



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute  
1990 Volume II: Contemporary American Drama: Scripts and Performance

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## **“Come-Alive” Social Studies: A Study of Cultures Through Play-Writing**

Curriculum Unit 90.02.07  
by Jeanne Sandahl

It is a truth universally acknowledged (among teachers) that when you have taught a particular curriculum for a number of years it tends to stultify, even though one of the pleasures of teaching lies in the fact that nothing is ever quite the same two years running, because the children are endlessly variable. But because you are always busy with papers to grade and records to keep and the minutiae of classroom management, you tend to use the same materials and books and perhaps the same old tried-and-true approach.

So it has been for me with Social Studies, in my 4th grade classroom. At our school this subject takes a back seat to heavy emphasis on Language Arts and Math, with Music as a major subject taking up quite a few periods each week. And so I confess I have taken the easy way out for several seasons now. We are provided with A Book. I have stuck to The Book.

But this past school year, a delightful experience in playwriting, stimulated by the Yale Children’s Dramat’s contest for elementary school playwrights, has given me the wish to try it again (my young writers won three of the prizes)—but this time, to use plays in a different way—to use theater arts in general, and playwriting as well, to make my tired Social Studies unit “come alive.” I should be able to cover the necessary concepts, and to practice teaching an integrated day at the same time, something I aim at but don’t always manage too well. For those who aren’t familiar with the term, an integrated day is one in which your subjects—reading, writing, spelling, math, etc.—all revolve around one theme. Each subject becomes an aspect of the major theme you have chosen to emphasize that day.

So, for two days a week, I will turn my classroom into a “drama lab.” We will use plays—their writing, production aspects, and auxiliary needs—to cover all our subjects. I’m sure we’ll have fun in the process.

Fourth Grade Social Studies units emphasize man in his environment, and how this influences the development of cultures. For this unit I have chosen Ancient Egypt, a hot dry land, but a true river culture, dominated by the mighty Nile. The annual flooding, with its miraculous enrichment of the soil, leads indomitably toward the rise of its politics, religion mythology, and economic structure. This beautiful materials now available, from coloring books to mythological tomes. Yale’s handsome Egyptian collection is close by, and we could have a super-climactic trip to the stunning display at New York’s Metropolitan Museum, with the added plum of lunch in the shadow of “Cleopatra’s Needle,” a beautiful obelisk somehow filched from Egypt in the 1890’s and set up to beautify Central Park in the area near the Museum. And of course, we have evidence

(which students could visit) of the fascination Egyptian architecture had for a much earlier generation: the cemetery gate on Grove Street, which is a copy of the Temple of Karnak, complete with symbols about the afterlife.

The approach I wish to try would, of course, work equally well with other cultures—Native Americans, perhaps, or a cargo in the mountains of South America, if that were preferred. I chose Egypt because we can read their writing, and there are so many beautiful pictures of their life and arts, and because I have found with previous classes that they are profoundly interested in the Egyptian preoccupation with the afterlife and its mortuary customs, perhaps for the same reason that they like horror movies.

So why choose the dramatic arts? Because they can make long-dead people real, and increase understanding of their culture and the many influences that made it what it was. Besides, it lends itself so well to cross-curriculum activities of all kinds—like Reading, Writing, Spelling, research, editing, criticism, and maybe even Math. And of course, kids love any activity where at times they can push back the desks and become someone else for awhile.

Here, then, is a list of my objectives:

1. To understand, through role playing techniques, the culture of another people, and how it might evolve because of geographic and environmental features.
2. To increase and enrich language skills of creating, writing, editing and spelling.
3. To increase research skills.
4. To advance class knowledge of history.
5. To enlarge student knowledge of playwriting and play production conventions.
6. To allow class to learn, understand and enjoy related theater arts, such as costume and scenery design, as well as the art of acting.
7. To increase my own skill in tying in classroom work to a central objective, using a unified day approach to my Social Studies objectives, making possible a more flexible and lively use of class time.
8. To make my Social Studies curriculum come alive—at last!

