Learning Activities to Explore Musical Theater

Free and fun ways for teens and “tweens” to learn more about each other and the world of musical theater

“Did you ever feel like there was a whole other person inside you just waiting to come out?”

Gabriella Montez in Disney’s *High School Musical*
Some dream of fortune and fame. Others dream of a serious vacation from school. Some want to be top athletes or win scholastic honors, while others hope to star in the school play and make friends. What if you want it all? How can you break free of expectations and start something new?

In Disney’s *High School Musical*, teens discover it is possible to reach even the toughest goals when you believe in yourself, pursue your passions and work together. The students at East High have to deal with cliques and all kinds of unwritten “rules” about their roles as they explore new interests, build relationships and struggle to find out just who they really are. Sound familiar? Beyond the show’s catchy songs, cool costumes and the typical high school dramas, Disney’s *High School Musical* features character and stories to which everyone can relate.

“**When we reach, we can fly.**”

Whether you dream of being a player or playmaker, a singer or songwriter, a star performer on stage or the many other theaters of life—try activities in this guide to help bring out the music in you. Along the way, you will discover the joys of theater and learn more about yourself, your family and friends!

“**Bop to the Top!**”

Songs and singing are featured throughout Disney’s *High School Musical*—karaoke, pep rally cheers, audition duets and, in the musical theater tradition, when characters break into song while speaking. Ultimately, *High School Musical* is part of a great musical theater tradition, a distinctly American invention, ready for you to explore.
CUE SHEET

Prelude: Everyone Has Dreams
Before the Curtain Rises: Welcome to Our Show!
   Introduction to Musical Theater
   Meet the Cast!
Overture: Get'cha Head in the Game
   “We’re All in This Together”
   “The World Can See Us in a Way That’s Different Than Who We Are”
   “All the World’s a Stage”
Act 1: The Actor’s Craft
Act 2: Writing and Directing
Intermission: Take a Break
Act 3: When Words Meet Music
Act 4: Stories in Motion
Behind the Scenes: Production and Promotions
Grand Finale: Your Own High School Musical
Director’s Notes

Page 2
Page 4
Page 4
Page 6
Page 7
Page 7
Page 9
Page 10
Page 12
Page 14
Page 16
Page 17
Page 19
Page 21
Page 23
Page 25

“Check, check…testing…one, two, three....”
The tech crew and stage manager run lighting, sound and safety checks before every show. Before the curtain rises on your activities, always get the “all clear” signal from your stage manager—Mom, Dad or another responsible adult!

In theater and film, a cue is a stage signal or direction that tells the cast and crew where to go or what action to take.

In the recording industry, cue sheets spell out the order of tracks on a compact disc.
“Now that’s show biz.”
Ms. Darbus, the drama teacher in Disney’s High School Musical, wants students to appreciate the wonder, tradition and history of musical theater. Like jazz and the blues, musical theater is a unique American form of art, rooted in older cultures. Born in the Jazz Age of the 1920s, musical theater blends operas, operettas, musical and dance revues and vaudeville comedy acts with popular ideas and sounds. Composers in New York City’s Tin Pan Alley cranked out crowd-pleasing musicals for the Broadway stage and recorded songs that filled the airwaves for years.

• What comes to mind when someone says “musicals”? Singing? Rock opera? Music video? MP3s?
• Go on a library or Internet scavenger hunt to sample the sounds of musical theater over the decades, looking for the top songs, famous artists and hit shows in each period.
• Learn more about musicals by interviewing older friends and family members. What are their favorite shows, stars, songs, scenes or composers—and why? Learn a hit show tune or dance made popular during another era of musical theater. How do stories, music and dance in modern musicals compare with past favorites?

The sound of music.
In the early days of musical theater, performers would break into spectacular song and dance routines that had little to do with the plot. (Talk about show-stopping scenes!) But in 1943, Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II sparked a revolution by using song and dance to actually tell a story in Oklahoma! The pair created a series of sentimental musicals with memorable songs people still love today because, as Hammerstein once said, “the things we are sentimental about are the fundamental things in life.” What is fundamentally important to you? In their show The Sound of Music, children learn to chase away fear singing about favorite things. How does music ease your fears?

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“The world is filled with troubles and many injustices. But reality is as beautiful as it is ugly. I think it is just as important to sing about beautiful mornings as it is to talk about slums. I just couldn’t write anything without hope in it.”
Oscar Hammerstein II (1895-1960)
Broadway lyricist
Match the playmakers to their musicals. Check the Web for answers and learn more about these creative collaborators. What contributions do composers and lyricists make to a show?

### Timeless tales.
In the 1590s, William Shakespeare wrote *Romeo and Juliet* about the untimely death of two teens from rival households who fall in love. In 1957, audiences wept to a similar tale when *West Side Story* opened on Broadway—a show that broke from the tradition of comedy in musical theater with themes of gang violence, murder and forbidden love. Check out a few of the video or DVD versions of these plays. How do they compare? How do music and dance tell the story? In Disney’s *High School Musical*, Kelsi writes the score for a new play called “Juliet and Romeo”—a feminist twist on Shakespeare’s classic. In trying out for the show, Troy and Gabriella rise above cliques and expectations to find joy in music and each other. What other plays feature star-crossed lovers?

