

NOTESTM Stage

A FIELD GUIDE FOR TEACHERS

GREASE

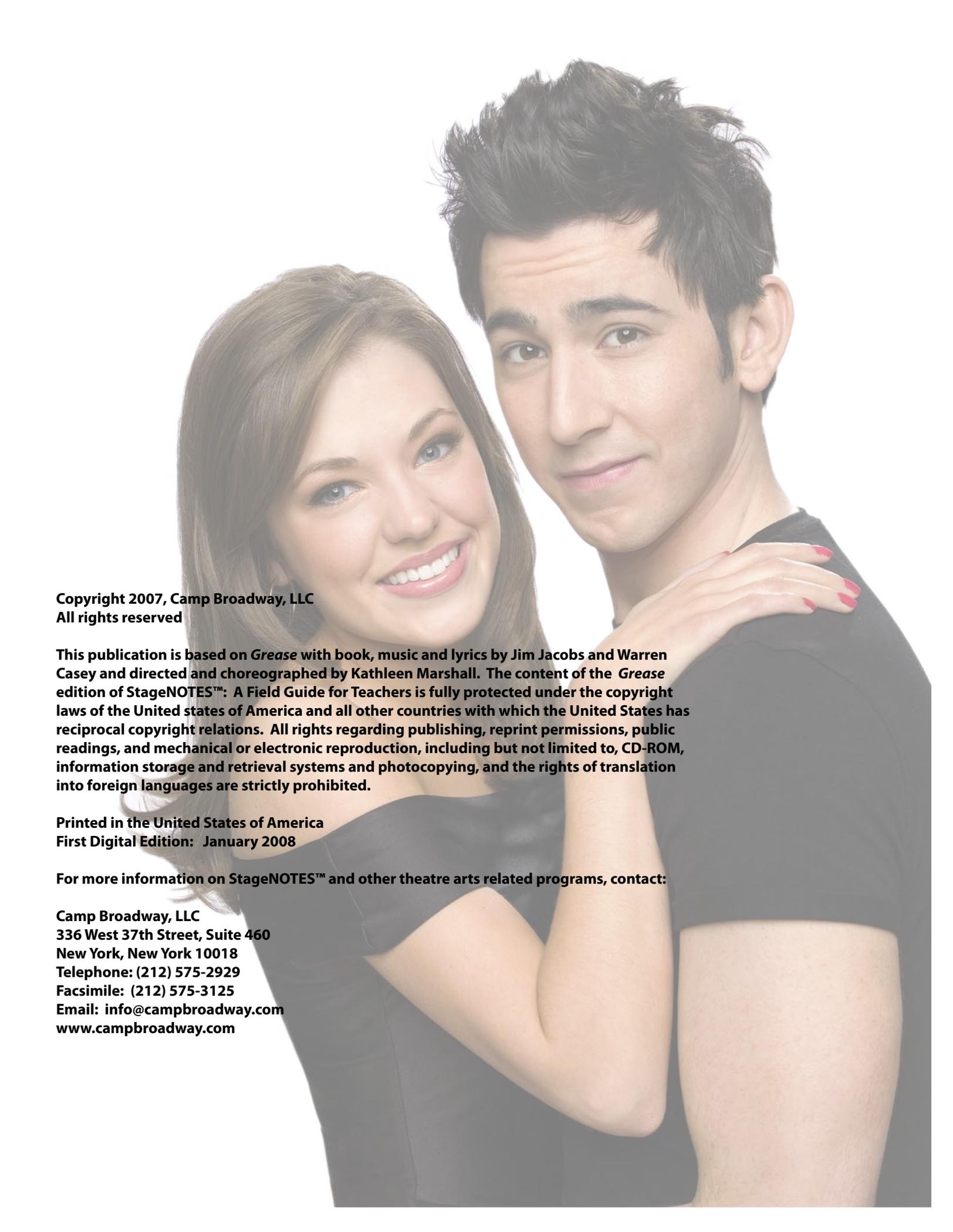
GREASETM

Live on Broadway!