## STRATEGIES

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These plans as I envision them would take an average of four one-hour periods a week for about 9 weeks. Sometimes we would require more time, as when art periods are involved. Some would be trips, which would take a whole morning. Towards the end of the unit, less time would be required in formal lesson activities and more in production aspects of a play, which rehearsals and costume making, etc.

Of course, you can't just throw some paper at your students and say, "Here, ducks, let's write a play." They will have to acquire a working knowledge of their subject, Ancient Egypt. Research and reports will be needed. Serendipitously, New Haven has just instituted computers with writing programs in the classroom, and the children love the new Compton's Encyclopedia that has been added to the computer program. My students were very enthusiastic about writing and printing out reports from it last year. We'll use that, and some of the beautiful books (listed in the bibliography herewith) to add to our base of knowledge.

Nor can you expect that children write plays without a good grasp of the parts of a play; they need to learn characters and characterization, setting (taught as time and place), conflict and resolution, and the useful device of a narrator. They need to be taught the form of a play; how to show who's talking when; how to write stage directions. This is best done through reading plays and discussion and analyzing. They need conscious experience of the format before they can write cohesively.

A good place to begin is with the basal reader (that's the basic reader series that most elementary school students read daily in). My next year's groups will be in different readers, but all will include at least one play among their pages; some rather charming but all with good guided discussions of the parts of a play, especially with the conflict/resolution part, which young children often need a good deal of help with. I have included our Readers in the bibliography, along with the name of the play I would choose for each of my three groups.

The next move will be to hammer home the parts of a play with independent reading of short plays. I plan to use "Small Plays for Special Days," by Sue Alexander. These are very short, have clear "problems" and clear resolutions. The children will read them independently, do a worksheet that requires them to analyze the parts, and then, perhaps, in teams of 2 or 3, produce them.

Teaching an integrated day requires that every subject taught that day (or as many as possible) stem from the major emphasis chosen for that day. So, while social studies reports are being generated and shared, spelling words will include concepts and vocabulary generated from that work—words like environment, culture, agriculture—and will be assigned for definition and practice. So, too, will Math be coopted on occasion: the Egyptians had a numeration system, which would be taught during Math period, and homework problems will be in Egyptian.

Art periods especially will serve the main subject. We might begin by picking up the first lesson—location of Ancient Egypt, the Nile, Africa, with a lesson in map skills, and add details to the map which are missing, drawing symbols for products on them.

Health, Nutrition and Science will also be part of the study; we will analyze the basic Egyptian diet, and perhaps even plan a feast day, with musicians and dancers. Since the Egyptians excelled at science in the form of medicine, mortuary science, and architectural physics, they will be included in our study through reports and pictures. Egyptian physicians were renowned far beyond their homeland. From the evidence of

skulls we know they performed trepanning for patients with brain injuries, long before modern Western medicine. And of course, the grim science of mummy-making has been studied closely, and there are some books for kids about it. Some of our reports may include models of a tomb—King Tutankhamen’s, perhaps.

When the students have researched and shared information on the major aspects of Egyptian life, we will turn to famous Egyptian historical characters. During reading they will be asked to write a biography of one Egyptian—such as Hatshepsut, the woman-pharaoh who wore a false beard; or maybe Akhnaton, the monotheistic pharaoh who tried to destroy the worship of the old gods and with it the power of their priests—we have pretty good information on many of those who left their massive monuments behind in the Valley of the Kings or the great pyramids. We will create a paperback of famous Egyptians for later display.

It is my custom to assign a book report each month; this first month they will be assigned to read a play, and report in the form of a “chalk talk” telling the major parts of the play, and then read a scene from the play aloud for the class. These scenes should give us a chance to work on projection and to emphasize the need for being heard.