### Theater etiquette.
How is watching live theater different than watching a movie or TV musical? Why is it important to watch quietly? When can members of the audience make noise? What sounds are OK to make? How do you show appreciation or dissatisfaction in a theater?

### Wait a minute…
Check out these dual definitions of words common in musical theater!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hook</td>
<td>A phrase of music or lyrics in a song that catches audience interest, or an item you hang your coat on.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Score</td>
<td>All the songs in a musical—like how the points add up in a game.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beat</td>
<td>Hold your temper. In music and dance, a beat is a count of about one second.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strike</td>
<td>Three and you’re out! Or, call it quits when you take the set apart after a show.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Block</td>
<td>To lay out all the moves telling actors where to go on stage—or deflect a shot in basketball.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pit</td>
<td>Where the orchestra sits—lower than the stage, but not really a hole!</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apron</td>
<td>Part of the stage in front of the curtain—and a way to stay clean in the kitchen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrap</td>
<td>Grandma calls her sweater a wrap, but in theater and film, “That’s a wrap!” means it’s all over.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corpse</td>
<td>A dead body—and when an actor gets an uncontrollable fit of laughter on stage!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginners</td>
<td>Freshmen! And cast members who are on stage when the curtain goes up.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Meet the Cast!**

**Troy Bolton** is captain of the East High Wildcats basketball team—and the coach’s son. Once he meets Gabriella and sings a karaoke duet with her, he finds there’s more to life than basketball.

**Gabriella Montez** is the new girl at East High School—interested in Troy, mathematics, science and auditioning for the musical.

**Chad Danforth** is Troy’s buddy and teammate. He loves basketball, is skeptical about leotards and gets a serious crush on Taylor when they work together to help their friends.

**Sharpay Evans** is the president of East High’s Drama Club. She’s used to getting her way—and all the lead roles.

**Ryan Evans** is Sharpay’s sidekick and younger twin (by eight minutes—a fact Sharpay won’t let him forget!). He has starred opposite Sharpay in 17 productions. And he loves hats.

**Chad Danforth** is Troy’s buddy and teammate. He loves basketball, is skeptical about leotards and gets a serious crush on Taylor when they work together to help their friends.

**Taylor McKessie** lives for science, thinks sports are for “Cro-magnums” and hopes that her new friend Gabriella will join the science team to help them win the Scholastic Decathlon.

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**PLUS:**

**Zeke Baylor** is a top basketball player on the East High Wildcats team. We discover he has two secrets—a crush on Sharpay and a love of baking.

**Kelsi Nielson** is a quiet, dedicated lyricist and composer working on a new feminist school musical, called “Juliet and Romeo.”

**Ms. Darbus** is East High’s “dramatic” drama teacher. She loves introducing students to the magic of the arts, and fights with Coach Bolton over the importance of theater and sports.

**Coach Bolton** is Troy’s father and basketball coach. A former Wildcats champion, he has high hopes for his team and even higher expectations for his star son.

**Say what?** Write a line each character might speak or think. What slang might the character use?

**Sing what?** What music might the character like? What karaoke song would he or she sing first?

**Walk this way.** Move like the character. How would you enter the cafeteria on the first day?

**Casting director.** In the musical of life, who would you choose to play you? A famous actor, friend, teacher or mentor? Who would play the other important roles in your life story?

**Musical director.** If you had to choose one song to summarize your life, what would it be?

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Watch High School Musical on Disney Channel!
What is it about musicals that brings people together? Get your head into the game as you explore some of the big ideas, or themes, in Disney’s *High School Musical*. At the same time, get a hands-on introduction to theater techniques that even Coach Bolton and the Wildcats would enjoy.

Teamwork is the key to success in theater, sports and life. Every role is a vital part of a show’s success. Working in an ensemble is essential on stage and in life—whether in a lead, cameo, supporting, walk-on or behind-the-scenes role. And every operation needs understudies ready to step in when a player can’t perform. Consider how you work with back up, how you follow or lead and help others to shine. These are true star qualities.

**Beautiful noise.**
Gather in a circle, with each person bringing a small object to make a rhythmic noise. Listen as the first flips through pages of a book, another rattles keys, still another dribbles a ball—all playing with sound, tone, cadence and beat. Moving in turn around the circle, each person adds to the groove—exploring their own sound while composing a song in harmony with others. After jamming for awhile, play without props. Each player creates a sound—chirping, clicking, clapping, tapping, experimenting with high and low, swift and slow—as others join in one at a time around the circle. Next, ask each person to move to the music, building off the movements of others.

**Mix and mingle interviews.**
Mix and mingle interviews can help you focus and listen better. Ask players in a group to move freely around the room as you sample a track from Disney’s *High School Musical*. Pause the music. Players partner with the closest person, standing back to back. One partner interviews the other, then retells the story to the group. Switch roles so each person gets...
a chance to listen and learn without looking. Try these conversation starters:
Tell me about something you love. How does music make you feel? Tell me about a time when you sang or danced in public.

Create a group contract.
Build a sense of community in your class or among a group of friends. Discuss agreements that are important for all to honor. Outline and publicly post rules, expectations and goals you will work on together.