A tool for using the theater
across the curriculum to meet
National Standards for Education

- Production Overview
- Lesson Guides
- Student Activities
- At-Home Projects
- Reproducibles



Copyright 2007, Camp Broadway, LLC
All rights reserved

This publication is based on *Grease* with book, music and lyrics by Jim Jacobs and Warren Casey and directed and choreographed by Kathleen Marshall. The content of the *Grease* edition of StageNOTES™: A Field Guide for Teachers is fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America and all other countries with which the United States has reciprocal copyright relations. All rights regarding publishing, reprint permissions, public readings, and mechanical or electronic reproduction, including but not limited to, CD-ROM, information storage and retrieval systems and photocopying, and the rights of translation into foreign languages are strictly prohibited.

Printed in the United States of America
First Digital Edition: January 2008

For more information on StageNOTES™ and other theatre arts related programs, contact:

Camp Broadway, LLC
336 West 37th Street, Suite 460
New York, New York 10018
Telephone: (212) 575-2929
Facsimile: (212) 575-3125
Email: info@campbroadway.com
www.campbroadway.com

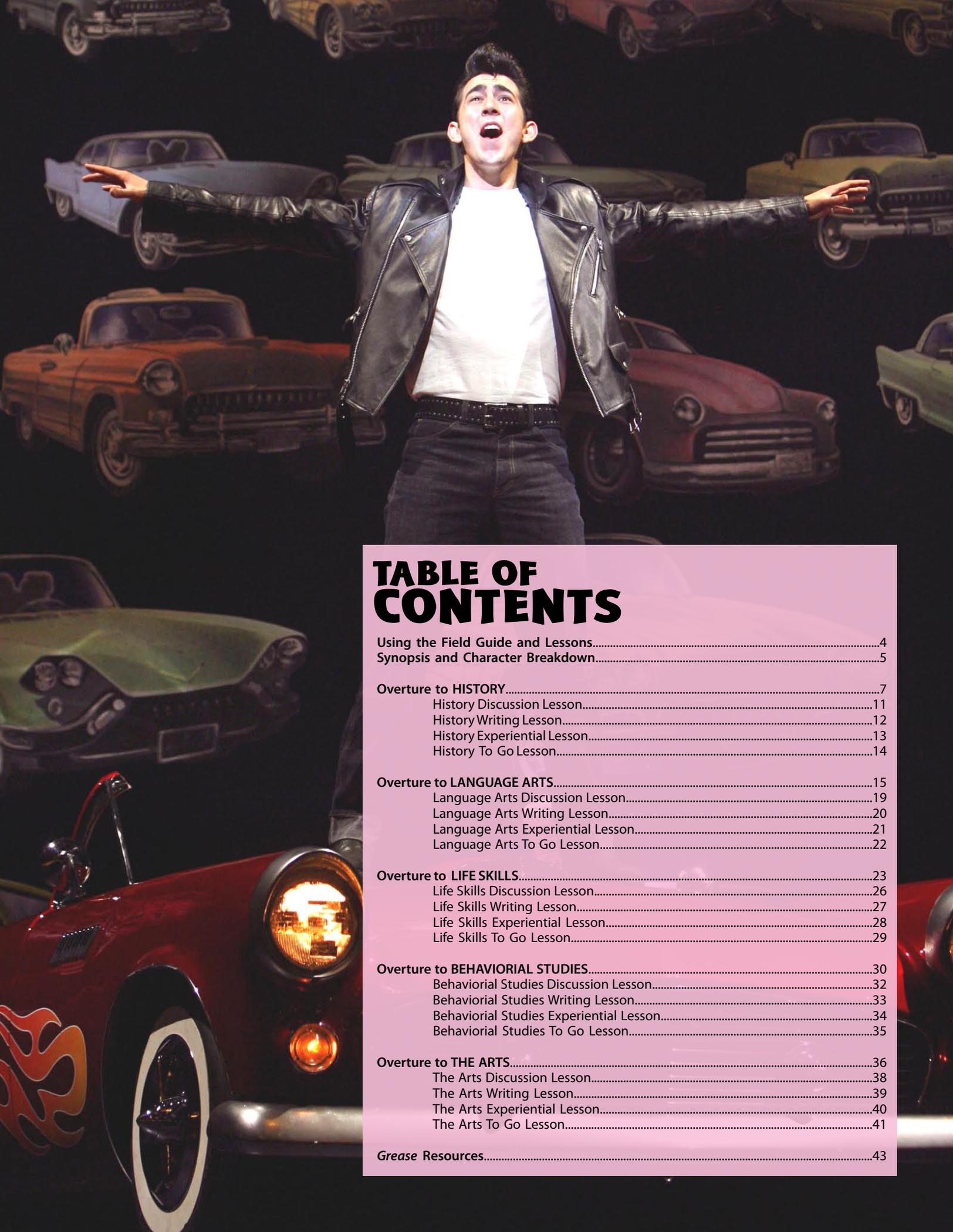


TABLE OF CONTENTS

Using the Field Guide and Lessons.....	4
Synopsis and Character Breakdown.....	5
Overture to HISTORY.....	7
History Discussion Lesson.....	11
History Writing Lesson.....	12
History Experiential Lesson.....	13
History To Go Lesson.....	14
Overture to LANGUAGE ARTS.....	15
Language Arts Discussion Lesson.....	19
Language Arts Writing Lesson.....	20
Language Arts Experiential Lesson.....	21
Language Arts To Go Lesson.....	22
Overture to LIFE SKILLS.....	23
Life Skills Discussion Lesson.....	26
Life Skills Writing Lesson.....	27
Life Skills Experiential Lesson.....	28
Life Skills To Go Lesson.....	29
Overture to BEHAVIORIAL STUDIES.....	30
Behaviorial Studies Discussion Lesson.....	32
Behaviorial Studies Writing Lesson.....	33
Behaviorial Studies Experiential Lesson.....	34
Behaviorial Studies To Go Lesson.....	35
Overture to THE ARTS.....	36
The Arts Discussion Lesson.....	38
The Arts Writing Lesson.....	39
The Arts Experiential Lesson.....	40
The Arts To Go Lesson.....	41
Grease Resources.....	43

USING THE FIELD GUIDE



Camp Broadway is pleased to bring you the *Grease* edition of StageNOTES®,

the 23rd in our series. We are proud to be affiliated with this exciting revival of a musical that has already touched generations of fans. This guide has been developed as a teaching tool to assist educators in the classroom who are introducing the story in conjunction with the Broadway production.