Since the gods play such an important part in Egyptian life, our improvisations will now turn toward them. I will have been reading from Geraldine Harris’ *Gods and Pharaohs* book (we have read-aloud time every day), which is a beautiful collection of Egyptian mythological tales, and they will have a nodding acquaintance with most of the Gods through that. But now they will have a homework assignment: prepare a short monologue, which they will write after some research, to present to the “pantheon” of other Gods. It will need to tell us who they represent, what their “job” or constituency is, and something about themselves as Gods. They should make a mask, as many of these gods have animal heads. We will have a parade, perhaps with the Grand March from *Aida*, and present each God in turn.

*(figure available in print form)*

This is what a diagram of the first week’s work might look like.

During the Language period at this point we would read prepared copysheets with Greek, Norse, and Egyptian creation myths. Discussion would center on comparison and contrast of the three (it’s one of the skills we teach in 4th and 5th grade). What influence did the Nile and its life-giving floods have on Egyptian myth? Did the fact that Osiris (who is always painted green in temple pictures) was torn to pieces by his evil brother Set, and then pieced back together by his faithful wife Isis have anything to do with the land which lay barren in the dry season but came magically to life with the flood? Teams can prepare role playing skits for each of the three major myths and present them to the class.

Art at this time might be designing personal cartouches, or signature symbols, composed of sound symbols that approximate each student’s name, which would of course require getting to know the Egyptian alphabet. We can make a frieze with the symbols for the classroom, because the symbols are pictographs and are fun to make. Math could be picked up again, to teach the Egyptian version of Arvala (the very old African strategy game played on the ground by children and on a specially designed board with cups by the adults) or the beautiful board game often found in tombs, the rules of which have been lost but which museums have copied and devised new rules. I have both these games in my classroom now, but you can find them in museum catalogs, especially the Metropolitan’s.

During this period, too, I will have made arrangements for a couple of local trips, one to Yale’s Egyptian collection in their Art Museum, and one to Grove Street Cemetery to study the Karnak gate, with its symbols. Trips to the Metropolitan Museum of Art need to be arranged for early in the year, because their schedule fills

up early, but I will try for a date in May or June.

Now that we have brainstormed our Egyptian family characters, we need to determine what other, perhaps historic, characters will inhabit our play. Now we will play improvisation games to help situations and characterizations emerge. (See Activity #1; among the lesson plans.)

As scenes are improvised, dramatic situations will soon emerge, some with more vitality than others. We will discuss them and decide what we want to keep. To be sure we have a record, we'll choose a class secretary or two, who will write down a synopsis of the scene. The next step will be a class brainstorming session again, to determine the plot line. It may be that the conflict that emerges is historical, as with the conflict between Ahknoton and the powerful priests. It may be they will decide on problems more personal to their "family" characters. I have tried this with whole-class stories, and the children show surprising ingenuity in connecting up plot lines and working out resolutions.

Again we will use structured improvisation (structured because now we have particular characters who have now to follow a particular plot line). Once again, we'll keep what seems to forward the plot best. We'll incorporate any new suggestions and our secretaries will take notes. For two or three days we'll repeat these scenes.

About now, during language periods, we will break up into teams to write down scenes. Because the dialogue and actions are pretty well fixed in the players' minds, it should be relatively easy to do this. I will need to provide some help with transitions and what the narrator says. Then we'll get the class computer expert (we always have one or two of these) who will type it up and print it out for us.

Now we have the script, and we have characters who know what they have to do. Learning lines will be easy, because what they say has emerged from their own efforts during the improvisations. But it's time for them to learn stage positions. We'll make a chart to hang on the wall, and review the history of them. There's a team game we can use to confirm them in the knowledge of down right, up left, etc. (See Activity #7 in the Lesson Plans). Reviewing the basic principles of blocking, like not turning their backs to the audience, or covering each other, we can make decisions about how and where to move. Volunteers can be shown how to diagram the moves and remind actors who forget.