Friends and enemies.
Not everyone in Disney’s High School Musical gets along. Kids in different cliques are in conflict, and it changes how they move. Build confidence, teamwork and relationships with this group game. Each player secretly chooses another to be an “enemy.” When the director calls “action,” players move around the room, avoiding their “enemies” at all cost! The director then calls “freeze,” asks players to choose a “friend” and calls “action” again. This time when moving, players must keep their chosen friends between them and their enemies. After the game, consider how you could tell the difference between friends and enemies, how you changed physically, how situations like this come up at school and how you can handle them.

“Everyone is special in their own way, we make each other strong, we’re not the same, we’re different in a good way, together’s where we belong.”

“We’re All in This Together” lyrics from Disney’s High School Musical

THEATRE LINGO SETS THE STAGE FOR LIFE!

**Ensemble:** A group that works together with equal contributions and trust.

**Character:** More than a role in a play, it’s how you treat people. That reveals true character.

**Motivation:** The reason behind the action—what drives you and makes you work for your best.

**Obstacle:** Anything in the way of the character’s ability to achieve goals. What obstacles do you face?

**Ovation:** Bravo! Brava! A rousing round of applause from the audience for your efforts.
Students at East High learn to break free of stereotypes—overly simple ideas about a person based on their membership in a group. While they may be based on a kernel of truth, stereotypes are overly simplified ways of looking at people that rarely are accurate.

Go with the flow?
Listen to the song “Stick to the Status Quo” from Disney’s High School Musical: “No, no, no, no! Stick to the stuff you know. If you wanna be cool, follow one simple rule: Don’t mess with the flow, no, no, stick to the status quo.” What does status quo mean to you? Why do you think the songwriters chose that term? Do the East High characters accept their roles?

Find yourself in High School Musical.
Are you an athlete like Troy, cautiously stepping onto a new stage of life? Maybe you are a newcomer like Gabriella, or a seasoned but jealous school star like Sharpay. What groups or social cliques are common in your school—and how do you work and get along with different people in them? What characters from other musicals remind you of people in your own life? How well do stereotypical characters in stories reflect qualities of true people? What dimensions of the stereotype are harmful or helpful in communications?

What are the different roles people play in your school? What reputations and expectations are associated with each? Map out your thoughts in a writer’s word web (a picture that links words to show how ideas are related). Where and how can you build new networks linking people and ideas?

“So good to be seen, so good to be heard,” sings Sharpay in the High School Musical number “What I’ve Been Looking For.” She knows that stage performers rely on keen powers of observation, memory and perception—using all of their senses to help memorize lines, learn cues, tap into emotions, add depth to their character and communicate mood to the audience.

Sharpay’s shoebox.
Test your ability to observe and remember by placing a collection of small, safe objects into a shoebox. Ask players to study everything carefully for a few minutes, then cover the box. What details or relationships among objects do people recall?

Listen to the environment to develop and appreciate your sense of sound. Sit quietly with your eyes closed for a minute. Note how many different sounds there are! Listen carefully in other environments—taking time out for a few minutes each day. How much of the world do you understand through sound? Imagine what the world is like for those who cannot hear.

“The world theatre comes from the Greeks. It means the seeing place. It is the place people come to see the truth about life and the social situation.”
Stella Adler (1901–1992)
prominent American acting teacher and actress
Musicals offer a chance to gain experience and skills you need to succeed in other situations in life.

What roles are in your future?
Picture yourself or a character from Disney’s High School Musical at different stages in life: infancy, childhood, young adulthood, middle age and old age. Walk, talk, move, sing or dance as you might at each stage and age.

Timing, pacing and delivery.
What keeps you on the edge of your seat or puts you to sleep? Actors and other performers depend on presentation, timing, staging and word choice. They try to “read” the audience, adjust to its mood and anticipate reactions. Watch powerful speakers, presenters or comedians. Detect rhythm and patterns in their language, volume and tone of voice. How do they pause for effect? How much time does it take for ideas to sink in or laughter to ring out before the presenter resumes? Try reading a passage with as few stops as possible; read it again, in slow motion; then a third time, using breath and timing for punctuation and impact.

Body language and gesture.
Actors think through moves and make deliberate gestures—painting pictures that capture mood and motive. Spend 10 minutes people-watching at a mall, restaurant or classroom. Can you tell how a person is feeling or thinking from the look on his face, the position of her body, the space between them? What stories can you build observing interactions among others? What does your body language say? Imagine watching yourself in fast-forward on videotape—noting exaggerated or repetitive motions. Try using your body to show a range of emotions and attitudes. Can others tell when you are acting like a person who is listening, angry, in love, impatient or guilty—or someone arrogant, puzzled, amazed, tense or tired? Without sound, show you are grieving, delighted, interested, jealous, selfish or silly.

Overcoming fears and flops.
Troy was afraid to tell his friends about singing. Gabriella “choked up” at the callback auditions—until Troy reminded her about the time they sang karaoke together, and it felt just right. Overcome your jitters and any feelings of stage fright with plenty of rehearsals so you feel well-prepared. Try deep breathing exercises or “blow raspberries”—gently vibrating air through your loosely closed lips. Remember the audience is your friend—people want to see you do well. Peer just over the heads of the audience to avoid eye contact, and feel your tension melt away. Some actors exercise to shake out their jitters. Warm up and stretch out your face and voice muscles, as you might limber up before playing sports. Use the power of visualization to picture your star performance or imagine you are in a relaxing space where you feel at ease.
“This is not what I want. This is not what I planned!”

