in schools.

**Materials:** Internet access for the YouTube video, painting and drawing supplies

**Assessment:** Journal entry in Step 2, reflective process piece in Step 4, and letter to the editor in Step 6

**CCSS Standards:** W.9-10.1, W.9-10.3, W.9-10.8, SL.9-10.1

"Even in the  
darkness you  
could find beauty  
and hope"



THE PURPOSE  
AND FUNCTION  
OF ART



# LESSON: THE PURPOSE OF ART

**Objective:** One of the most interesting thematic elements of *An American in Paris* is the ongoing discussion about the function of art. Adam's view is that art should reflect the reality, however painful or brutal, that surrounds the artist. For Adam, art need not necessarily be beautiful or pleasant. Jerry, and to a lesser degree Henri, feel that art should uplift the spirit of both the artist and the viewer, and that art, by its very nature, should be beautiful. In the end, Adam comes to see the other point of view, and it is this realization that enables him to finish the music for the culminating ballet. In this exercise, students will explore the roots of Modernism in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. This movement, especially in the visual arts in music, was the first time that artists created art that was deliberately “ugly” and discordant. The public reaction was intense; Parisians rioted at the 1913 premiere of the ballet of Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*. That piece is now regarded as a classic, but the debate over whether art must be beautiful continued throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century and into our own.

## **Procedures:**

1. Have students research Modernist art and music. They should focus on art movements like cubism, fauvism, futurism, constructivism and surrealism. They might listen to music by Stravinsky, Schoenberg or Berg, or read the work of poets like T.S. Eliot, all of whom broke all of the rules of their respective art forms.
2. Have students then research the critical responses to these works when they were first presented. Do they agree or disagree with the critics of the day?
3. Divide the class into two and stage a debate on the following Resolved: Art does not have to be traditionally beautiful to be considered great. Students can use what they have researched as well as their own responses to conduct the debate.
4. Once the students have their ideas together, pair them up with someone from the opposite team and let them discuss the resolved for a few minutes.
5. Have students return to their own teams, and discuss what they learned about their own arguments and those of the other team.
6. Stage a full-class debate! If you want to be a judge and decide whose argument is more persuasive you may, but this is not a necessity.
7. When the debate is complete, have students write an argument essay expressing their final thoughts about the Resolved.

**Materials:** Internet access for research on Modernism and the contemporary critical response.

**Assessment:** Debate in Stage 6, essay in Stage 7

**CCSS Standards:** RL.9-10.5, RI.9-10.1, RI.9-10.8, W.9-10.1, W.9-10.4, W.9-10.7, W.9-10.8, SL.9-10.1, SL.9-10.4



LIFE SKILLS

# THE POWER OF LIVE THEATRE





# LESSON: THE POWER OF LIVE THEATRE

**Objective:** One of the main purposes of this study guide is to encourage students to experience live theatre. In this exercise, students will draw on their own experiences with live theatre to discuss the ways in which a live theatre experience differs from TV or movies, and will explore what they can take away from a live theatre experience.

## **Procedures:**

1. Have students write a journal entry in which they recount the first live theatrical performance they remember seeing. What stood out for them from that experience? What do they remember most to this day?
2. Then have them write an entry about what they have seen most recently, followed by the same set of questions. Have the class share out their answers; is there is an overlap? Do the same things stand out as memorable over time?
3. Lead a class discussion about the differences between seeing live theatre and seeing something on television or film. Have the students seen anything both at the theatre and on a screen? What were the differences between the two experiences?
4. As an optional assignment, and depending on availability, ask students to attend a live theatre performance and journal their experience. They may write about their feelings and thoughts before, during and after the show, and spotlight the most memorable moments in the performance.
5. Have students search the Internet to find reviews of recent theatrical performances. After discussing the elements that comprise a typical theatre review, have them write a review of the performance they saw.