By using StageNOTES®, you will understand how *Grease* mirrors the life and times of the late 1950s (**History**), expands our vocabulary (**Language Arts**), illuminates the human condition (**Behavioral Studies**), aids in our own self-exploration (**Life Skills**) and encourages creative thinking and expression (**The Arts**).

The Camp Broadway creative team, consisting of theater educators, scholars, researchers and theater professionals, has developed a series of lesson plans that, although inspired by and based on the musical *Grease*, can also accompany class study. To assist you in preparing your presentation of each lesson, we have included: an objective; an situation taken directly from the script of *Grease*; a discussion topic; a writing assignment; and an interactive class activity. The reproducible lessons (handouts) accompany each lesson unit, which contains: an essay question; a creative exercise; and an “after hours activity” that encourages students to interact with family, friends, or the community at large.

The curriculum categories offered in the *Grease* study guide have been informed by the basic standards of education detailed in Content Knowledge: A Compendium of Standards and Benchmarks for K-12 Education, 2nd Edition, written by John S. Kendall and Robert J. Marzano (1997). This definitive compilation was published by Mid-Continent Regional Education Laboratory, Inc. (McREL) and the Association for Supervision and Curricular Development (ASCD) after a systematic collection, review and analysis of noteworthy national and state curricular documents in all subjects.

The *Grease* study guide is for you, the educator, in response to your need for a standards-compliant curriculum. We truly hope this study guide will help you incorporate the themes and content of *Grease* into your classroom lessons.

Philip Katz
Producing Director

SYNOPSIS OF GREASE



Grease, by Jim Jacobs and Warren Casey, is the all-American musical, based on the sub-cultures of high school life in the 1950's. The show takes place at the hyperactive Rydell High School, where Danny Zuko fronts his gang - the raucous T-Birds - who romance their sassy female equivalents - the Pink Ladies. When "good-girl" Sandy Dumbrowski arrives in town, the Pink Ladies take her under their collective wing.

In 1978, *Grease* became "the word" with a popular feature-film adaptation starring John Travolta and Olivia Newton-John as the lovelorn leads. A Broadway revival played from 1994-1998.

The new Broadway production features the smash Jacobs-Casey songs made famous by the original play including "Summer Nights," "Greased Lightning" and "We Go Together" as well as the additional film songs "Grease is the Word," "You're The One That I Want," "Hopelessly Devoted to You," and "Sandy" interpolated into the score.

Tony Award winner Kathleen Marshall (*The Pajama Game*) directs and choreographs this new Broadway Production.

