NYU STEINHARDT
MUSIC AND PERFORMING ARTS PROFESSIONS

PROGRAM IN EDUCATIONAL THEATRE presents

TWO WEEKS WITH THE QUEEN
Based on a novel by Morris Gleitzman
Adapted by Mary Morris

Cast
MAGGIE BUSSARD
BRENDAN CHAMBERS
MEGHAN CROSBY
ERIC GELB
JULIA LENNON
KRISTINA MELSHIMER
SHANNON STODDARD

Directed by PHILIP TAYLOR
Assistant Directed by ANDREW GAINES
Set Designer DARYL EMBRY
Lighting Designers LEAH COHEN and DARYL EMBRY
Costume Designer MEAGHAN CROSS
Sound Designer KARI-NOOR THOMPSON
Production Stage Manager SARAH BROWN

Provincetown Playhouse 133 MacDougal Street

TEACHER’S RESOURCE GUIDE
steinhardt.nyu.edu/music
Dear Teacher:

Welcome to Educational Theatre at NYU. Now in our 51st year, our award-winning program is dedicated to developing the next generation of theatre artists and educators for careers in schools, cultural institutions, and various community settings. We have a long and established track record of producing the most innovative theatre educators in New York State and beyond.

Our undergraduate, masters and doctoral students develop their artistic praxis in traditional and non-traditional performance spaces, and they learn how to apply their craft in educational and outreach sites. Students study with notable theatre educators from New York and the world. They learn about the transformative power of theatre, and how to implement and evaluate dynamic theatre arts programs.

At NYU Steinhardt’s Educational Theatre program, you have access to:

- Greenwich Village and New York City, the cultural capital of the world
- Carefully supervised teaching placements and internships in New York's finest schools and cultural institutions
- Study abroad programs with the world’s greatest innovators
- Numerous opportunities to develop your skills in such core areas as drama education, theatre for young audiences, play production, and applied theatre
- An internationally renowned and dedicated faculty
- A comprehensive and balanced curriculum in theatre art and pedagogy
- A richly diverse and multicultural community committed to social justice

All of these opportunities take full advantage of a warm and collegial Department of Music and Performing Arts Professions that promotes the development of a grounded aesthetic and permits program electives in numerous disciplines across the University, including drama therapy, musical theatre, and performance studies.

To speak to us personally, or to arrange a visit, please contact our office at ed.theatre@nyu.edu or 212 998 5868.

David Montgomery, PhD
Director
Program in Educational Theatre
Dear Teacher:

We have been working for many weeks to prepare this resource guide for you and we hope that you find it useful when helping your students learn from our production of *Two Weeks with the Queen*, either before or after seeing the show.

The first part of the play is set in Australia. The text is narrated from the point of view of Colin, a twelve-year-old boy, who lives there with his parents and younger brother, Luke.

On Christmas Day, Luke suddenly falls seriously ill and is diagnosed with cancer. In a well-meaning attempt to spare Colin the pain of his brother’s illness, his parents decide to send him to England to stay with relatives Auntie Iris, Uncle Bob and their overprotected son Alistair.

Colin is a determined and optimistic character who decides that he will enlist the help of the Queen of England herself to help find a doctor to cure his brother’s cancer. He never manages to meet the Queen but he does meet Ted, an adult unlike all others he has met, and their friendship helps each of them to come to terms with the difficult situation that they both face. *(Pearson)*.

The main concept behind this guide is a series of pre- and post-show activities. We hope that you will review these activities and consider using the pre-show activities in your classroom before you attend the performance. It is not necessary to complete these activities in order to understand the work, but the more information the students have before they see the show, the richer their experience will be at the performance.

Each individual activity concludes with a series of reflective discussion questions which will help the students to process their experiences as well as allow them to demonstrate achievement towards the New York State Learning Standards for the Arts.

Please pay particular attention to the Theatre Etiquette piece on page 7 and review this information with your students before attending the performance.

Thank you for bringing your students to our production and we hope that you will consider coming again in the future.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Jones, PhD
Program Administrator
NYU Steinhardt
Program in Educational Theatre
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“I will not be silenced and I will not give up and I will not be ignored.”