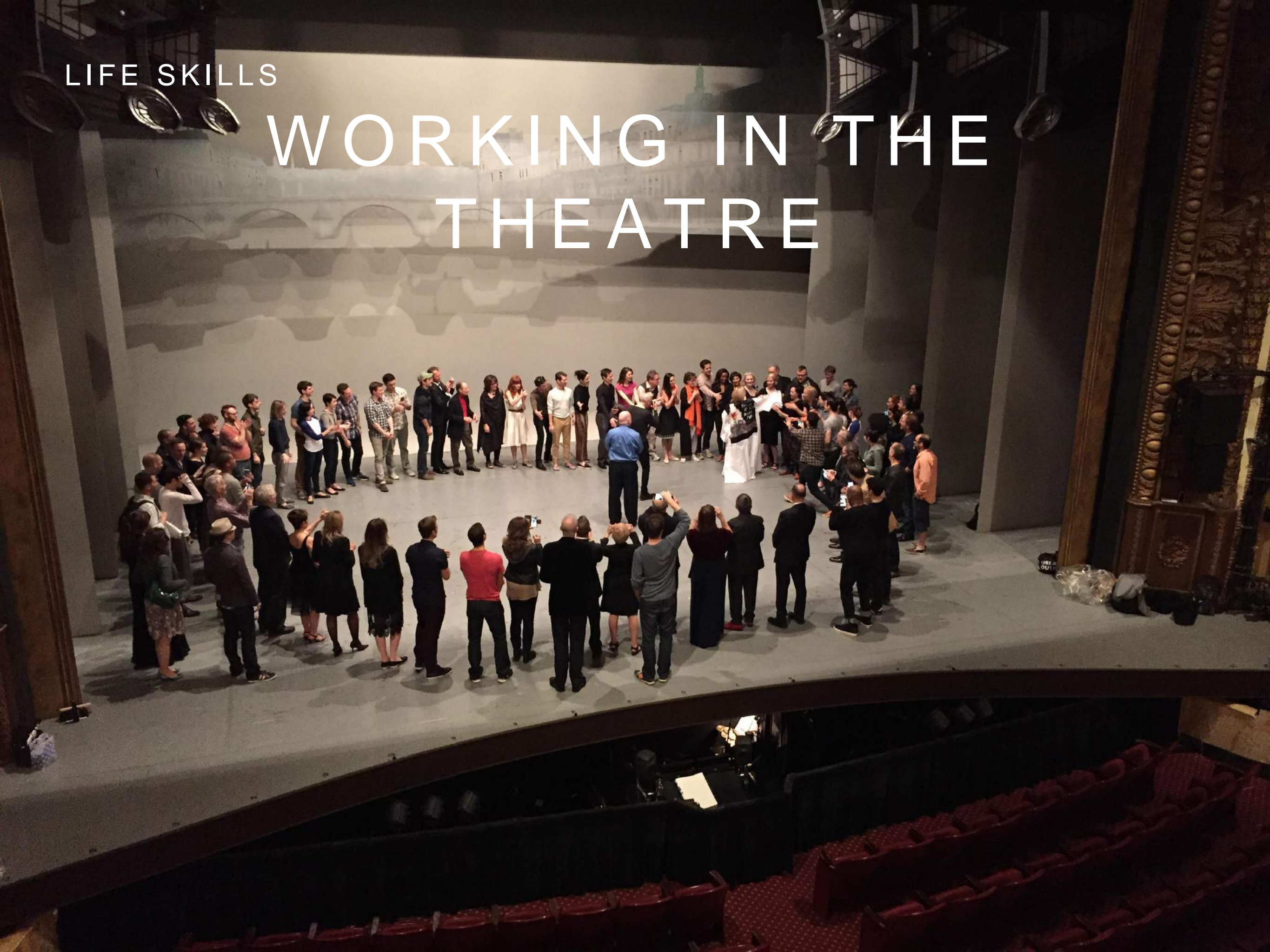
**Materials:** Internet access to research theatre reviews

**Assessments:** The journals in Steps 1, 2 and 4 and the review piece in Step 5

**CCSS Standards:** RI.9-10.6, RI.9-10.8, W.9-10.1, W.9-10.3, SL.9-10.1

LIFE SKILLS

# WORKING IN THE THEATRE





# “LET’S PUT ON A SHOW!”

**Background:** Who are the people behind the scenes who help bring a theatrical performance to life?

Producer(s), Writer(s), Investors, Director, Choreographer, Actors

Stagehands, Orchestra, Conductor, Lighting Technician, Costume Designer, Set Designer

Dressers, Hair and Makeup

Advertising/Marketing, Digital and Social Media, Press/Publicity

Company Management, Stage Management

Theatre Management/House Management, Ushers

Box Office/Ticket Sales/Group Sales



# LESSON: WORKING IN THE THEATRE

**Objective:** Students will come to understand the roles of the many people it takes to put on a Broadway show. Students will explore the different roles and what each entails. Students may also learn about the different career paths they may choose to pursue in the theater.

## **Procedures:**

1. Have students research the various roles listed on the previous slide. Discuss with the class the various expectations and requirements for each of these roles.
2. Ask students to choose a profession from the theatre industry and to write a hypothetical “day in the life” of their chosen profession. What does a day look like from beginning to end as a producer? Stagehand? Publicist? What are the tasks you are expected to carry out? What struggles do you encounter? What are your favorite parts of the job?
3. Now have the students imagine that the class is about to put on a Broadway show. The easiest way to do this would be to pretend that the class is putting on a musical version of a recent popular movie. Have the class agree on the musical they are to present. The students will not actually put on the show, of course. Instead, they will explore some of the steps necessary to get to “opening night.”
4. Encourage the students to assign roles to help with organizing the activity.
5. Imagine that it is a week before opening night. Have the class, in their roles, dialogue about what has to happen with their aspect of the show to make it work. What is each person excited about? What concerns and worries does each person have?
6. Pretend that you are an entertainment reporter. Interview various students about what happened during the process of constructing a “play” from the ground up.
7. Have students create a journal entry about what they have learned in this process about the challenges of mounting a Broadway musical.

