

## Tenth Grade

### The Spirit Returns: On Stage

#### Meets Washington State Learning Standards

##### History

H1.9-10.2 Assess how historical events and developments were shaped by unique circumstances of time and place as well as broader historical contexts.

H1.9-10.3 Design questions generated about individuals and groups that assess how the significance of their actions changes over time.

H2.9-10.2 Summarize how cultures and cultural and ethnic groups have shaped world history (1450-present).

H2.9-10.4 Analyze multiple and complex causes and effects of events in world history (1450-present).

H3.9-10.1 Analyze and interpret historical materials from a variety of perspectives in world history (1450-present).

H3.9-10.3 Explain how the perspectives of people in the present shape interpretations of the past.

##### Social Studies

SSS1.9-12.4 Gather relevant information from multiple sources representing a wide range of views while using the origin, authority, structure, context, and corroborative value of the sources to guide the selection.

SSS1.9-12.5 Explain the challenge and opportunities of addressing problems over place and time using disciplinary and interdisciplinary lenses.

SSS2.9-12.4 Explain how supporting questions contribute to an inquiry and how, through engaging source work, new compelling and supporting questions emerge.

SSS3.9-12.1 Evaluate one's own viewpoint and the viewpoints of others in the context of a discussion.

SSS4.9-12.1 Evaluate multiple reasons or factors to develop a position paper or presentation.

SSS4.9-12.3 Present adaptations of arguments and explanations that feature evocative ideas and perspectives on issues and topics to reach a range of audiences and venues outside the classroom, using print and oral technologies (e.g., posters, essays, letters, debates, speeches, reports, and maps) and digital technologies (e.g. Internet, social media, and digital documentary).

SSS4.9-12.4 Create strategies to avoid plagiarism and respect intellectual property when developing a paper or presentation.

**Overview/Purpose:** By analyzing multiple primary and secondary sources as well as various historical narratives and their own biases surrounding the “founding of Seattle,” students will develop and perform a creative theatrical presentation.

**Estimated Lesson Length:** Between three and five class periods (2+ hours)

**Requires Homework?:** Yes

#### Background:

Some basic information and resources for writing play scripts (feel free to use as many or few of these as you find appropriate for your class):

<https://www.wikihow.com/Write-a-Play-Script>

<https://www.nfi.edu/writing-a-play-script/>

From The Cary Playwrights Forum:

#### THE STANDARD STAGE PLAY FORMAT:

- 1) In this format, it is easy for a producer/script reader to estimate how long the running time of the script will be. The accepted format lays out the script at roughly one minute per page.
- 2) This standard format is optimized to make all the separate elements of the script easy to read and comprehend (character names, dialogue, stage directions, page numbering, etc.).
- 3) This standard format immediately tells a producer/script reader that the playwright knows something about professional presentation.

#### THE BASICS

Use 8.5" x 11" white paper typed or printed on one side only, using black ink.

Standard copier paper is acceptable.

Font: Courier 12 point. No exceptions. (You'll quickly discover that standard play formatting is stubbornly rooted in the days of the typewriter.)

#### THE TITLE PAGE

Top Margin: 3.5 inches Left Margin 4 inches Right Margin: 1 inch Bottom Margin: 1 inch

The play's title is printed in ALL CAPS (4 inches from the left side of the page, 3.5 inches from the left.)

Two spaces below the title are an underscore line, which runs the exact spacing length of the title. (Like the title, the underscore line begins 4 inches from the left side of the page.)

Two spaces below the underscore line are a description line such as "A Play in Two Acts". Note the capitalization here.

Two spaces below the description line are the word "by" -- not capitalized.

Two spaces below the byline are the playwright's name. Put your contact information in the lower right-hand corner of the page. The title page is not numbered.

#### DRAMATIS PERSONAE PAGE (The "cast of characters" page)

The Dramatis Personae page comes directly after the title page. This page is not numbered.

Top Margin: 1-inch Left Margin: 1.5 inches Right Margin: 1 inch Bottom margin: 1 inch

On the top of the page, the words "Cast of Characters" (note capitalization) are centered and underlined.

Two spaces below the "Cast of Characters" line, you'll enter the first name in your list of the character names.

The character names line up on the left margin, are underlined and followed by a colon. To the right of each character's name, at a tab setting of your choice, comes a brief description of the character.

Two spaces below the character description comes the name of the next character, in the left margin, underlined and followed by a colon... etc. If there's enough room, put the Scene and Time descriptions for the play somewhere below the character list (your choice).