During this flurry of dramatic activity, life will go on in the classroom. Spelling words continue to emerge from our activities—from Egyptian myth, from architecture, from theater terms—the possibilities are infinite. Meanwhile too, art activities can include collecting pictures of Egyptian art and architecture, and setting up a gallery of them, complete with short written commentaries for them. Our school is short of space, and so we use the big old fashioned halls for things like this. We may also have been able to find a volunteer archaeologist or even an Egyptologist among the many talented people who will share their knowledge with New Haven School children.

Now that we have discussed the stage positions, and played games to fix them in our minds, and have decided who should move where in our playing area, we'll give each character a diagram of the set, with directions on how to mark their moves in their script. We can use the simple symbols usually used: X for a crossing of the set; XDR for cross down right, and so on. The actors should learn to mark scripts so that their directions are clearly and quickly picked out, with arrows from their lines to the margin where directions for movements can be written. They can be taught to underline the speeches ahead of their own for cues.

From this point on we have daily rehearsals, scene by scene. In reading class we'll research costumes as close

to the period of our play as possible. Egyptian history was more than 1500 years long, and there were many changes in styles of clothing, etc. but drawing pictures of our characters in clothing that approximates the time will be fun. Readers can research music and musicians, and there are a good many pictures of dancers. Musical instruments seem to have been harps and pipes—possibly beginning as reeds from the river—and percussion instruments, parts of which can be seen in the Yale and Metropolitan collections. Since we have no idea what Egyptian music may have sounded like, we may improvise with recorders. It might be possible to make some sistrums—percussion instruments with brass discs on wires that must have made sounds similar to some of the percussion parts of modern orchestras.

When costumes have been researched, we'll devote Art class to designing and manufacturing the costumes we need. Paper bag masks will do nicely for heads of gods; colorful cardboard collars will do nicely to simulate the jeweled collars of nobles and dignitaries; sheets or cheesecloth will do for skirts and other garments. It's one era of history that requires little or no sewing. Judiciously placed safety pins will do. Note two excellent books in my list.

Our school, nearly 100 years old, has no auditorium, and no stage. We conduct our assemblies and plays in the wide upstairs hall, with moveable platforms and lighting made out of clamp lights with No. 10 tin can covers that can have gels taped across for colors. A parent made us a dimmer board, so we can have simple lights and light plans, but they're not essential; they just add a note of glamour to the occasion. So we'll need a lights person; the perfect job for that hyperactive student who finds he needs employment that's a little more consistently active. We'll all write program notes in Language classes now, and appoint a committee to do the program on the computer, to be copied on the copier with added student art work. Spelling this week might consist entirely of theater terms. Our reading aloud periods this week might deal with Moses and the captivity in Egypt, just to help the class remember, there were other cultures all around the Egyptians during their history; some desert nomad herdsmen, like the Jews.

If we can afford the materials (our PTA is usually generous) we will also study simple make-up; it's so quintessentially Egyptian to make up the eyes dramatically. We'll choose a make-up team and a costume team. One of the things that should emerge from this unit will be a sense of the number of people and the energy they must expend to keep the actors out front. Of course, here we'll all be actors as well.

Scenery could be painted on big brown project rolls and fastened to the wall, but I should like to experiment with scenery painted on the side of big refrigerator boxes which can be rotated to reveal different scenes. And so we will need a couple of stage hands to rotate them.

Toward the end of the nine weeks, we'll take the time to rehearse once a day. Now that we have a set script instead of the frenetic energies kids use in improvisation, there may be those who need special help with projection, and the commonest complaint about school plays is that some young actors can't be heard. This can be a real problem when your audience includes even younger children than my student actors. When they can't hear they begin to talk, and focus is easily lost. Some experts say the teacher should stand next to the child and say his lines at the volume desired, which I have found does help, but next rehearsal they may revert. Robert Cohen in his book (see bibliography) recommends the young actor should practice orotund phrases like "Roll On, thou deep and dark blue ocean, roll!" in a full voice, with plenty of breath under it—in the shower and any other place he/she can find where there is freedom to orate without being kidded to death by small siblings. I've never tried it, but I will. I'll send them down to the boiler room to try it.