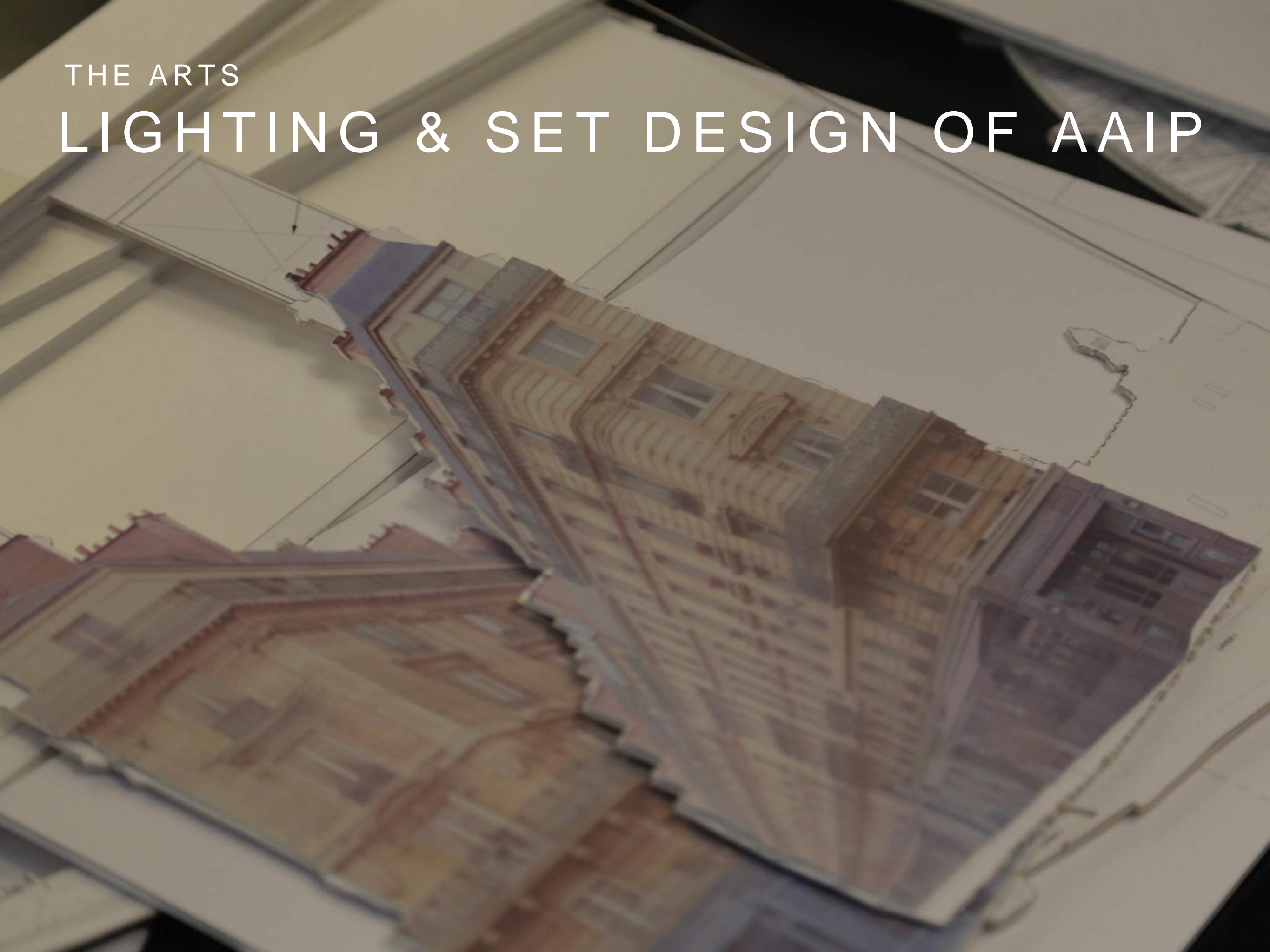
**Materials:** Internet access for research on the people behind the scenes, materials for advertising and promotion

**Assessments:** The “day in the life” essay in Step 2, the interviews in Step 6, and the journal entry in Step 7

**CCSS Standards:** W.9-10.2, W.9-10.3, W.9-10.7, SL.9-10.1, SL.9-10.4, SL.9-10.6



THE ARTS  
LIGHTING & SET DESIGN OF AAIP





# LESSON: LIGHTING & SET DESIGN

**Objective:** Students will learn what makes the set and lighting design for *An American in Paris* unique on Broadway and how the sets are moved on and off stage.

**Background:** AAIP is different than most shows on Broadway because of the way the sets are designed and moved on and off stage by the actors.