CHARACTERS IN GREASE

BETTY RIZZO

Wisecracking Rizzo is the unspoken leader of the Pink Ladies. With a tough exterior and fun-loving disposition, she quickly expresses her immediate dislike of Sandy. Rizzo's longing for male validation consistently causes personal problems for her throughout the show. Her resentment towards Sandy, for being Danny's love interest, subsides when she finds true romance with Kenickie.

FRENCHY

Sandy's neighbor, she is the first of the Pink Ladies to befriend her. Receiving poor grades in high school, she decides to drop out and pursue her dreams to become a beautician. Frenchy soon recognizes that beauty school is not as easy as she originally anticipated and quickly becomes a "Beauty School Dropout".

JAN

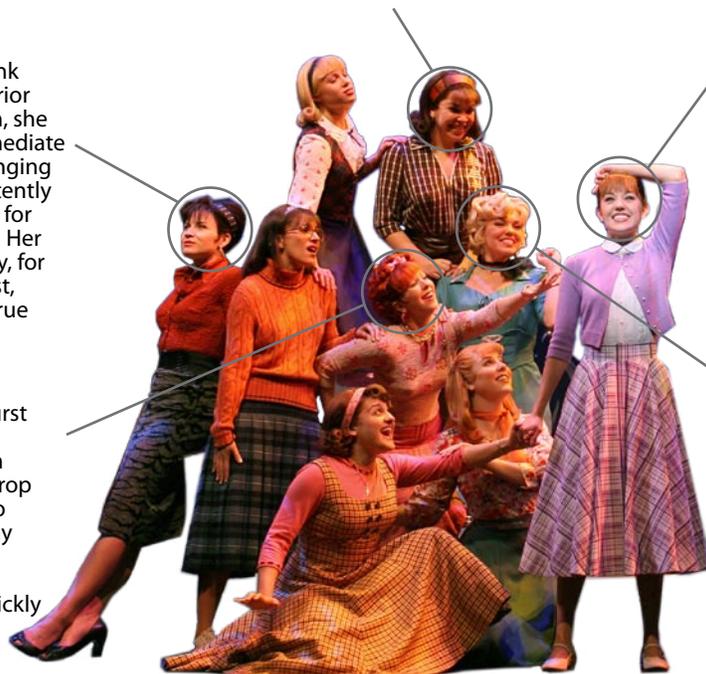
Jan is the sweetheart of the Pink Ladies. She loves to eat a little more than the rest of the group. That doesn't stop her from winning the heart of Roger who moons over her.

SANDY DUMBROWSKI

A recent transfer from Immaculatta High School, it is discovered on the first day of school that Sandy and Danny have just had a summer romance. With her well-behaved attitude and clean-cut appearance, Sandy is slow to fit in. After being snubbed by Danny, who tries to save-face in front of his friends, she attempts to change her image to become the one that he wants.

MARTY

Marty is the most fashion conscious of the Pink Ladies. Her skill and commitment as a pen pal has led her to have many boyfriends. Her real love is Freddy – a marine serving overseas.



DANNY ZUKO

Danny is one of the leaders of the T-Bird gang and best friends with Kenickie. He is taken by surprise when he finds that his summer romance has transferred schools and now attends Rydell. Danny disrespects Sandy in front of his friends in order to protect his macho reputation. Knowing that his love is true, Danny attempts to show Sandy that he can be the man that she deserves.

ROGER

Nicknamed "Rump" for being the mooning champion of Rydell High, he is another member of the T-Birds who ends up mooning over Jan.

DOODY

It might be a mystery how Doody, the dopey one of the group, ended up in a gang as cool as the T-Birds. It might be his musical talent on the guitar or his aspiration to be a rock star.



KENICKIE

Danny's right-hand man and deputy of the T-Birds, Kenickie is the epitome of the greaser and has spent the summer working to buy a car for racing. Focused on fixing up the car for racing, Kenickie begins to overlook his relationship with Rizzo.

MISS LYNCH

Miss Lynch is Rydell High's somewhat clueless and put-upon principal and English teacher. She represents the adult figure in a world full of high school misfits.

VINCE FONTAINE

The Main Brain Vince Fontaine is the local Disc Jockey. He hosts the Rydell High prom and judges the Hand-Jive contest. Vince is very popular with the ladies.