– Elizabeth Taylor

**Director’s Note**

I was fortunate enough to see the original 1992 production of *Two Weeks with the Queen* in Sydney. I remember being captivated by the story of sibling rivalry and love, the coming of age motif, and the need to be compassionate during tumultuous times. These themes seem to be highly resonant today.

During that period, there were images of the Grim Reaper casting blame. A fear of this unknown disease, known as AIDS, hitting gay men, was rampant. How the world was managing, or not, to deal with human suffering became regular fodder for TV news.

Fortunately there were inspirational figures, like the legendary actress Elizabeth Taylor, and the beautiful Princess Diana, who threw caution to the wind, and were unfazed by visiting the hospices, holding the hands of the ill, and becoming tireless advocates for research and change. Upon the death of Ms. Taylor in 2011, I was thrilled that a significant portion of her estate was going to amFAR, the Foundation for AIDS Research. I only wish we had more of these sensitive, generous and tireless champions now.

In our play, Colin is pretty much our Everyboy. He has a lot of opinions, his younger brother, Luke, annoys him; and, while he loves his parents, he has an independent mind. The words of Ms. Taylor at the top of this page could very well be Colin Mumford’s! Resistant to being sent away during a family crisis, he discovers an important mission, and a determination to make matters better. On his journey, he makes profound discoveries, not only about himself, but also about the world in which he lives. And those insights, to me, are at the very heart of what theatre for young audiences strives for as an aesthetic medium.

I am delighted that the Educational Theatre program at NYU has included this timely and evocative play in its season. I am quite sure our late and loving program founders, Nancy and Lowell Swortzell, would be happy with the efforts of our talented company. I hope you will too.

Philip Taylor, PhD

*If you would like to know about more amFAR, look here [http://www.amfar.org/]*
New York State Learning Standards for the Arts
Excerpted from:
Learning Standards for the Arts
New York State Education Department, April 1996

Available online: www.emsc.nysed.gov/ciai/arts.html

STANDARD 1: Creating, Performing, and Participating in the Arts
Students will actively engage in the processes that constitute creation and performance in the arts (dance, music, theatre, and visual arts) and participate in various roles in the arts.

STANDARD 2: Knowing and Using Arts Materials and Resources
Students will be knowledgeable about and make use of the materials and resources available for participation in the arts in various roles.

STANDARD 3: Responding to and Analyzing Works of Art
Students will respond critically to a variety of works in the arts, connecting the individual work to other works and to other aspects of human endeavor and thought.

STANDARD 4: Understanding the Cultural Dimensions and Contributions of the Arts
Students will develop an understanding of the personal and cultural forces that shape artistic communication and how the arts in turn shape the diverse cultures of past and present society.

Theatre
Key Ideas

1: Creating, Performing, and Participating in the Arts
Students will create and perform theatre pieces as well as improvisational drama. They will understand and use the basic elements of theatre in their characterizations, improvisations, and play writing. Students will engage in individual and group theatrical and theatre-related tasks, and will describe the various roles and means of creating, performing, and producing theatre.

2: Knowing and Using Arts Materials and Resources
Students will know the basic tools, media, and techniques involved in theatrical production. Students will locate and use school, community, and professional resources for theatre experiences. Students will understand the job opportunities available in all aspects of theatre.

3: Responding to and Analyzing Works of Art
Students will reflect on, interpret, and evaluate plays and theatrical performances, both live and recorded, using the language of dramatic criticism. Students will analyze the meaning and role of theatre in society. Students will identify ways in which drama/theatre connects to film.

4: Understanding the Cultural Dimensions and Contributions of the Arts
Students will gain knowledge about past and present cultures as expressed through theatre. They will interpret how theatre reflects the beliefs, issues, and events of societies past and present.
Two Weeks with the Queen – Summary

The first part of the play is set in Australia. The text is narrated from the point of view of Colin, a twelve-year-old boy, who lives there with his parents and younger brother, Luke.

On Christmas Day, Luke suddenly falls seriously ill and is diagnosed with cancer. In a well-meaning attempt to spare Colin the pain of his brother’s illness, his parents decide to send him to England to stay with relatives Auntie Iris, Uncle Bob and their overprotected son Alistair.