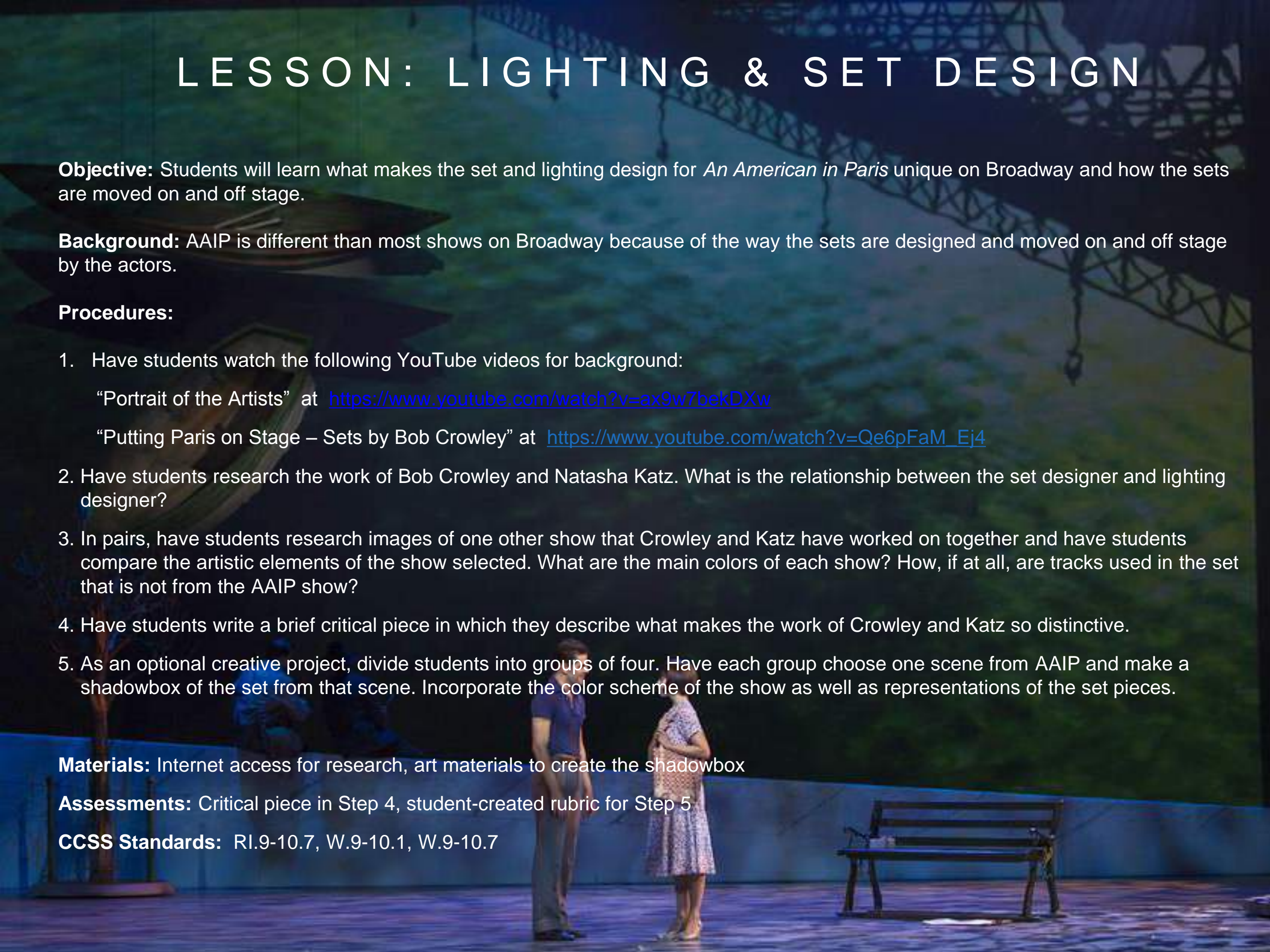
## Procedures:

1. Have students watch the following YouTube videos for background:  
“Portrait of the Artists” at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ax9w7bekDXw>  
“Putting Paris on Stage – Sets by Bob Crowley” at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qe6pFaM\\_Ej4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qe6pFaM_Ej4)
2. Have students research the work of Bob Crowley and Natasha Katz. What is the relationship between the set designer and lighting designer?
3. In pairs, have students research images of one other show that Crowley and Katz have worked on together and have students compare the artistic elements of the show selected. What are the main colors of each show? How, if at all, are tracks used in the set that is not from the AAIP show?
4. Have students write a brief critical piece in which they describe what makes the work of Crowley and Katz so distinctive.
5. As an optional creative project, divide students into groups of four. Have each group choose one scene from AAIP and make a shadowbox of the set from that scene. Incorporate the color scheme of the show as well as representations of the set pieces.

**Materials:** Internet access for research, art materials to create the shadowbox

**Assessments:** Critical piece in Step 4, student-created rubric for Step 5

**CCSS Standards:** RI.9-10.7, W.9-10.1, W.9-10.7





# An American in Paris



THEATRE AND  
SOCIAL MEDIA



# AAIP AND SOCIAL MEDIA



Now more than ever, social media plays a major part in the world we live in and how we go about our daily lives. Integrating these tools and using them to your advantage can be the best way to support any business, person, idea, and in this case, a Broadway show.