While we are coming up to dress rehearsal, we'll practice poster design: how to get the message of the coming play across to the whole school. Then we'll plaster the school walls with our coming attractions. We



will probably do two actual performances for our school, because our seating space is small and our audience sits on the floor and needs to be near to the action to see. Whether we have an overture of recorders and dancing Egyptians, or a procession of the pantheon of the gods, will be left to our playwrights to decide. It will also depend on the skills of this particular class. Some years you strike it rich; half the girls are studying ballet outside, or are accomplished musicians already.

Of course, we'll "Strike the set" and have a cast party. The next day, for creative writing they have an assignment: suppose they were theater critics: what would they write about our play? What did they like, and what not like? How could we have made it better?

In my class, review is usually done through games, which may follow the format of a fact bee or a Jeopardy style quiz. In this case I'll use a team Trivia game with prepared questions that cover all the areas we have worked over these nine weeks: facts about Egypt, about theater terms, about plays and stage structure. Both winners and losers will have to take the real quiz that follows, though.

Our end of the year trip (we get only one big one) will be to the Metropolitan Museum. They have wonderful docents who steer you through the Egyptian wing with courtesy and great knowledge. Our class should be well prepared to take advantage of the opportunity. Some of the most dazzling artifacts, to me, are a room full of wooden boxes found in tombs. Small, beautifully carved and painted figures—hundreds of them—are busily conducting all the activities it would take to keep a thriving nobleman's estate going—baking, farming, sailing, fishing, fighting off enemies. It makes that long-ago time so real and so vivid, and gives us a feeling of kinship with that long-ago people of the great River. The nobleman's estate has vanished into the dust, but the activities are all essentially the same ones we carry out today. We still have rich and poor, priest and poet, worship and war. If my students have, through study and the magic of drama, begun to feel the wonder of this great civilization which began on the river bank and grew to grandeur—I'll feel it was really worthwhile.

## A NINE WEEK CALENDAR OF ACTIVITIES

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WEEK 1 See diagram of integrated day, above.

WEEK 2 Research reports: Egyptian history, economy, politics, religion, professions, classes, education, medicine. Spelling: generated from E. mythology. Art: Collage of E. people for bulletin board. Reading aloud: from *Gods & Pharaohs*.

WEEK 3 Last week's reports are shared, discussed, posted. Now we study Egyptian personalities. Each student writes a biography with (Art) a picture/portrait of that person, drawn in the style of E. artists. We combine them into a "Lives of...." paperback, computer-published.

WEEK 4 Religion and the Gods this week. Each one prepares a monologue based on study of one of the E. gods, wearing something associated: a mask, perhaps. We hold a Pantheon Procession and each person delivers. If possible, we visit the Yale Art Gallery. Art: We study the E. "alphabet" and design personal signature cartouches for each person and post them.

WEEK 5 Using prepared summaries of Greek, Norse, and Egyptian creation myths, we write comparisons and discuss them, and reasons for their differences. We team up to improvise reenactments of the three stories. Spelling comes from myths. Math: We learn to play Egyptian game found in tombs (a board game). Art: If this is the week we go to Grove Street to see the

Temple of Karnak gate, we sketch it.

WEEK 6 Quiz on Egyptian life. Class will brainstorm characters for play, ages, names, class, etc. We begin improvisations based on these characters interacting with historical Egyptians. Then we decide on “problem” and “resolution” for play, and continue improvisations based on brainstorming ideas. Art: We collect pictures of Egyptian architecture and make a “gallery” of the hall. We write commentaries for each.

WEEK 7 We form teams to write down scenes. We edit and share. Teacher helps with transitions and narrator, if any. Volunteer puts script on computer, we print. Three rehearsals this week. Art: We design costumes for our characters on paper. Class begins to accumulate materials. Spelling has continued to be generated from Egyptian terms.

WEEK 8 Using board diagram of stage positions, we learn their history and use. We play team game to confirm knowledge of positions. We have a rehearsal each day, working on projection, sharpening characterization. We choose teams for costume manufacture, make-up, lights, etc. Art: We make costumes, dramatic posters for school. Program committee begins work but whole class writes program notes.