Colin is a determined and optimistic character who decides that he will enlist the help of the Queen of England herself to help find a doctor to cure his brother’s cancer. He never manages to meet the Queen but he does meet Ted, an adult unlike all others he has met, and their friendship helps each of them to come to terms with the difficult situation that they both face. (Pearson).

Theatre Etiquette

It is essential that students understand that the experience of going to the theatre requires a certain kind of interaction between audience members and the cast of a show.

In order to present a successful show, we ask that all audience members:

1) Be respectful to the performers and other audience members (refrain from talking, standing up, using cell phones, taking pictures/video, and eating/drinking).

2) Feel free to laugh, cry, and applaud when appropriate.

3) Enjoy the show!
Two Weeks with the Queen – Characters

COLIN MUDFORD – Colin is a twelve-year old boy. At the start of the play, he lives in, Australia with his Mum, Dad, and little brother Luke. Like many twelve-year-olds, he is friendly, fearless, and adventurous.

LUKE MUDFORD – Luke is Colin’s younger brother. From Colin’s perspective, Luke often gets whatever he wants. Early in the play, he comes down with a mysterious illness and has to go to the hospital.

MUM – Colin’s mom.

DAD – Colin’s dad.

AUNTIE IRIS – Colin’s Aunt who lives in England and is married to Uncle Bob.

UNCLE BOB – Colin’s Uncle who is married to Aunt Iris.

ALISTAIR – Colin’s cousin and Aunt Iris and Uncle Bob’s son. Alistair is afflicted with dandruff and generally afraid of the world.

TED – A friendly guy that Colin meets in the cancer hospital in London.

GRIFF – An AIDS patient in the hospital and Ted’s partner.

EXTRA ROLES:

BUSINESSMAN   NURSE
GUARD         MATRON
AMERICAN TOURIST FLIGHT ATTENDANT
SPANISH TOURIST CAPTAIN
PATIENT       POLICEMAN
AIRPORT CHECK-IN STAFF ENGLISH NURSE
CAFÉ STAFF    ENGLISH DOCTOR
DOCTOR 1      ENGLISH STUDENT DOCTORS
DOCTOR 2      DR. GRAHAM
Pre-Show Activity: *Character Predictions*

The characters in a play are utilized by the playwright to help tell the story. It is their relationships, situations, conflicts, and desires that propel the narrative forward.

For this activity, the teacher should reproduce the nine main character descriptions on page 8 of this guide. The main characters should be cut into strips so that each slip has a different family: the Mudford’s, Aunt Iris/Uncle Bob/Alistair, and Ted/Griff.

The students will work in groups of two, three, or four; each group will receive a family of characters that fits the number of people in their group (duplicates between groups are fine, but each student within an individual group must have a different character). The students will be responsible for creating a short scene using the characters they were given. For example, Colin, Luke, Mum, and Dad may enact Luke’s birthday, or Ted might visit Griff in the hospital. The scene can take place in any time or place and can involve any situation, provided that the scene is titled “One Day Last Week.”

The scenes should clearly identify who the characters are and what their relationships to each other are (some of this will come from the descriptions, and some will be invented by the students).

Some questions to explore may include:
- Who is there?
- Who speaks?
- What activities are you doing?

After the students have had a few minutes to brainstorm and rehearse, ask for volunteers to show their scenes to the class.

The teacher should use the discussion questions at left in order to facilitate a reflective conversation about the activity. The questions have been designed to reflect on the activity in terms of content and performative aspects.

After viewing the full play, students should revisit their ideas about the characters and situations they explored in this activity and compare the two. What was the same? What was different or surprising?

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**Discussion Questions**

1. How did you feel during this activity?
2. What have we learned about these characters?
3. Do you think the scenes and situations we have seen in class today will be similar to what we will see in the full production? Why or why not?

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**Scene Criteria**

1. Everyone must have an equal role.
2. The roles and relationships must be clear.
3. The scene must be titled, “One Day Last Week.”
Two Weeks with the Queen – Theme

A central theme in Two Weeks with the Queen is that of relationships. As the play unfolds, we learn about Colin’s relationships and watch as he navigates others’ relationships and develops new relationships.