Great social media focuses on the audience, what they want, and how to engage with them. Keeping on top of current trends and emerging applications plays a large part in using social media effectively.

A great example of this is the video live streaming app, Periscope, which became popular around the time *An American in Paris* opened on Broadway. AAIP used the app to live stream all of the opening night festivities so that people could feel like they were right in the middle of the action. Cast member Brandon Uranowitz also used Periscope to live stream video on opening night, and was able to capture unique moments like the opening night curtain call from the stage looking out on the audience. Apps like these create opportunities for an audience to feel like they are on the “inside.”

Currently, through our different social channels, the AAIP audience essentially has VIP access to the AAIP cast, backstage at The Palace Theatre, Broadway events, parties, special traditions and more. It's this type of exclusive access that builds lasting relationships between a show and its audience.



# AAIP AND SOCIAL MEDIA



Another wonderful social media opportunity AAIP took advantage of was the first-ever Snapchat Live Story for Broadway. In October 2015, Snapchat (a picture and video messaging application) launched the first “Live Story” for Broadway. Shows like The Lion King, Wicked, Phantom of the Opera and Jersey Boys all participated. The story featured many short, ten-second videos submitted by the respective shows. AAIP opened the story with a series of fun, behind-the-scenes videos showing life on a two-show day at The Palace Theatre. The Broadway Live Story received millions of views worldwide. Just think, a few years ago, a show never would have had access to an audience that size, especially not on a mobile device!

# AAIP AND SOCIAL MEDIA



**Facebook**, still a popular platform for most Broadway shows, serves as a major social platform for AAIP. On average, Facebook users skew a bit older than most of the users on other platforms like Snapchat, Periscope, Instagram or Twitter. Since the average audience-goer of AAIP is over 45 years old, Facebook actually has a larger fan base for AAIP than any other social platform. Two types of content that typically perform well on Facebook are YouTube videos (i.e. the show's official trailer) and photo albums from special events and performances.

**Instagram** serves as a visual-based platform and a great place to conduct contests, sweepstakes, and giveaways. AAIP utilized Instagram to conduct ticket giveaways for Valentine's Day and Halloween in 2015. Contests and giveaways incentivize the action of sharing a photo or a hash tag. When one follower shares the show's official hash tag, or tags AAIP in a photo, they are spreading the word about that show to their entire audience of followers (and the idea that they support it/endorse it). Visually, this would look like a great big family tree branching out – the more shares and tags, the more the tree grows. Think about the last time you followed an account on Instagram. Was it through a hash tag you searched? A friend who posted a photo and tagged that account? Something you saw your friends recently "liked"? In general, people trust word of mouth or a recommendation from a friend.

Determining your brand keeps content specific and consistent. For instance, AAIP has a friendly, conversational tone, while maintaining a high-class and elegant feel. Since Paris is such a big part of the show, the AAIP social media team adopted the idea of saying "*Merci!*" instead of "Thank you!" along with other ideas like "French Word of the Week," and fun facts about Paris. Whenever possible, incorporate what is unique to your brand. AAIP used #themanilove and #igotmygal as the tags for a Valentine's Day giveaway (both are lyrics from songs in the show). Find your voice as a brand and stick to it. Your audience will appreciate a consistent tone and style.



# AAIP AND SOCIAL MEDIA

It's important to remember other platforms like Tumblr. Although this may not be the #1 social media hotspot, this platform has a dedicated and hugely passionate fan base. There are subcultures on Tumblr and "fandoms" dedicated to AAIP. Tumblr has trends of its own within the platform like "shipping" (putting the names of a couple together in one name – i.e. 'Jerrise' for Jerry & Lise), "headcanons" (a series of questions left blank to answer for each character) and GIF sets (a series of multiple photos with slight animation/movement, usually comedic in nature and paired with a phrase from the show or pop culture). Fans have even written fan fiction about AAIP. These kind of golden "social" nuggets sometimes don't turn up on Twitter or Facebook, so it's important to always engage on places like Tumblr to find those dedicated fans and the content they are creating on their own!

Fan art on right found on Tumblr  
By - @karynslee



# LESSON: SOCIAL MEDIA AND THEATRE

**Objective:** Students will learn how a Broadway show like *An American in Paris* builds and communicates with its audience through the power of social media.