WEEK 9 Program printed. Costumes finished.

Tuesday Dress Rehearsal.

Performances Wednesday and Thursday.

Friday: Class writes Critics’ Review of play.

Cast Party!

MAY OR JUNE Class visits Egyptian Wing of Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

## Sample Lesson Plans

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### Activity #1: Role-Playing

***Goal to relate what we know about Egypt to lives of real or realistic people who lived then.***



**Preparation** *Small index cards, on which are written WHO, WHAT, or WHERE: There must be enough of each to create and equip all the groups of 3 in the room. On the front of each card is written as follows:*

*WHO* cards indicate who the people in the scene are. Example: Pharaoh Ahkhnaton, a high priest of Isis, a commander of Egyptian troops against the Nubians.

*WHAT* cards indicate what they are meeting about. Example: Temples to the old gods are to be shut and new ones built to Ra. The army is to be cut back as peace will be signed with Nubia.

*WHERE* cards indicate where the meeting takes place. Example: The Throne-Room in the palace at Thebes

**Procedure** *Teams are formed consisting of 3 persons. Try to form teams that include extroverted persons with the shy ones.*

Give each team 15 minutes to create and practice a scene in which each character shows who he is through speech and actions. (Teams should try to use actions as well as speech)

Leader should circulate, asking characters questions about their feelings and helping with suggestions if the team is “stuck”.

**Culmination** *All other teams act as audience while each team presents its scenes. Suggestions are made and incorporated as the scene is run through a second time. Agreement is reached on what should be kept for another day. Notes are taken to preserve the best touches.*

Sample Lesson Plans

## **Activity #2: Role-Playing, Part 2**

**Goal** *to enrich and deepen the characterizations of Egyptian citizens each student played in Activity #1. To remember and increase familiarity with the scene previously played.*

**Preparation** *Players find a spot in the room where they can be as isolated as possible. Each sits on the floor in silence. Each must have done Activity #1.*

**Procedure** *Students are expected to maintain silence as each character is interviewed. The leader tells each participant to close eyes, and to form a mental picture of his/her character. The leader asks: What color are the eyes? Hair? How tall are you? How old are you? As he asks each question the participant mentally answers the question. Participants are told “BE that person now!”*

**Culmination** *Then the leader walks about the room interviewing each character. Each must answer in the voice of his character, as loudly as possible:*

Who are you? How do you feel? What do you want? and, of course, sometimes “Why?” to the responses.

When everyone has been interviewed, initiate a discussion: Who was really in character? Could YOU stay in your character? What could you do to help maintain it?

## **Activity #3: The Singing Syllable**

**Goal** *to encourage cooperation and ensemble concentration; to warm up full voice before improvisations or rehearsals.*

***Preparation Group of 10 or more, in seats.***

***Procedure “It” is appointed, and sent from the room till summoned. A conductor is appointed. The conductor divides the room into 3 teams and gives each team one syllable of a 3 syllable word. A tune, one that is universally known, is chosen. At the conductor’s signal, each group begins to sing just its own syllable to that song. The conductor can call for softer or louder, but otherwise pretends to conduct.***

Example: Suppose the word “cucumber” is chosen. One team sings “cu, cu, cu, cu, cu, cu, cu” While the others sing “cum” and “ber”. Players should try to stay together and follow the motions of the conductor as to speed and volume.

***Culmination “It” is summoned back. “It” must then, by walking around the room and listening, decide what the word can be.***

The game is most fun and most beneficial when everyone is cooperating and singing their best. After two or three times, the group is well warmed up and usually has enjoyed it.