OVERTURE TO HISTORY

“MY DREAMS SHALL ALWAYS BE OF THEE, RYDELL”

Grease was conceived 35 years ago, opening on Broadway in 1972. Its story and characters are situated in the school year of 1958-59, almost 50 years ago. What was it about the culture of that particular year that held such fascination for the creators of *Grease*?

The close of the 1950's is indeed a fascinating time to revisit. Since the end of World War II, the US had ridden high on the post-war economic boom. Soldiers returning from the war started families and bought brand new homes built in the luxuriously spacious environment of the newly invented suburbs. They bought new cars to get themselves to the newly invented shopping malls where their wives could choose from a dazzling assortment of new conveniences including modern appliances. Energizing all this growth was a zealous

patriotism and an emphasis on moral values fueled by the Allies' victory over evil. America in the 1950s, by all appearances, was an idyllic place and time.

But by 1958, this shining era was looking a bit tarnished; the values it had advertised were looking suspect; and a new war, of a much more frightening sort, was looming. It turns out that not everyone was enjoying the fruits of economic growth. In fact, in 1958, annual incomes of white families were twice as high as non-white families; and 1 percent of the population enjoyed 9 percent of the nation's disposable income. Suburban growth had had a devastating effect on urban/industrial centers resulting in record high unemployment. Divisions

between the wealthy and the working class were becoming more distinct and an economic recession was taking hold.

In addition, the clean-cut values associated with white, middle-class America were beginning to unravel. With Communism proliferating around the world, misplaced patriotic fervor gave way to finger-pointing at home. Meanwhile, persistent racism and economic imbalance was beginning to spur overt action and unrest among black and white Americans. In 1958 the Civil Rights Commission came into being.

Hand in hand with the “Communist threat,” came the specter of nuclear war as development of that technology moved forward in the Soviet Union, Europe and the US. English philosopher Bertrand Russell introduced a symbol for total nuclear disarmament that ultimately became a universal symbol for peace.



Summary of Standard for Historical Understanding

1. Understanding and analyzing chronological relationships and patterns:

▪ Analyze influence of specific beliefs on these times. How would events be different in the absence of these beliefs?

▪ Analyze the effects specific decisions had on history. How would things have been different in the absence of these specific decisions?

2. Understanding the historical perspective:

▪ Understand that the consequences of human intentions are influenced by the means of carrying them out.

▪ Understand how the past affects our private lives and society in general.

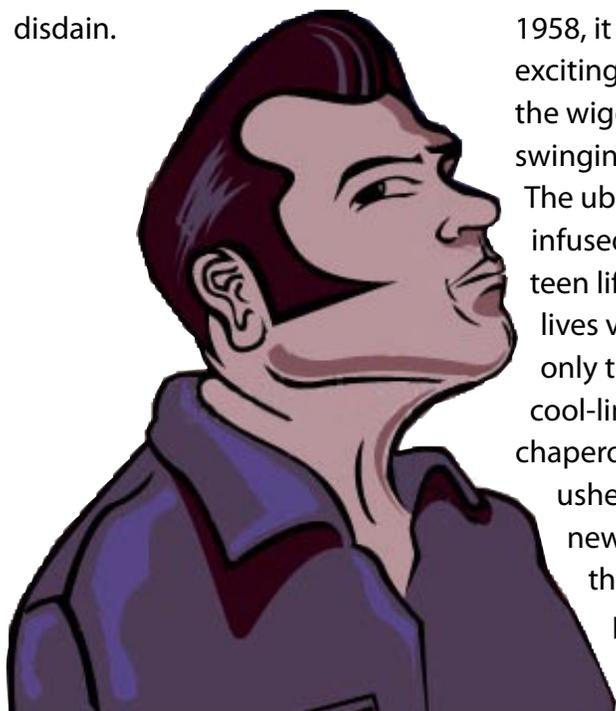
▪ Perceive past events with historical empathy

▪ Evaluate credibility and authenticity of historical sources.

▪ Evaluate the validity and credibility of different historical interpretations

With all of this conflict in the air, perhaps it's not surprising that, for the first time, teens emerged with a separate identity in popular culture. While the conservative film studios fought hard to project a teen identity that was pure and upright, of which Sandra Dee was the embodiment, a rebellious youth culture was on the rise in the form of the "Greasers."

Wearing their hair longer and slicked back with pomade or "grease," leather jackets and jeans, young men in working class neighborhoods affected an image of "cool," i.e. a poised, disinterested disdain.