Pre-Show Activity: Thematic Scenes

Short Scenes

1. Brainstorming: List the theme on the board: relationships. Ask the students to name different types of relationships that they are familiar with. Then ask them to think about stories in film, literature, or from their own lives which might demonstrate something about relationships: either existing relationships, the development of a new relationship, or even the end of a relationship.

   Some guiding questions include: What experiences have you seen in movies, books, or your own life that represent relationships?

   After providing think time, ask the students to share some ideas and list them on the board.

2. Next have the students pick a topic from the board to use as a springboard for a short scene. The scenes must show:
   a. An existing relationship
   b. The beginning of a new relationship
   c. The end of a relationship

3. Students will be broken up into groups of 2-3

4. Students will create a scene using the criteria from above

5. Students will perform their scenes in front of the class

6. The teacher should use the discussion questions at right to reflect on the scenes.

Discussion Questions

1. What relationship did you see?

2. Why did you choose this relationship?

3. How were the scenes similar or different amongst all the groups?

4. Do you have an emotional response to this activity? Has it made you think differently about any of your personal relationships? Why?
Two Weeks with the Queen – Setting

A playwright is very particular about all aspects of her or his writing: from the characters, to the time period, to the location where different scenes take place.

In Two Weeks with the Queen, Colin goes on a journey from his home country (Australia) to a country he is not very familiar with (England). As such, it will be helpful for students to gain some familiarity with these two countries so that they can begin to contemplate the complexity of Colin’s journey.

Given the wealth of information available online and in reference books, for children, I encourage you to ask your learners to do a little research on these two countries and then complete the following activity.

Pre-Show Activity: Collage

1. Ask the students to research images from the two countries. These images could be actual photographs or illustrations like those included throughout this guide.

2. On a poster board, students should divide the poster in half and label one half Australia and the other, England.

3. Students should paste the images on the half of the poster board where it belongs. It may be helpful for them to label the images as they post them.

4. When the posters are completed, you should have the students post them around the classroom and have a gallery walk, whereby the students can circulate around the room and look at the posters.

5. Following the gallery walk, use the questions at left for a reflective discussion.

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Discussion Questions

1. What did you notice about the images you saw on the posters?

2. What did you learn about Australia? What did you learn about England?

3. What similarities did you notice about the two countries?

4. What differences did you notice about the two countries?

5. Based on these similarities and differences, how do you think Colin will feel when he arrives in England? Why?

6. How do you think we will be able to identify the two different countries when we are watching the play?
Two Weeks with the Queen – A Vocabulary

Like any good writer, both Morris Gleitzman (author of the book the play is adapted from) and playwright Mary Morris use very precise language in their writing. Two Weeks with the Queen features characters from Australia and England, so some of the words and phrases the characters speak are a bit different from the way we speak here in New York.

battlement – a defensive low wall on top of a castle with spaces for shooting arrows

brill – short for brilliant; when something is amazing or awesome, it is ‘brill’

Buckingham Palace – the palace in Central London where the Queen lives

bung – slang for ‘throw’ (ie. “bung it in there”); sometimes means ‘broken’

Chrissie pud – short for Christmas pudding; a sweet cake with dried fruit

corgis – a breed of small dog; Queen Elizabeth II is famous for owning them

cricket – a bat and ball game played between two teams, each with eleven players

cricket pitch – a grass field used for playing cricket

crook – sick (ie. “He might be getting crook.”)

digger – soldier

dole-bludger – a person who receives unemployment benefits and has no interest in finding another job. As they are living off the government, they are “on the dole”

Dubrovnik – a city in Southern Croatia

dunnies – bathrooms
frock – a dress

gastric – a stomach ache

geroff – “get off” (ie. “Geroff me!”)

Heathrow – an international airport in London, England

hoons – slang term for ‘hooligans’ or ‘trouble-makers’

Kylie M inogue – an Australian pop star

newsagents – newsstand

petrol – short for petroleum; gasoline

pikers – slang for ‘cheapskates’, ‘amateurs’, ‘spoilsports’

pinching – stealing

Qantas – Australian national airline

queue – a line where people stand to wait

the rack – a medieval torture device

rellies – short for ‘relatives’

ropable – angry

sack – to be fired from a job (ie. “You won’t sack her, will ya?”)