## **Procedures:**

1. Have students research the social profiles of *An American in Paris* and other shows that interest them. While they are doing this, have them take note of the tone of the language being used; any social campaigns, contests, or giveaways that are running; any messaging and posts that support other shows; and any official tags that are used and specific branding of posts.
2. Have students write a one-page summary of *An American in Paris*' social media presence.
3. Have students select a Broadway show to follow on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and any supporting accounts (YouTube, tumblr, Pinterest) for a fixed period of time, say two weeks for example.
4. Have students track the number of followers on each platform over the set time period, and have them keep a chart to track their numbers and the growth over time.
5. Have students track what types of content performed the best over that period of time and why (most likes, most shares etc.)
6. Have students see if there is a correlation between the content that was posted and the increase in followers (or, lack of content or ineffective content and a plateau or decrease in followers).
7. Have students do a one-page write-up about how the apps they have explored could most effectively be used to support a Broadway show.
8. Have students research and download emerging and recommended social apps. Have them try these emerging apps and share what works and what doesn't.
9. With the permission of the school administration, have your students apply what they have learned to create a social media campaign for the play or musical that your school is presenting this semester.

**Materials:** Access to the Internet for research, permission (if possible) to download apps and use them in school

**Assessment:** Write-up in Step 2, Write-up in Step 7

**CCSS Standards:** W.9-10.2, W.9-10.6, W.9-10.7, W.9-10.8, SL.9-10.1





*Jeffrey Givida*  
*Break A Leg!*  
*Brandon Givida*  
*We're all Fools for L'Amour!*  
**Merde!**  
*From the An American in Paris family.*  
*We wish you the best on your opening night!*  
*Carlin Abraham*  
*XOXO Dora Lora*  
*Longo*  
*Merde!*  
*Lofey*  
*Conce*  
*Will Fitch*  
*Break Legs!*  
*Jeffrey*  
*Merde!*

AAIP AND THEATRICAL TRADITIONS

## THEATRICAL TRADITION: “MERDE”

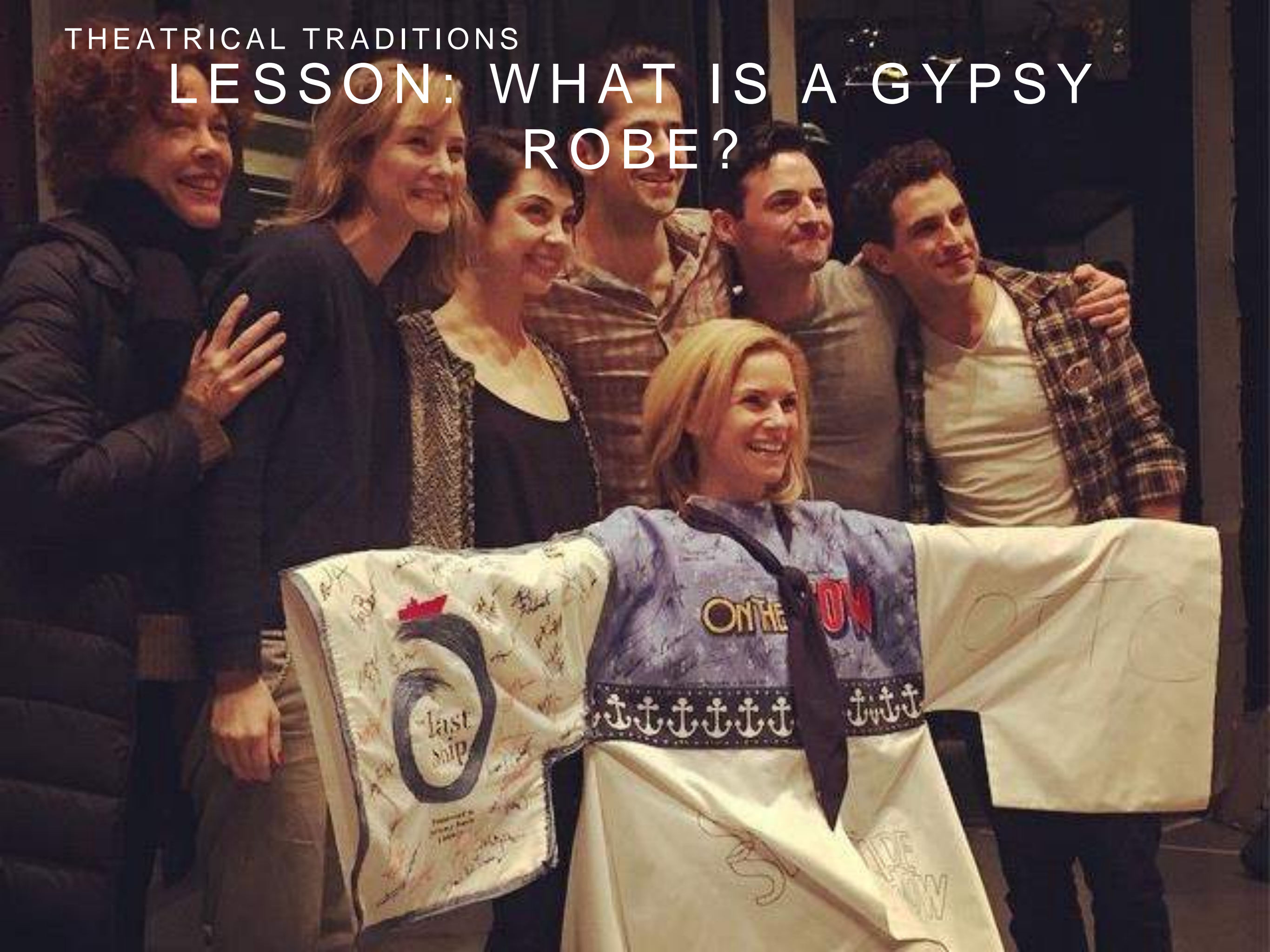
A phrase commonly used to wish good luck in the dance and ballet world, “Merde” actually means “crap” or waste. So why do we say it? At the end of the 19th century, wealthy French aristocrats would travel by horse drawn carriage to the theatre for entertainment. If the show was good, the horses would be outside for a long time, their waste littering the streets in front of the theatre. The more people who attended the play, the more waste on the street. This quickly became a sign that the play was successful, which started the trend of saying “Merde” for good luck!

