

ACTING IN MUSICALS

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Materials needed: lyrics or libretto from an obscure or less popular musical.

Objective: To teach the importance of acting in the musical theater, and to provide a method of interpreting song lyrics.

Method: This lesson plan evolved as a result of a student who said to me, "I'm going to be in musicals, and I don't have to learn how to act!" In order to emphasize that acting is an essential part of performing in a musical. (as essential as singing or dancing.)

Type out the lyrics from a song from an obscure or lesser known musical. ("Argument" from Chess works well) Preferably a duet with lyrics that don't rhyme, or lyrics that can be "acted" as a scene. Type them in "dialogue style". Assign the scene to the students and DON'T tell the students that they are performing a song. Treat this scene just as you would any acting scene.

After the students have rehearsed and performed the scene, then play the song that they unknowingly performed.

This emphasizes that "real" acting must be done even when performing a song. Songs with strong emotional lyrics work well, and I have had students tell me that this "trick" changed their approach to performing musical theatre.