SCG – Sydney Cricket Ground; a famous stadium in Sydney, Australia

shurrup – shut up

sick – throw-up (ie. “Like why sick has carrots in it.”)

slack – lazy (ie. “They’re being slack.”)

telly – short for ‘television’

top up – to get a refill (ie. “Would you like me to top up your drink?”)

trail bike – a small motorcycle that is used for off-roading; a dirt bike

tube – the subway; in London it is called the Underground

underdacks – underpants
EXPRESSIONS

“bolts her tucker” – stuffs her face

“get sent to Northern Ireland” – From the 1960s to the 1990s, there was fighting in Northern Ireland between the Catholics and the Protestants about whether Northern Ireland should remain a part of the United Kingdom or re-unify with Ireland. Bombings and other low-level warfare were common. So, if someone said you might “get sent to Northern Ireland,” that meant that you would be sent to the middle of a dangerous war zone.

“good on ya” – “good for you”; congratulations

“just a tick” – “just a second”

“rack off” – “get lost”

“stack me” – an expression used to show surprise or amazement

“tight as a chook’s bum” – ‘chook’ is slang for ‘chicken’
Pre-Show Activity: Using New Vocabulary

Discussion Questions

1. What did you notice about the new vocabulary words?

2. Based on your work in this activity, do you think it might be challenging to understand the dialogue in the play? Why or why not?

3. Do you think there are words or phrases that we use here in New York that folks in other countries might not use? If so, what might some of them be?

4. What could you do to help someone who isn’t from here understand what these words or phrases mean?

Create a Dialogue

1. Review the vocabulary list on pages 12-14 with your students.

2. Using the vocabulary list on pages 12-14 of this guide and the dialogue form on pages 16-17, students should select any two characters from the character list on page 8 and create a dialogue between them. In the dialogue, they should try to use as many of the vocabulary words as possible.

As with any dramatic writing, the students will need to identify a setting for the dialogue.

Some guiding questions include: What is the relationship between these characters? Given the setting you selected, what might these two characters be talking about?

3. After the students have had some time to write, you should put them into pairs and have them take turns reading their dialogues together, each student reading a different character.

4. Following the pair share, ask volunteers to share one of their dialogues with the class.

5. After some groups have shared, use the discussion questions at left to facilitate a brief reflective discussion.

6. Following the discussion, distribute copies of the Two Weeks Crossword Puzzle on page 18 of this guide and have the students work in pairs to complete the puzzle.
Two Weeks with the Queen – Dialogue Worksheet

Select two characters from the character list that you want to use for this activity and list them below:

Character 1: _____________________________ Character 2: _____________________________

Identify a setting where these two characters might have a conversation:

Setting: _____________________________

Create a short dialogue (conversation) between these two characters. Try to use as many vocabulary words from the vocabulary list as you can.

Before you begin, think about the following: What is the relationship between these two characters? Given the setting you selected, what might these two characters be talking about?

Character 1:
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

Character 2:
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

Character 1:
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

Character 2:
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

Character 1:
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

Character 2:
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

Character 1:
__________________________________________________________________________
**Two Weeks... Vocabulary Crossword Puzzle**

Across

5. underpants  
9. short for ‘relatives’  
12. a breed of small dog  
16. shut up  
17. soldier  
18. short for ‘television’

Down

1. Australian national airline  
2. cheapskates, amateurs, spoilsports  
3. the subway  
4. sick  
6. bathrooms  
7. a bat and ball game  
8. lazy  
10. to be fired from a job  
11. angry  
13. a line where people stand to wait  
14. short for brilliant  
15. slang for ‘throw’
Design: Costume

Discussion Questions

1. How can a costume change the audience’s first impression of a character?

2. What can a costume change tell you in the middle of the show?

3. When making your collage, what aspects did you consider?

4. What can the costumes tell you about an environment or time period?

After viewing the play, look back to the costume designs created in this activity and ask students to compare their work to what they saw in the production. What was similar? What was different? Why?