Their female counterparts wore tight-fitting sweaters and jeans - a stark contrast to the flouncy poodle skirts modeled by Sandra Dee. Teens displayed their rebellion against the ultra-conservative 1950s codes of behavior by experimenting with cigarettes, alcohol and sex. The cause of all this decadent behavior, according to horrified adults, was a new and dangerous form of music called Rock and Roll.

The music takes its name from a vernacular term for intercourse and, indeed, it became the soundtrack for the later sexual revolution. In 1958, it represented the exciting contrast between the wiggling of Elvis and the swinging of Sinatra.

The ubiquitous music infused every aspect of teen life. Piped into their lives via car radios with only the sexy voices of the cool-lingo-speaking DJ's for chaperones, the music ushered in another new phenomenon - the cult of the radio personality was born.

Looking back through

the prism of the 15 years that had passed by the time *Grease* was first produced in 1972, those rebellious times would have looked, as they do today, comparatively innocuous. The day to day preoccupations of the characters: (hairstyles, hot rods, dating and even the more serious worries of peer pressure, gang warfare, a missed period or the future beyond high school) were, in one sense, typical of the coming of age angst that all teenagers experience. But the stakes were not the same. The quiet, awkward boy who sat in the back might be strange but he wasn't likely to mow down his classmates with a semi-automatic, nor was a rival gang member. Unprotected sex might be risky but it wasn't life-threatening. A career in the military seemed an attractive option in the peacetime year of 1959. Despite the stirrings of change, so far as anyone knew - least of all young people who had grown up in the "fabulous" 50's - there was no need to save the world.

By 1972 the world was a very different place. The Civil Rights Movement had resulted in

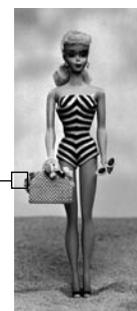
A SLICE OF LIFE 1958 AND 1959

the assassination of Martin Luther King as well as countless other deaths. President John F. Kennedy, champion of the disenfranchised, had been assassinated as had his brother, Robert, who had been a powerful beacon of hope. The war against Communism had taken the form of a senseless campaign in the jungles of Southeast Asia that would claim 50,000 young American lives. Draft evasion, birth control pills and cynicism had become part of the cultural landscape. Sex, drugs and rock and roll were not only the gauntlet of adolescence but had become embedded in its very identity.

There was no way to know, in 1958, where the seeds of social revolution would lead or just how profoundly the world was about to change. Perhaps this accounts for the revival of 1950's pop culture in the 1970's. In addition to *Grease*, there were films such as "American Graffiti" and "The Lords of Flatbush" and the television show "Happy Days," all celebrating, with varying degrees of seriousness, the first glimpses of an authentic youth culture. Only through a retrospective lens can it be seen for its simultaneous significance and innocuousness.

From the standpoint of the early 70s, it's clear that the end of the 50s was the end of innocence. The persistent charm and joy of *Grease* lies in the fact that it restores us, for a short while, to a state of blissful ignorance.

BARBIE DOLLS MAKE THEIR DEBUT



A RECORD NUMBER OF PEOPLE RECEIVE UNEMPLOYMENT

BOBBY DARIN RECORDS "SPLISH SPLASH"

WITH SANDRA DEE



HOST
ROD
SERLING



"THE TWILIGHT ZONE" TELEVISION SERIES PREMIERES

AMERICANS BUY 100 MILLION HULA HOOPS



BILLIE HOLIDAY DIES

HAWAII AND ALASKA ARE ADMITTED TO THE UNION

PANTYHOSE ARE INVENTED

FIRST KNOWN HUMAN TO DIE OF HIV IN THE CONGO

USING THE LESSONS

Discussion: The focus is on facilitating an in-depth class dialogue.

Writing: The focus is on the expression of thoughts in written form.

Experiential: The focus is on understanding social dynamics as well as collaboration and teamwork in small and large groups.

To go: A student worksheet of additional activities to be completed outside of class.