Center the word "Scene" -- capitalized-- and underline it, and two spaces below it write the scene or place where your play takes place at the left margin. (Such as "A college dormitory overlooking a parking lot.") Two spaces below this, center the word "Time" -- capitalized-- and underline it.

Two spaces below it write the scene or place where your play takes place at the left margin. (Such as "The present.") If there is no room for a description of Scene and Time on the Dramatis Personae page, put it on a separate page following this one

## THE PLAY

Make sure to finish with END OF PLAY

### Materials:

- (included) Packets containing various historical information about the Landing Party and Indigenous Nations, including:
  - photographs from the Southwest Seattle Historical Society Collection (relating to Point of Contact with Landing Party)
  - Pioneer Days on Puget Sound*, by Arthur Denny
  - Westward to Alki*, Gordon R Newell
  - Chief Seattle and the Town That Took His Name: The Change of Worlds for the Native People and Settlers on Puget Sound* by David M Buerge
  - Chief Seattle's Speech
  - The Treaty of Point Elliott
  
- (included) Other helpful resources for student research:
  - The Duwamish Tribe website
    - <https://www.duwamishtribe.org/>
  - Seattle newspaper database
    - <https://guides.lib.uw.edu/research/news/enews>
  
- (NOT included) Encourage or require further independent research from multiple sources

**Instructional Activities:** Refresh students about the story of Alki being the “birthplace of Seattle.” Have one or several students try to tell you the story from memory for the class before you share any prepared instructional information. Ask the class if the story they just heard from their peers was accurate? Was it entertaining? Did they learn anything new from it?

With the popularity of theatrical experiences like the musical *Hamilton*, there has been an increased push for America's past being told by America *today*, with a focus on diversity and polyvocality whenever possible. Ask students if they have seen *Hamilton* or another period piece, and if they have indeed noticed a shift towards an inclusion of more perspectives when teaching about our history.

Share the story of the Landing Party at Alki as told through textbooks and the like. After this, tell students that they will be writing and performing their own historical plays, focusing on the “founding” of Seattle. Explain that they will need to utilize both primary and secondary sources, and explain how they do so (ex. Analyzing writings for retellings of events from a first-person perspective, research-based informational books, photographs and paintings, and Duwamish histories). Encourage the integration of as many perspectives as possible, and urge them to find ways to reconsider the accepted Euro-American narrative. Ask them to keep the reliability of sources in mind (ex. Can Chief Seattle's speech be treated as a primary source if it's been written down later by someone else and has been altered/surrounded by controversy?). Encourage them to think about who has written this history.

Remind them that though accuracy is key, fun should not be forgotten! Perhaps foster healthy competition, and offer a prize for an “audience choice award.”

Give students ample time to write their plays and encourage collaboration with the school drama department or community theaters. One to two weeks’ time either in or out of class is suggested to work on plays.

**Hands-On Activity:** Students will have the opportunity to research, write, and perform a play that presents their modern understanding of and questions about the Landing Party’s arrival in the Seattle area and their ensuing interactions with the indigenous tribes. This play should focus on incorporating multiple points of view, questioning the accepted narrative, and supporting any artistic choices they make with historical fact. The play should be short; roughly ten minutes long, or ten pages. Give students access to the packets of information included with this lesson, but encourage them to do their own research as well.

**Closure:** Have each group of students perform their play, either in the classroom or in a larger performance space like a gymnasium or auditorium. Give short breaks after each performance, and encourage students to jot down notes about what they thought of each play. After the final performance, host a discussion with the students.

This discussion will help evaluate their own viewpoints and the viewpoints of others they chose to present (SSS3.9-12.1). Ask students which performance they thought was most accurate? Which one was most entertaining? Were these two the same performance? Why or why not? Have them vote on an audience favorite with ballots (they should not be allowed to vote for their own).

Questions that may be helpful for the ensuing post-show discussion are listed below in Assessment.

**Assessment:**

*What sources did you find most helpful?*

*What was most surprising to you when creating this piece of theatre?*

*Why is it important to question accepted narratives?*

*Is there anyone’s story you were unable to tell? Why or why not?*

*Would being able to write a longer play make this assignment easier or harder?*

*How does our current perspective shape our interpretation of the past?*

*Why weren’t all of the plays identical? Aren’t we all talking about the same events?*

*How do you know that you have accumulated information that represents a range of multiple viewpoints?*

*How can you decide whether or not a source has credibility?*