#### **Activity #4: Group Improvisation**

***Goal practice in ensemble playing.***

***Preparation Form groups of 4 or 5.***

***Procedure Group is given a well-known historical event. Using mime only, they are to act it out. You may want to appoint one member of the group as a director. For example, the Discovery of the Americas by Columbus might be acted out: Columbus, sailors show rolling gait of seamen. Crew mimes mutinous threats. Columbus folds arms, shakes head grimly. Lookout sees land! All fall to knees to thank God!***

***Culmination Remaining groups, after they have prepared their own skit, acts as audience, tries to guess the event.***

#### **Activity #5: Gibberish (after Viola Spolin)**

***Goal to get natural, energetic speech from young actors who may be shy or hesitant in speech.***

***Preparation Groups of 2 or 3, one group at a time.***

***Procedure Give the group a subject to discuss. They begin to improvise a conversation. When the flow is well established, call out “Gibberish!” The group must switch to nonsense syllables, but make the conversation appear to continue normally, until you call out “English!” They then switch back to normal. Repeat several times with each group.***

Culmination: Other groups listen, enjoy, make suggestions.

#### **Activity #6: Speak a Little Louder, Dear:**

***Goal to get a particular player to feel what it’s like to speak up in front of other folks.***

***Preparation Choose a group of 3 or 4 persons, including the actor who needs the help.***

**Procedure** Ask the group to improvise a scene in which everyone except the low-speaker is DEAF. Tell him he has to tell this family that a flood is coming and they must move to high ground. The others just don't get the message, somehow. They are not totally deaf. If he speaks loudly enough.

**Culmination** Praise the loudest performance. Ask the actor how it felt? Could he do it again, even louder?

### **Activity #7: Stage Race**

**Goal** to help students achieve familiarity with positions on stage.

**Preparation** Two large (equal-sized) 9-square stage diagrams should be chalked on playground. Discuss the names and the historical background of the various positions. Form two equal teams, each facing one of the diagrams.

**Procedure** Teacher calls out commands: "Cross to DR, face audience." "Find center stage, face up left." Teams get points if their player gets to proper place on diagram first.

**Culmination** Game ends when every player has had a turn.

## **TEACHER BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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Cheney, Arnold B. *The Writing Corner* . Santa Monica, CA.: Goodyear Publishing Company, Inc., 1979.

This super teacher's book on teaching writing has some useful suggestions for writing scripts.

Chilver, Peter. *Staging a School Play* . New York: Harper and Row, 1967.

Practical guidance for every step in production, along with help with projection, timing, and other problems with young actors.

Cohen, Robert. *Acting One* . University of California: Mayfield Press, 1984.

Good tips on memorization; some excellent beginning exercises and some sound principles to help beginners. Help with voice development as well.

Cohen, Robert, and Harrop, John. *Creative Play Direction* . Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1984.

A very complete depiction of the director's job. Leaves you in awe of the task but contains a good deal of useful help on working with actors, in and out of the classroom.

Davidson, Basil. *African Kingdoms* . New York: Time-Life Books. Information on early Nile peoples. Handsome illustrations, good for reference for teachers and for students.

Hodgson, John, and Richards, Ernest. *Improvisation* . New York: Grove Press, 1974.

Very useful for developing concentration, building characterization, and moving from improvisation to play making.

Howard, Vernon. *Pantomimes, Charades, and Skits* . New York: Sterling Publishing Co., Inc.

A charming, nicely organized book of games that develop group imagination. Many could be adapted to subject matter that you may want to teach.

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A veteran classroom drama teacher gives a curriculum with many improvisation activities, structured and non-structured.

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May tell more about play production than you'll ever want to know, but this one's especially good at explaining the duties of production crews, stage positions, etc., which it is useful for students to learn.

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One of the Arrow Creative Classroom series, brief and practical, especially on the writing end of play creation with students.

Scott, Gerry D. III. *Ancient Egyptian Art at Yale* . New Haven: Yale University Art Gallery.

A beautiful, carefully annotated collection of pictures, with provinces, of Yale's extensive Egyptian collection. Helps sort out the various periods of Egyptian history.

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(no author listed) "A Walk Through King Tutankhamun's Tomb" *Instructor Magazine* , Vol. LXXXVII (October,

1977) 54-61.