Broadway functions as a community, and shows support fellow shows. This builds camaraderie and a supportive family dynamic. AAIP posts a congratulatory message every time a new show opens on Broadway. The message always says “Merde!” The AAIP social team custom tailors each post to fit the theme of the show that is opening. Most stage managers also deliver a signed message to the stage door of the new show, to wish them luck and show support.



THEATRICAL TRADITIONS

# LESSON: WHAT IS A GYPSY ROBE?



# THEATRICAL TRADITION: THE GYPSY ROBE

The **Gypsy Robe** is a tradition in which a chorus member with the most Broadway credits receives a robe on the opening night of a Broadway musical.

## The Rules:

- ♣ The Gypsy Robe goes only to Broadway musicals with a chorus.
- ♣ The Gypsy Robe goes to a chorus member only, specifically the one with the most number of Broadway chorus credits.
- ♣ The Robe must be delivered on opening night to the member selected, at least a half-hour before the show starts.
- ♣ The new recipient must put on the Robe and circle the stage three times, while cast members reach out and touch the Robe for good luck. The new recipient visits each dressing room while wearing the Robe.
- ♣ The new recipient supervises the application of mementos from the show to the Robe. Some important rules for adding mementos: for wearability, durability and longevity, add-ons must be lightweight, sturdy and reasonably sized so that each Robe can represent a full season.
- ♣ The opening night date and the recipient's name is written on or near a memento, and cast members only sign that section of the Robe.
- ♣ The recipient will attend the opening of the next Broadway musical and will present the Robe to the next "Gypsy" in that show.

**Activity:** Hold a “mock” Gypsy Robe ceremony. (Students can use a T-shirt or a sheet instead of a robe.) Set up your own criteria for the recipient; you might choose the oldest person in the class, the person with the highest GPA or the student with the most A’s in the class. You can also incorporate other classes by passing the robe on to a class down the hall or to another department. Each recipient adds to the robe by signing their name or the name of the class, and/or by drawing on it.



## DANCE TERMS

*Pas de Deux*

Toe the Mark

Heel and Toe

Eagle Rock

Oceana Roll

Toadolo

Shivaree

Jerome Robbins

Radio City Music Hall

Cabaret

## MISC. TERMS

Also-ran

Dilettante

Vichyssoise

Benefactress

Victrola

Concerto

Nadia Boulanger

*Pour quoi*

Fauntleroy

## WAR TERMS

Nazi

Nazi Occupation

Nazi Collaborator

The Liberation

G.I.

Expatriate

War Hero

*Swastika*

*Tricolore*

Breadline

*Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité*

Blockade

## ORIGINAL FILM

Gene Kelly

Leslie Caron

Oscar Levant

Georges Guetary

Nina Foch

Vincente Minnelli

## PLACES

Champs Élysées

Arc de Triomphe

The Louvre

Galleries Lafayette

Ballet du Châtelet

The Seine

Montmartre

Monte Carlo

## ARTISTS

Paul Cézanne

Jean Cocteau

Pablo Picasso

Claude Monet

## WRITERS

Victor Hugo

Emile Zola

Gustave Flaubert

Albert Camus

Jean-Paul Sartre

NAMES, PLACES, WORDS,  
AND PHRASES TO KNOW  
FROM AAIP



# LESSON: VOCABULARY

**Objective:** Students will become familiar with terms used both in the show and in this guide. This will expand students' knowledge of certain dance/ballet terms, war terms, as well as various French places, artists, writers, and terms from French culture.

**Procedures:**

1. Assign a set of words to pairs of students.
2. Give the students the choice of how to present their vocabulary words to the class. The presentation should be no more than 10-15 seconds for each word. Students may create a short film, use an app like Vine or other social media, present a little skit or employ one of the visual arts or show/read brief examples of the artist's work to present their word.
3. Have students learn the list of terms from their classmates, and test their knowledge as you see fit.
4. As a fun activity, challenge students to use as many terms from the vocabulary list as they can in an understandable, cohesive paragraph or two.