Get over it, Sharpay! Star performers know how to go with the flow. They stay relaxed, in character, on top of cues and ready to improvise—thinking, acting and reacting to situations in the moment, creating new ideas and approaches as a scenario unfolds. Actors aren’t the only ones who improvise. Teachers, cooks, salespeople, counselors, athletes…many people combine imagination and flexibility with observation and communication to get through situations.

Try these improvisation games:

**Mirror, mirror.** Standing face to face, copy a partner’s slow, steady movements. Maintain good eye contact. Move as one, working in unison so it is hard to figure out who is leading.

**Go Wildcats!** Players suggest props, words or situations around which to build a scene at an East High pep rally. One catch—no speaking. The entire scene has to be in rally songs or cheers! Add gestures and movements to communicate. How does that affect the tempo (speed), pitch (highness or lowness) or volume of your cheer? You took a big risk by singing and Improvising! What did it feel like to sing by yourself? How does it compare with singing in a group?

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“Life is a lot like jazz…it’s best when you improvise.”

**George Gershwin** (1898–1937) popular, classical and Broadway music composer who collaborated with his lyricist brother, Ira Gershwin

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“Each of us brings something to the table to help each other grow.”

Working together in harmony, we can resolve conflicts and discover new ways to reach a healthy balance in life activities. Gain valuable perspective listening to different points of view and reaching out to others by trying these.

**Reasonable parties.** Coach Bolton and Ms. Darbus are passionate about their work, each believing their activity is more valuable to students. Stage a debate between the “Drama Club” and “Wildcats.” Each group must present reasons why their activity is more important to high school life than the other. List five valuable skills you need to do the activity. How does the activity help an individual, the group and the school community? After each side presents its case, “judges” will decide the strongest argument.

**Strike a balance.** Finish homework or watch TV? Make it to the auditions or go to the playoffs? Sometimes we get pulled in too many directions. Talk with caring family and friends to help sort and set priorities. Other people are there for support. Try this with your team, club or class: Gather a group around a tree stump. (An overturned plastic drum bucket or sturdy crate will do, too). One at a time, players step up and try to stay balanced as a group until all are aboard! Can you reach balance while walking, hopping or sliding on an imaginary tight rope?

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Places everyone—**hit your mark!**

Actors need to find their spots—marked on the floor with tape—so the stage lights will be on them.

**“We should be boosting you up, not tearing you down.”**

Zeke Baylor in Disney’s High School Musical
Talented actors bring into focus all of the qualities that make their characters unique—capturing how the character looks, sounds, moves, thinks. Actors breathe life into their characters, trying to see the world through the character’s eyes, to “become” that person. Practice some basics you need to do well in visual, language and theater arts while using your eyes, ears, imagination and acting skills in improvisation and scene work as you create characters.

**Keep a journal or observation bank**—noting human behavior and interaction you can weave into roles. Consider all the facets that make the person unique. Be like a sponge, soak up impressions. Write a journal entry from a character’s point of view, or videotape an imaginary TV interview with the character. Listen to and practice speaking with different accents.

**Tap into “sense memory.”**
Think about eating a melting ice cream cone, splashing in puddles or the smell of the locker room. Silently act out how it feels. Show the sensation, using all of your body.

**Get into character.**
Imagine you are Kelsi after winning “Best Musical Score” at the Tony Awards®, or Zeke whipping up cookies in the kitchen. Maybe you are a new kid at East High trying out for the basketball team. Play “who am I?” with friends, using your body, voice and feelings to create vivid characters. What sort of body and posture does your character have? Twirl hair? Bite nails? How does your character walk?

**What’s your story?**
Think about the character’s personal history. Where does the character live? Add mannerisms, likes and dislikes. Is the character honest, loyal, deceitful, shy? How can you show those qualities? Can other players tell a story about your character from tidbits you portray?

“All the best performers bring to their role something more, something different than what the author put on paper. That’s what makes theatre live. That’s why it persists.”

*Stephen Sondheim (born 1930)*
composer and lyricist
Chillin’ at home.
Picture your character doing a favorite activity at home and act out the scene—reading in the den, shooting hoops in the backyard, whipping up snacks in the kitchen. How does the character eat? Sit? Sleep? Act out a scene. Try playing your character in different settings—at the library, the championship game or a scholastic decathlon. Why is it important for actors on stage to physically express meaning behind words? How do you do this?

Understanding why.
To be convincing, actors must understand what causes their character to behave or think in a certain way. Some actors work from the “inside out,” tapping into their own emotions to motivate the character. Others work from the “outside in,” presenting a picture of the person they are playing on stage. What motivates you to perform?

Point of view.
Recreate a scene from Disney’s High School Musical from the point of view of several different characters. Play several times, considering your change in perspective.

Who is speaking?
“Logue” in. Make up a minute-long monologue for your favorite character. Which High School Musical songs or verses have monologues set to music? Improvise a five-minute dialogue with another person. The word ending “logue” comes from the Greek logos, meaning “word, speech, telling.” Words with this suffix refer to types of speech or text. What do these mean: Epilogue? Prologue? Travelogue? Ideologue? Catalogue?