History of the Tut discovery with striking pictures and suggestions for related art projects. Shows a picture of the strategy game which several museums now carry.

## STUDENT BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Alexander, Sue. *Small Plays for Special Days* . New York: Seabury Press, 1977.

Seven 3 to 5 minute plays with simple plots and simple characters, but fun and funny. Simple structure for analysis and good practice for young actors.

Asimov, Isaac. *The Book That Saved the Earth* (play). From Blazing Trails (reading series, Level 10). New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1983.

This is part of the Basal reader series used in the New Haven School system. This will be my middle reading group in this coming year. This is a delightful play and a good place to begin discussion of the parts of a play.

Braun-Raasmussen, Ole, and Peterson, Grete. *Make-up, Costumes, and Masks for the Stage* . New York: Sterling Publishing Co., Inc., 1981.

Very useful tips on how to manufacture just about anything for the stage (except sets). Lots of illustrations and patterns; plans that use easy to find and inexpensive materials.

Casson, Lionel. *Ancient Egypt* . New York: Time-Life Books, 1965.

Excellent reference source for teachers and for student reports: strong emphasis on culture and the landforms. A excellent history of ancient Egypt. Many beautiful illustrations.

Harris, Geraldine. *Gods and Pharaohs* . New York: Schoken-Books, 1982.

Stories about the Egyptian gods and the “divine” pharaohs. High group 4ths could read it, but it makes a wonderful book for reading aloud by the teacher. More beautiful illustrations.

Ions, Veronica. *Egyptian Mythology* . New York: Peter Bedrick Books, 1983.

A beautiful compendium of the Egyptian gods, their beginnings, their constituencies, and their special “talents.” Handsome illustrations.

McCaslin, Nellie. *Act Now! Plays and Ways to Make Them* . New York: S.G. Phillips, 1975.

Some fun acting games, tips on writing, written for a good 4th grade reader. Shows how a story becomes a play.

Nesbit, E. *The Phoenix and the Carpet* , from *Golden Voyages* (basal reading series, Level II). New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1983.

This play will be used with my highest reading group as a way to begin studying play format.

Newby, P.H. *The Egypt Story* . Cairo, Egypt: The American University in Cairo Press, 1979.

Another beautiful reference book with wonderful pictures. It wanders into modern Egypt too, which may be of interest to some students. A history of Egypt through the ages.

Palma, Diego Dalla. *Make-Up Artists' Handbook* . New York: Sterling Publishing Co., 1985.

Easy to read, replete with illustrations and simple directions for theatrical make-up, hair styles, etc.

Schuan, Karl. *The First Book of Acting* . New York: Franklin Watts, Inc., 1965.

Written for elementary students, it describes how plays are produced, and the jobs of each of the production crew. Good tips on what to expect at try-outs, rehearsals, etc.

Tashjian, Virginia A. *Juba This and Juba That—Story Hour Stretches for Large or Small Groups* . Toronto: Little, Brown and Co., 1969.

A utterly charming collection of group chants and story responses, useful for loosening up a group, warm-ups, or just plain for fun!

Ventura, Piero, and Ceserani, Gian Paolo. *Tutankhamun* . Morristown, N.J.: Silver Burdett Co., 1985.

Part of a marvelous series of books on historical times written, with many pictures, for children. This one is an excellent history of Tutankhamun and his times, starting with the discovery of his tomb—an archaeological detective story, but much more.

Winther, Barbara. *Little Mouse Deer* (play). From *Ring Around the World* (reading series, Level 9). New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1983.

This will be the reader for my lowest group in the coming year. An attractive short play with an African base. Useful to start discussion of play format and play parts and conventions.

(no author listed) *A Coloring Book of Tutankhamun* . Santa Barbara, Ca.: Bellerophon Books, 1978.

One of a series of beautiful well-researched coloring books that cover a particular historical period. Excellent line drawings that clearly show details of dress, equipment, and cultural activities of the ancient Egyptians.

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