All stage costumes must meet certain requirements. First, they must readily reveal to the audience a character’s personality, taste, age, wealth, and social position. In addition, a costume must enable the audience to differentiate between the characters.

Costumes should reflect the mood and style of the production. In comedies, actors usually dress in bright colors and light weight fabrics. In tragedies, colors are subdued to denote gloom, and fabrics are often heavy. Costumes for fantasies are generally stylized with the setting. In period plays, they must conform to the fashion, line, and material used in that particular time.

Accessories for period costumes need careful selection to be appropriate for the time and to be in harmony with the outfit. There must be an acceptable reason for using each costume piece and only necessary accessories should be utilized. Since costumes are important in adding period atmosphere, the costume designer should provide something that looks authentic.

(Introduction adapted from Basic Drama Projects by F. A. Tanner, 1982)

Pre-Show Activity: Costume Design

Warm Up:

1. The teacher divides the class up into small groups.
2. Each group must design a costume for each of the following iconic characters, spending about one minute on each:
   - Dorothy (The Wizard of Oz) in the 1920s
   - Peter Pan in the 1950s
   - Cinderella in the 2000s
   - Frankenstein Monster in the 1880s

Main Activity:

1. The teacher divides the class up into small groups.
2. Have the students refer to the character descriptions on page 8 of this resource guide.
3. Have the students cut out clothing from magazines and create outfits for each character based on the description. Though the play takes place in the 1989, the costumes for this activity can appear contemporary.
4. Glue the images to a piece of paper and have the students present them.
Design: Lighting

Audience enjoyment of a production depends a great deal on the show’s lighting. It is important, therefore, that stage lighting meet four basic requirements:

1. Provide Visibility
2. Establish Emphasis
3. Create Mood
4. Suggest Light Source

Visibility and Emphasis: Comfortable visibility in the theatre is the prime requisite for stage lighting as too much light glares and too much darkness strains. Light intensity must be carefully balanced to allow the audience to see what they are supposed to see without their being unduly aware of the lights. Emphasis is created by utilizing bright light for dominant stage areas and dim lights for subordinate areas. The light intensity draws the viewer’s eyes toward what is important.

Mood: To achieve mood, the lighting designer must blend together a variety of light sources using color. If the play is a comedy, the designer might choose a mix of bright lights in predominantly warm colors. If the play is a tragedy or serious drama, blending should create a medium to low tone, throwing shadows and casting cool colors.

Light Source: The lighting designer in a realistic play will work to suggest to the audience obvious sources of light such as the sun, moon, table lamps, candles, fireplaces, etc. By suggesting the source, they can convey the time of day and the weather conditions. A cool daylight blue of low intensity apparently coming through a window may suggest early morning. A bright warm amber light streaming through French doors may indicate late afternoon on a warm, sunny day.

(Introduction adapted from *Basic Drama Projects* by F. A. Tanner, 1982)
Pre-Show Activity: *Lighting Design*

**Discussion Questions**

1. How can preshow lighting help influence the show?

2. How does different lighting make you feel?

3. Are there specific lighting designs that you are expecting?

After viewing the play, look back to the lighting designs created in this activity and ask students to compare their work to what they saw in the production. What was similar? What was different? Why?

**Warm Up:**

1. The students lie on the floor and are told to think about different colors and light intensity. The teacher cycles through a variety of colors and levels of light intensity while the students listen and visualize.

2. What do those colors and light intensity make them think? How do they make them feel?

3. How do the colors and light intensity influence the student and his or her perspective?

4. Following the activity, the teacher asks the students to share some of their thoughts.

**Main Activity**

1. The teacher breaks the students into small groups of 3-4.

2. The teacher divides the summary on page 7 of this guide into three chunks and distributes one chunk to each of the groups, doubling as necessary.

3. The groups must create a list of themes, focal points, and a numbered list of lighting cues for their excerpt from the summary.

4. Following the group work, each group will share their work and discuss their choices.
Design: Sets

The types of scenery used for a play depend upon the stage facilities, the available technicians and crews, the play’s budget, and the time available for making scenery. Regardless of the setting a set designer chooses, it must meet the following requirements.