“A monologue is a speech in which a character directly addresses the audience or another character as if thinking out loud. When the character delivering a monologue is alone on stage, it also may be described as a soliloquy.”

“I am not interested in the truth that is without myself; I am interested in the truth that is within myself.”

Konstantin Stanislavsky (1863–1938)
Russian actor and director
Stanislavsky created the “method acting” approach—a system of relaxation, concentration and sensory exercises that helps actors draw on their own emotions, memories and experiences to portray characters realistically.
Writing and script development.
Describe a person whose appearance impressed you, then build a story in which the character can be involved.

The plot thickens.
Build a group story. One player begins the yarn by spinning a few lines. At any moment, the director points to another player who immediately picks up the story where the first left off. Continue as each person adds to the tale. Practice storytelling with younger children—they can be a tough audience! Try to unite, invite, offer and acknowledge contributions to keep ’em hooked!

Analyze a script.
Most scripts tell a story with a definitive shape, or arc, though which all characters pass, starting with the scene (which sets context), moving to the buildup (where there is a conflict or opportunity), culminating in the climax (turning point of the story) and ending with resolution. There are several different kinds of plots that move a story from A to Z—from problem to resolution, mystery to solution, conflict to peace, danger to safety, confusion to order. Think of stories you know that are examples of each—or describe some other plot patterns.

"Playwrights, screenwriters, directors—no matter the planning or degree of background research, we all borrow from oral storytelling traditions. It’s a true art form and valuable professional tool.”

Alan Smithee
the name used by screenwriters who wish to remain anonymous

“I just wish there were more new writers.”

Andrew Lloyd Webber (born 1948)
English composer of 13 award-winning blockbuster musicals on Broadway and in London’s West End
Storyboard.
Like comic strips, storyboards are a series of pictures that show how the plot unfolds. Build a story with drawings, dialogue bubbles, color sketches and magazine cut-outs. Or, stage and snap a series of photos. What are the main events? How will the characters work through obstacles and opportunities?

Giving and taking direction.
Once rehearsals start, it is the director’s job to block out movements for each character on stage. Actors animate movement with their own motivations, but follow the director’s blocking and cues to hit their marks in nine quadrants on stage:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Upstage Right</th>
<th>Upstage Center</th>
<th>Upstage Left</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Centerstage Right</td>
<td>Centerstage</td>
<td>Centerstage Left</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downstage Right</td>
<td>Downstage Center</td>
<td>Downstage Left</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audience</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Players can learn stage directions by writing a lot of different moves on index cards (Cross down left, move downstage right, come centerstage). Drawing the cards one by one, the group leader calls out stage directions to the cast—as asking each person to move like a character from Disney’s High School Musical. (Cross upstage right like Taylor; dribble downstage left like Chad; enter stage left like Kelsi.)

Cafeteria freeze.
Performers and directors work to keep action in an “effective frame” on stage and in film so that each person adds to the overall impact of the picture. Try this game: Players pretend to enter the lunchroom at East High, moving fluidly around each other until the director calls out “Stage picture!” Everyone freezes, then notes their relationship to the audience. With side coaching, the director encourages those who are out of the picture to do whatever it takes to make any part of their body visible to the audience (jut out an arm, slide onto a knee, etc.) Move big, and use all levels in space—with poses at high, low and medium heights.

“Musical comedies aren’t written, they are rewritten.”

Stephen Sondheim
composer and lyricist who has been called “the greatest and perhaps best-known artist in the American musical theater” by The New York Times
How do you unwind?
After the anticipation and excitement of the opening acts, actors and audiences take breaks and loosen up during intermission. Many performers use basic relaxation and visualization techniques as well as “improv” games and other acting exercises to warm up, ease into or wrap up after a scene or show.

Try these activities to get limber or loosen up anytime:

Relax. Lie on your back. Imagine each part of your body floating, or falling asleep. Isolate and relax each toe. Move up the body, letting go of tension in the foot, ankle, calf, knee, thigh, hips, waist, stomach, heart and lungs. Soften shoulders, arms, hands, fingers and every muscle of the face and neck until you feel at peace.

Clean slate. Project ideas that enter your head onto a mental blackboard, then wipe clean.

Dance like Ryan! Rotate your hips, knees and shoulders in time to your favorite music.

Wildcat basketball. Players try to dribble, guard, shoot and score—using an invisible ball! Lift and toss the “space ball,” discovering how it feels, how others can see the shape. Take aim, throw and catch with full body movements. Is the ball in space or your imagination? Those with flushed faces and rapid heartbeats were truly “in the game.” Why do players breathe more heavily after exercise? Why do bodies need more oxygen after exertion?
Vocal warm-ups. Actors and singers use their voices as instruments to project sound and emotion—practicing proper breathing techniques, vocal and facial warm-ups to stay in tune and in shape with exercises like these:

Rise and fall. Learn to breathe from your diaphragm—the muscle responsible for correct breathing, which is at the top of your stomach, shaped like an upside-down soup bowl. It expands and moves downward when you breathe in. Lie on your back with a book placed on your stomach. Watch the book rise and fall as you deeply inhale and exhale with an “ahhhh.”

Limber lips. Practice enunciating with tongue twisters. Speak as quickly as you can. Take care to say each syllable clearly—that’s good diction!

Stress points. Read the same line many times, emphasizing a different word or phrase.