**Materials:** Internet access for research, materials to create the vocabulary word presentations

**Assessment:** Vocabulary assessment in Step 3, creative paragraphs in Step 4

**CCSS Standards:** RL.9-10.4, RI.9-10.4, W.9-10.3, W.9-10.7



# MISCELLANEOUS

## Helpful Videos

Creating *An American in Paris*:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JMWyAPoxsWE>

A conversation with the creators: Christopher Wheeldon and Craig Lucas  
Interview

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QKtFrAY6tNU>

From Paris to Broadway:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K7ivYBbq58I>

Official Trailer:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1wt8tLjkl4w>

## A Note on the Standards

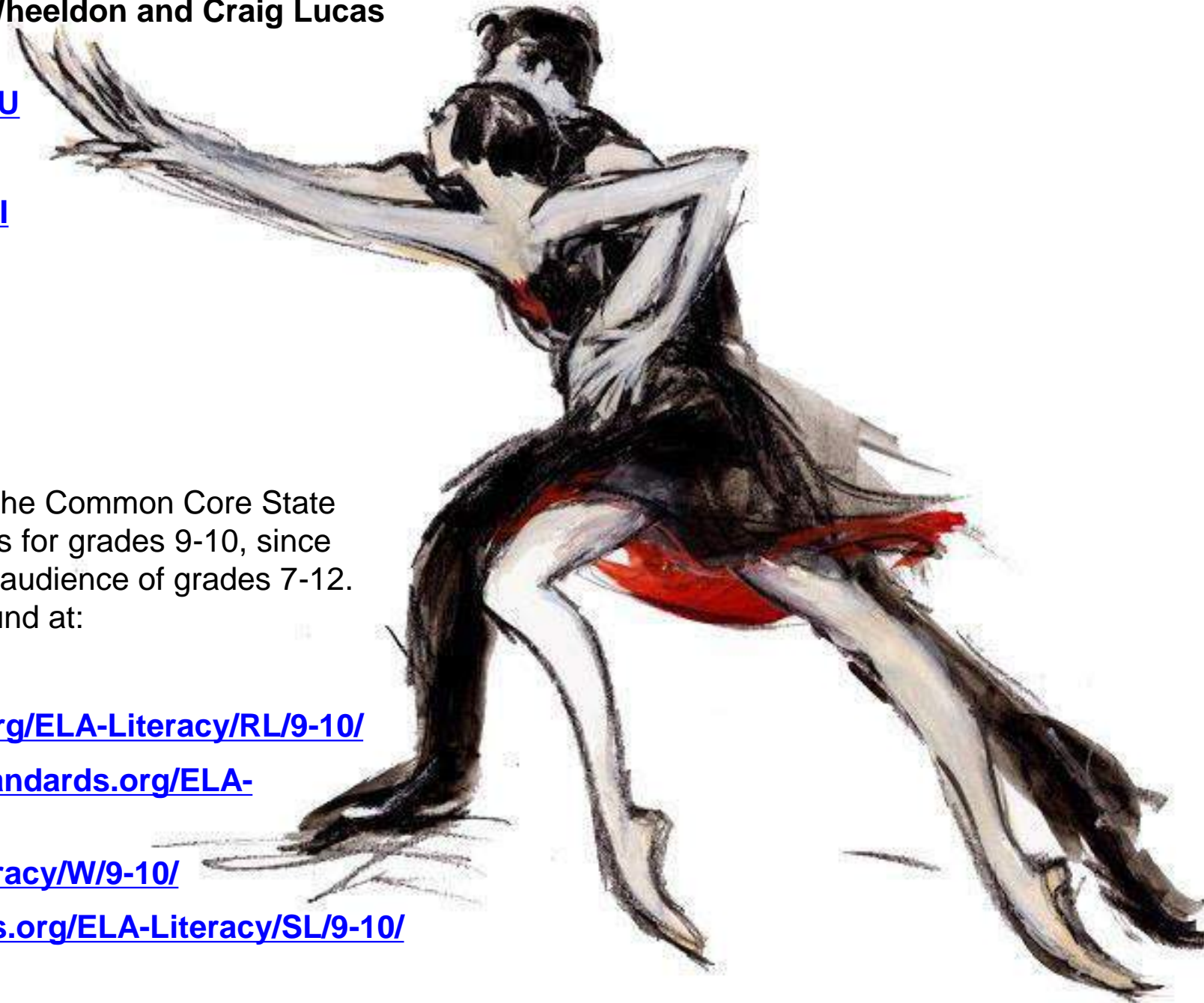
The activities in this study guide are directly tied to the Common Core State Standards. They are pitched to the CCSS Standards for grades 9-10, since those grades are right at the center of our intended audience of grades 7-12. The detailed standards and descriptions may be found at:

Reading Literature: <http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RL/9-10/>

Reading Informational Texts: <http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RI/9-10/>

Writing: <http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/9-10/>

Speaking & Listening: <http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/SL/9-10/>



UNTIL NEXT TIME

AU REVOIR!