First, the setting should provide a suitable background for the play’s action. There must be adequate space for movement, including several areas or levels to provide variety and interest and to motivate the actors into using the whole stage in the course of the play. There must be adequate doors, windows, and stars. Furthermore, the color of the setting should contrast with the actors faces so that the actors will be readily seen.

Second, the setting must communicate adequate information about the play. The locale, the time and the period, the cultural, social, and economical status of the characters must all be revealed in the set.

Third, the play’s style and mood must be suggested. From observing the scenery with its particular color and line design, the audience should immediately be able to tell at the rise of the curtain whether the play is comic, tragic, fantastic, realistic, etc.

Fourth, the setting must be technically practical or useable. Doors and windows must open if they are to be used. Stairs, platforms, and ramps must be built firmly if they are to bear the actor’s weight. If there are set changes, scenery must be planned for quick shifts.

Fifth, the setting should be aesthetically pleasing to the eye. Thus, all elements must be unified. In tragedy, the setting may be heavy and massive with dark and somber colors. In comedy, the scenery may be frivolous with curved lines and light colors. The setting must also be balanced. If there is a big fireplace on one side of the stage, there should be something on the other side to convey equal weight.

(Introduction adapted from Basic Drama Projects by F. A. Tanner, 1982)
Pre-Show Activity: *Set Design*

### Discussion Questions

1. *Two Weeks with the Queen* will be performed in a small theatre. How might that impact the set?

2. Where do you think the set designers might draw inspiration from when creating the set?

3. As the play takes place in the 1980s, how would you use the set to enhance the time period?

After viewing the play, look back to the set designs created in this activity and ask students to compare their work to what they saw in the production. What was similar? What was different? Why?

### Warm Up:

1. Students read the document about set design from the previous page
2. In pairs, students discuss different set design concepts from plays they may have seen before. The discussion is framed by the following: how does the set affect how audiences see the world of the play?
3. The pairs share aspects of their discussion with the whole class

### Main Activity:

1. Based on what students may know about *Two Weeks with the Queen*, students will create a set design
2. Students will be assigned a specific theme, so that they can incorporate that theme into their design sketch:
   - 1980s
   - Australia
   - England
   - A hospital
3. Have students share their design concepts and explain how they incorporated the theme into their sketch.
Design: Sound

Not so many years ago, sound in the theatre was fairly simple. If the director wanted some preshow music, you got some records and approximated the mood and spirit of the play and played them over the auditorium public-address system for about ten minutes before the curtain went up. You might get daring and play them again during the intermission.

If the script called for special sound effects such as doorbell or a telephone ringing, you either made the sounds live or consulted your sound-effects library, composed of low-fidelity 78-RPM records. If you used library effects, you either recorded them on you wire or tape recorder, or you cued the records up and played them just the way a disc jockey would.

Sound in the theatre has changed substantially since the bad old days. Instead of being an afterthought, sound is now frequently an integral part of the production concept. Increasing numbers of productions are giving credit to sound design as well as to the more traditional scenic, costume, and lighting design.

Theatre sound can be subdivided into three categories: music, effects, and reinforcement. Music is often used to reinforce the mood or atmosphere for a play. Effects create an aural backdrop of appropriate sounds for the environment of a play. Reinforcement is used whenever there is a need to boost the loudness level of actors’ voices, as when the acoustics of an auditorium are not good or during musicals when the singers can’t be heard over the orchestra.

(Introduction adapted from *Theatrical Design and Production* by J. Michael Gillette, 2000)
Pre-Show Activity: *Sound Design*

**Discussion Questions**

1. What elements of songs/music remind you of certain time periods? Why?
2. Discuss differences in tableaux → may lead to discussion on differences in time periods.
3. Do the lyrics affect the song’s impact on the listener more than the beat or rhythm? Why or why not?

**Warm Up: Spectrum of Time**

1. The teacher plays short clips of a few songs from different time periods
2. The students listen to the song clip and try to identify the time period the song may come from and/or a time in their life that the song reminds them of
3. Students share and defend their responses

**Main Activity: Music Inspired Tableaux**

1. Working in small groups, the students select a song or lyric from the warm up and create a tableau based on it
2. The teacher may need to provide lyrics from the songs or replay them
3. The students share their tableau
4. Spectators reflect on the tableau using a “See/Think/Wonder” protocol
Post-Show Activity: *Response Letters*

When watching this or any play, there is certain to be some disagreement among audience members about the events of the play and the reasons certain characters behaved the way they did. The purpose of this activity is to try to illuminate the spectrum of understanding that exists within the class.