Singing syllables. Players choose a word or phrase to start the game. Position individuals or teams around a circle and assign one syllable of the phrase for each to sing in turn to a familiar tune. Sing a few rounds, then try the same word or phrase with different melodies.

When do I sing? Think about the relationship between language, music and mood. Listen carefully to songs in Disney’s High School Musical as you take notes. What’s the “big idea” in each song? How does the song make you feel? What messages, phrases or words pop out—and what does that tell you about characters and events? How do songs move the story and pull you into the plot? Why do you think the composer and lyricist chose this moment for song or dance instead of spoken words?

HAVE FUN WITH TONGUE TWISTERS

“Red leather, yellow leather.”


“A skunk sat on a stump and thunk the stump stunk, but the stump thunk the skunk stunk.”
Sing in context and character.
A reprise is the return of a song in a different context later in the show. Sharpay and Ryan sing a polished version of “What I’ve Been Looking For” early in *High School Musical*, while Gabriella and Troy offer a slower, more tender version in the reprise. Try singing this song like characters in the show. How would each perform it? Then, fit the words to a different musical style—rock, pop, hip-hop, country, reggae or blues. How does the music change meaning?

Score!
A marriage of music and lyrics. Choose a poem, text passage or sports article to be your lyrics—matching it to another favorite tune. Sing your song for others. Listen for musical and word patterns that repeat. How does music add emotion? Get together with classmates to create an entire score—using news articles, editorials and advertising about a global or local event. What type of music will your group choose to tell the story?

Lay down a hit soundtrack.
Make a CD of your compositions. Choose the order and title of songs. Take a picture of your group for the cover, create a montage or add original art.

Remember, every great artist was once an amateur!
Stephen Schwartz wrote the musical *Godspell* while he was still a teenager—and it went on to become a Broadway hit.

“The truest expression of a people is in its dances and its music. Bodies never lie.”
*Agnes De Mille* (1905–1993)
Harlem-born dancer and choreographer whose famous dream ballet sequence in *Oklahoma!* used dance to advance plot.
Body sense and rhythmic movement.
Be aware of how you move through space. Go on a space walk or play freeze tag in slow motion. Play Double Dutch with an invisible jump rope—keeping the rope and jumpers lined up. Turning the rope takes more concentration than jumping! Dance like an object—imagine how a paint brush, basketball, pom-pom, piano or scoreboard would move to music.

Tell a story with dance.
Play a silent scene in which character emotions are controlled by music, or improvise a dance that expresses your ideas. How does music make you move? What pictures do you see? Grow bigger and bigger. Shrink smaller and smaller. Exaggerate moves for musical theater.

Inspiration and perspiration!
Choreography from Disney’s High School Musical draws on many influences and uses moves from basketball, cheerleading and pep rallies. Other dance scenes draw on hip-hop, salsa, modern and jazz traditions, as well as freestyle.

IT’S NOT ALL GREEK TO ME!
What root and meaning do these terms from Greek have in common?

Choreography: From a Greek word that means to describe a dance in writing and drawing.

Choreographer: Someone who arranges dance steps and movements for a ballet or show.

Chorus: In Greek theater, a character or group that comments on action and advances the plot.
Choreograph your workout.
Set a basketball drill to music. Clean your room to your favorite tunes. Practice number facts and commit vocabulary to memory by pairing new ideas with dance steps.

Now dress the part!
How do costumes and props affect character moves?

Try out these moves!

**Strike a pose:** Pick a typical stance from a character at East High. Freeze for four counts. Strike another character pose and hold four counts. Add jumps. Repeat with two more poses for a total of 16 beats.

**Cheerleader arms:** “Ready, OK!” Make 90-degree angles with your arms. Hold them straight up by your ears or in a V. Clap between each movement as you try variations.

**Step clap:** Step to the side with your right foot. Bring your left foot into its side and clap. Step with your left foot and reverse. Repeat for eight counts.

**Lunge:** Stand facing forward, lunge to the right side and put your right arm straight out to your side. Come back to the middle. Repeat to the left side. Add in arm variations and try lunging forward and backward.

**Paddle turn:** With your left foot on the ground to pivot, let your right foot make eight small taps to “paddle” around in a full turn. Keep arms out to each side. Go around once, then clap or pose. Switch so that the right foot pivots, with the left foot paddling. Repeat each side for eight counts.

**Freestyle:** Use imagination to create new routines—combining these basic elements of all dances.

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**Get inspiration for your dance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Movement</th>
<th>Space</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Direction</th>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Energy</th>
<th>Body</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Run, walk, hop, leap, skip, slide, jump, gallop, bend, twist, stretch, swing, lead, follow</td>
<td>In what level of space are you? High Medium Low</td>
<td>Slow Medium Fast With music or without</td>
<td>Forward Backward Sideways Diagonal Turning</td>
<td>Straight Curved Open Closed</td>
<td>Strong Light Sharp Smooth</td>
<td>Parts from head to toe Shapes the body can take—curves, angles</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Behind-the-scenes talent makes major musical productions possible, with each person contributing unique skills and artistic sensibilities.

**Set designers** translate real and imaginary settings onto the stage, working with craftspeople to build a world in which the actors play.