At the end of *Two Weeks with the Queen*, Colin returns home to Australia, surprising his parent and Luke at the hospital. Following the end of the play, what would any of the characters say about the events we have witnessed? To whom would he or she say it?

Once the students have written their letters, ask them to get into small groups and read their letters to each other. Once they have all shared, use the discussion questions to debrief the activity.

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**Discussion Questions**

1. What do we think the characters want to express? Why didn’t they express these thoughts before the end of the play?

2. What do these letters reveal about the character?

3. What can the class as a whole learn from this experience?

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Post-Show Activity: *Alternate Ending*

The students should reflect on their understanding of *Two Weeks with the Queen* and contemplate alternative outcomes.

Option A: Narrative or Dramatic Writing

Each student is asked to think about a possible alternative ending or extension to the play, and is given some time to write a narrative or short scene of their new ending.

Option B: Improvisational Acting

The class is broken into groups and each group is responsible for improvising (that is, making up a scene without a script) that resolves the play in a new and interesting way.

The students should share their work. For the narrative activity, small group sharing is best. For the improvisational options, they can show their scenes to the class. Use the discussion questions that follow to reflect on the activity.

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**Discussion Questions**

1. Do the alternative endings seem reasonable? Why or why not?

2. Are there other possible endings that we have not heard? What might they be?

3. Why do you think the playwright ended the play in this way?

4. What might the playwright want the audience to do after seeing the play?
Post-Show Activity: Discussion Questions

Various elements of the plot of *Two Weeks with the Queen* pose powerful questions for the audience to consider. As such, the students may have a number of questions about the production (beyond those they addressed to the cast after seeing the show) and it may be worthwhile to allow them a space to talk about these lingering questions.

Some questions you might consider exploring are:

- What does the play *Two Weeks with the Queen* tell us about life in Australia and England in the 1980s?
- What does the play *Two Weeks with the Queen* tell us about life for a person with a serious illness in the 1980s?
- Compare the relationship of Colin and his parents to the relationship of Alistair and his parents. What are the differences? What are the similarities?
- What do you think keeps Colin from giving up on his plan to find a doctor to help Luke? Why?
- Compare Colin’s state of mind at the beginning of the play to how he thinks and feels at the end of the play. What has changed? Why?
- If you took the place of one of the characters in the play, would you behave the same way that he or she did or might you act differently? Why?
- What other plays, stories, movies, or television shows did this play remind you of? Why?
- What do you think we can learn from a play like *Two Weeks with the Queen*?
- Find a good definition of the word *drama* and make an argument: *Two Weeks with the Queen* is or is not a drama.
- What do you think *Two Weeks with the Queen* says about gay relationships? Why?
- What do you think *Two Weeks with the Queen* says about stereotypes? Why?
- Think about the title of the play. Do you think it has a double meaning? Why or why not?

Production Related Questions:

- If you were directing this play, how would you choose to enhance the themes of the play?
- How did the theatre limit what could be done with the set?
- How do you think the costume/lights/set/sound designers allocated the budget for the show?
- Where do you think the costume/lights/set/sound designers drew inspiration from?
References


At This Theatre

The historic Provincetown Playhouse is credited with launching the careers of Claudette Colbert, Bette Davis and Eugene O'Neill, who premiered many of his early plays at the Provincetown. The Department of Music and Performing Arts Professions presents readings, new musical works, and storytelling evenings, among other events and performances in the Playhouse. It is also used a classroom for larger classes.

The theatre, which is run by Steinhardt's Programs in Vocal Performance and Educational Theatre, has an illustrious place in the history of American drama. Renovations preserved the Playhouse's original brick walls, refurbished the mid-century seat end standards, restored the exterior to its 1940 facade, and updated the 88-seat theatre's seating, lighting and sound controls, and air handling.

http://steinhardt.nyu.edu/music/facilities/provincetown/