**Stage managers** are organized multitaskers who keep everything running smoothly during show time—creating production schedules, monitoring rehearsals, supporting the director and calling cues.

**Property or “prop” masters** find or build everything needed to fill the set, from furniture to hand objects.

**Sound designers** amplify, direct and enhance the show’s audio—creating noises, recordings and special effects.

**Lighting design** adds dimension to a play by illuminating the stage in different ways. Consider how light of different color, intensity and direction fills a set with atmosphere.

**Make-up and hair stylists** often use exaggerated techniques for musical theater to make actors look older, younger, hairier, scarier and balder—or simply to make sure actors’ expressions are visible to people in the back rows of the audience!

**Costume designers** and wardrobe stylists create realistic, period clothing—making sure actors can perform freely.

**Marketing and promotions specialists** work to make sure the house is packed. They reach out to the community with special events and activities and generate good publicity and reviews to spread the word about the show.

**House manager and box office staff** are responsible for selling tickets and coordinating the work of theater employees to assure safe, clean and comfortable spaces for the audience to enjoy the show.

Learn more about technical theater jobs.

Watch a show entirely from the perspective of the stage manager or a crew member in the catwalk above the stage. Arrange for a backstage tour of a local theater and meet or interview some of the production crew members working there. Role-play a production meeting before rehearsal to get all the people involved “on the same page.”
Create “the look.”
Design a costume for an original *High School Musical* character. Brainstorm with friends to choose a character you would like to include in the story. Show the character’s personality with clothing, fabric and color choices. What kinds of clothes does the character wear? How does she view herself? How does he reflect his feelings in what he wears? Write down five articles of clothing, colors or accessories the character would wear. Draw sketches to illustrate your design—and use photos and magazine clippings to show fabrics, textures and colors that fit your character. Write a line or two that the character will say when he or she first appears on stage in your costume.

Illuminate me.
Get a sense of what light can do on stage. Sit in front of a mirror in a darkened room and shine a flashlight on your face from several positions (avoid your eyes, please!). How does lighting from the top, side or bottom change your appearance? What happens if you use different colors? Cover your flashlight with colored plastic cups, food wrap, cellophane or notebook dividers to experiment with effects of the spectrum. Chart the changes you detect, then decide the best way to create mood with color and direction in lighting and show others.

A whole new world.
Ever dream of what the very first home you own will look like? Design a set to look like a room in your dream house. Imagine how you will use the room. Where will people stand, sit, work or play? What colors do you see? What furniture? Objects? Draw a sketch, or use a shoebox to make a diorama, a three-dimensional representation of the scene.

“Great works are performed by perseverance.”
*Samuel Johnson* (1709–1784)
English critic and poet
Apply for a grant to produce Disney's *High School Musical*.
Launching in Fall 2007, the NAMM Foundation and Disney's *High School Musical* School Grant Program allows for middle and high schools across the U.S. to apply for a grant to cover all licensing costs that may be required in order for them to put on their own in-school stage show and to also receive a cash grant that will help support additional teaching and production needs including music and/or dance coaching to enhance the educational opportunities that are part of the production. Grants are competitive and will be evaluated based on grant funding guidelines, including the school's and community's planning and producing concrete educational outcomes as part of a production of “High School Musical: On Stage” in a public performance that involves students in all aspects of the production. Grant guidelines will be available at nammfoundation.org.

Everyone’s a critic.
Read reviews of Disney’s *High School Musical* to understand how critics rate a show—then go to see a local musical production and write up your opinions. Consider different aspects of the show—positive and negative. Look for originality, expression and a good sense of character among actors and vocalists. How did the choreography and dancers convey energy and emotion? How successful was the production overall? Send your review to the local or school newspaper to publish.

“We felt we had to know something of his back story. I don’t think people in the cinema would just accept that he’s there. I think we had to learn how he got there.”

*Andrew Lloyd Webber (born 1948)* discussing use of an onscreen back story for the character of the Phantom in the musical *The Phantom of the Opera*
Be your own Ms. Darbus.
Start a theater ensemble with other kids. What are you interested in—improv, comedy sketches, song and dance? Create a group contract (see page 8) based on your troupe’s interests and agreements—and start putting together a show. Is there a local theater, coffee shop or organization with a talent show or “open mic” for young performers?

Put your show in the spotlight!
Perform for a younger class at school, at a senior center or a congregation in your community. Make posters and ads, send invitations and send a short notice or article to local media to promote attendance at the show.

Grab a seat.
Live theater needs an audience. Check entertainment listings in the newspaper or on the Web for musicals and other shows that interest you. Or plan a group trip to Broadway!

“This could be the start of something new.”
Get involved in a musical theater production at school or in the community. Audition—or volunteer to work backstage. It’s a great way to make friends and express yourself through music, story, movement and dance. Many productions rely on interns and assistants to help with costumes, sets, publicity, ticket sales and refreshments.
ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS
- Write in response to literature
- Organize ideas for presentation
- Provide details of characters
- Develop characters and provide plot details
- Comprehend and analyze text

CAREER ED
- Problem solving
- Communication skills
- Teamwork
- Career foundations

MUSIC
- Use movement, pitch, tempo and tone for character
- Use elements of music for expressive effect
- Call on traditional and non-traditional sound sources
- Compose short pieces with specified guidelines

THEATER
- Investigate and analyze theater
- Use authentic vocabulary integral to theater
- Generate ideas for written and improvised work
- Respond expressively to imaginary and scripted events
- Concentrate, collaborate and contribute to an ensemble
- Improve and create scenes and dialogue
- Use voice, gesture and expressions to create vivid characters
- Realize artistic interpretations for informal or formal productions

DANCE
- Understand and apply expressive and efficient movement
- Use the body with concentration, focus and music
- Learn basic dance steps, positions/patterns from many traditions
- Improvise, create and perform dance

GENERAL NOTES
- Tap enthusiasm sparked by High School Musical—inspiring kids with musical theater to become better people and performers!
- Novice actors may shy away from the spotlight and centerstage—so be sure to encourage players to work in groups at first, and provide time for individual practice.
- Each activity is designed to achieve standards of excellence in core subjects and practice essential skills that students need to succeed in high school, college and careers.
SOCIAL STUDIES & HISTORY
- Interpret chronological relationships
- Understand how individuals influenced history
- Interpret events within eras of U.S. history

VISUAL ARTS
- Show volume, proportion and control
- Understand skills required for costume design
- Make connections among elements of design

HEALTH & PHYSICAL EDUCATION
- Self-management and social behavior
- Respect for individual differences
- Fitness habits for a lifetime

SCIENCE
- Collect and analyze data and develop conclusions
- Plan a simple investigation to address questions
- Summarize data and offer interpretations and implications

TECHNOLOGY
- Collaborate using telecommunications and online resources
- Locate information from electronic sources

Put on a Show!
You can perform High School Musical and other titles from the Disney Collection. For more information, visit Music Theatre International at www.MTIDisneyCollection.com.

See a Show!

The Music in You: Learning Activities in Musical Theater—starring YOU and a cast of friends and family! September 2007

Special thanks to Disney Theatrical Production Education Department for content and activities.

For additional resources, visit "The Music In You" Web site.
Visit the Library.
Learn more about musical theater with these great books:
• 101 More Dance Games for Children: New Fun and Creativity with Movement by Paul Rooyackers and Rob Webster
• A Grand Tour: The Rise, Glory, and Fall of an American Institution by Denny Martin Flinn
• Acting A to Z: The Young Person’s Guide to a Stage or Screen Career by Katherine Mayfield
• Acting for Young Actors: The Ultimate Teen Guide by Mary Lou Belli and Dinah Lenney
• Acting through Exercises by John L. Gronbeck-Tedesco
• Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking by Malcolm Gladwell
• Broadway Musicals: The 101 Greatest Shows of All Time by Ken Bloom and Frank Vlastnik
• Center Stage by Wayne D. Cook
• Creative Drama and Imagination by Helaine Rosenberg
• Creative Drama Resource Book by Ruth Beall Heinig
• From Cakewalks to Concert Halls: An Illustrated History of African American Popular Music from 1895 to 1930 by Thomas Morgan and William Barlow
• Funny Bones: Comedy Games and Activities for Kids by Lisa Bany-Winters
• Games for Actors and Non-Actors by Augusto Boal
• How to Talk to Children about Art by Francoise Barbe-Gall
• Improvisations for the Theatre by Viola Spolin
• International Playtime: Classroom Games and Dances from Around the World by Wayne E. Nelson and Henry “Buzz” Glass
• Kids Take the Stage: Helping Young People Discover the Creative Outlet of Theater by Lenka Peterson, Dan O’Connor, and Paul Newman
• On Stage: Theater Games and Activities for Kids by Lisa Bany-Winters
• Red, Hot, Blue: A Smithsonian Salute to the American Musical by Amy Henderson and Dwight Blocker Bowers
• Set Your Voice Free by Roger Love
• Show Time: Music, Dance, and Drama Activities for Kids by Lisa Bany-Winters
• Stagecraft 1: A Complete Guide to Backstage Work by William A. Lord
• Stanislavsky for Beginners by David Allen
• The 7 Simple Truths of Acting for The Teen Actor by Larry Silverberg
• The Comedy Bible: From Stand-up to Sitcom by Judy Carter
• The Family Story-Telling Handbook by Anne Pellowski.
• The Filmgoer’s Companion by Leslie Halliwell
• The Mozart Effect for Children: Awakening Your Child’s Mind, Health and Creativity with Music by Don Campbell
• Theater Games for the Classroom by Viola Spolin
• Theatre for Young Audiences: 20 Great Plays for Children by Coleman A. Jennings
Use the Web.
Check out these Web sites for more information on arts education and musical theater:

- www.actorsequity.org
- www.actorsource.com
- www.artsedge.org
- www.backstage.com
- www.brainyquote.com
- www.broadwayworld.com
- www.carnegiehall.org/article/explore_and_learn/ovr_weill_music_inst.html
- www.costumes.org
- http://dance.gmu.edu/Critique_Dance.html
- www.free.prohosting.com/~jez
- www.howardgardner.com
- http://improvencyclopedia.org
- www.lyricsmania.com
- www.musicals.net
- www.musicals101.com
- www.namm.org
- www.pbs.org/wnet/gperf/index.html
- www.playbill.com
- www.playwriting101.com
- www.shakespeare.com
- www.spolin.com/players.html
- www.theater-link.com
- www.us.imdb.com