Reproducible

Experiential

Writing

Discussion

HISTORY TO GO

CHALLENGE #1 SOCIAL/POLIT

While Danny, Sandy begin, happily obli swirling around their websites list events t continue to impact d and select a topic th years in which Greas essay contest websit in terms of a pitbow then write the essay in the cont

CHALLENGE #2 PERSONAL HIS

Someone who grew 60s. Write the person of a person in that ag Using the attitudes s guide, ask them if th this. What was their school cliques, girlf sex, drinking at th attitudes change ov their behavior as be adult lives. Knowing would they have do

HISTORY EXPERIENTIAL

EXPERIENTIAL OBJECTIVE:

Measure levels of concern in the 50s with those of today.

TEACHER TIPS:

Back then students p went off and students desks, as if that would really knows what aut with its own fears. 9/11 taking to protect our they are reasonable?

EXERCISE:

Students write down t world today. Have the on a scale of one to te concern (fear, if appro finished), total the sco

Next students write o pertaining to relatio Have them interview t peers, scoring each as total the scores.

Compare the scores fr the two surveys. On w survey did students s higher? Did it surpris you? Why? Why not? D a conclusion: How dif are your peers in thi from the young peop play?

A SITUATION FROM THE SCRIPT:

The characters in Grease seem

HISTORY WRITING

WRITING OBJECTIVE:

Explore the evolution of women's rights from the 50s to today.

TEACHER TIPS:

How would you assess Grease. Do you think what way?

EXERCISE:

What legal issues perti current standards with cases. Applying what t "briefs" on possible leg based on the male cha

A SITUATION FROM THE SCRIPT:

Numerous references in Grease in today's liberated environment

HISTORY DISCUSSION

DISCUSSION OBJECTIVE:

Examine the 50s from an historical perspective along with its impact on today's culture.

TEACHER TIPS:

America in the 50s is often described as 'a more innocent time' How does this stack up against realities such as the Cold War, nuclear proliferation, and racial unrest? The characters in Grease seem oblivious to the issues. Do you think young people today are more knowledgeable when it comes to current events? Is this important? Why?

EXERCISE:

Divide the class into groups. Assign each group one of the following historical topics: 1958 Civil Right Commission, the McCarthy Hearings, the Korean War, the Cold War, Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1952. Add any others you think relevant.

Each group presents its findings and the class examines, through discussion, the impact of each on today's social and political fabric.

A SITUATION FROM THE SCRIPT:

World War II was barely five years over when in 1950 the Korean War became America's latest conflict. The rest of the decade besides an era of homegrown conflicts, including Senator Joseph McCarthy's communist witch hunts, social and political challenges to ongoing racism. Meanwhile, America's youth, indicated by the characters in Grease, were making their own declarations of independence, changing mores faster than fashion trends.

SENATOR JOSEPH McCARTHY

StageNOTES™ 10

- Featured Lesson Units**
- ① History
 - ② Language Arts
 - ③ Behavioral Studies
 - ④ Life Skills
 - ⑤ The Arts

Each StageNOTES™ lesson includes the following components:

Objective:
An overall note to the teacher outlining the goals of the lesson to follow.

A situation from the script:
An excerpt from a situation in the script to help "set the stage" for the activity that follows.

Culminating activity:
A detailed description and instructions for the activity to be facilitated in class.

HISTORY DISCUSSION

DISCUSSION OBJECTIVE:

Examine the 50s from an historical perspective along with its impact on today's culture.

TEACHER TIPS:

America in the 50s is often described as "a more innocent time." How does this stack up against realities such as the Cold War, nuclear proliferation, and racial unrest? The characters in *Grease* seem oblivious to the issues. Do you think young people today are more knowledgeable when it comes to current events? Is this important? Why?

EXERCISE:

Divide the class into groups. Assign each group one of the following historical topics: 1958 Civil Right Commission; the McCarthy Hearings; the Korean War; the Cold War; Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1952. Add any others you think relevant.

Each group presents its findings and the class examines, through discussion, the impact of each on today's social and political fabric.

A SITUATION FROM THE SCRIPT:

World War II was barely five years over when in 1950 the Korean War became America's latest conflict. The rest of the decade heralded an era of homegrown conflicts, including Senator Joseph McCarthy's communist witch hunts, social and political challenges to ongoing racism. Meanwhile, America's youth, indicated by the characters in Grease, were making their own declarations of independence, changing mores faster than fashion trends.



SENATOR JOSEPH McCARTHY

HISTORY WRITING

WRITING OBJECTIVE:

Explore the evolution of women's rights from the 50s to today.

TEACHER TIPS:

How would you assess the male/female relationships in *Grease*. Do you think much has changed since the 50s. In what way?

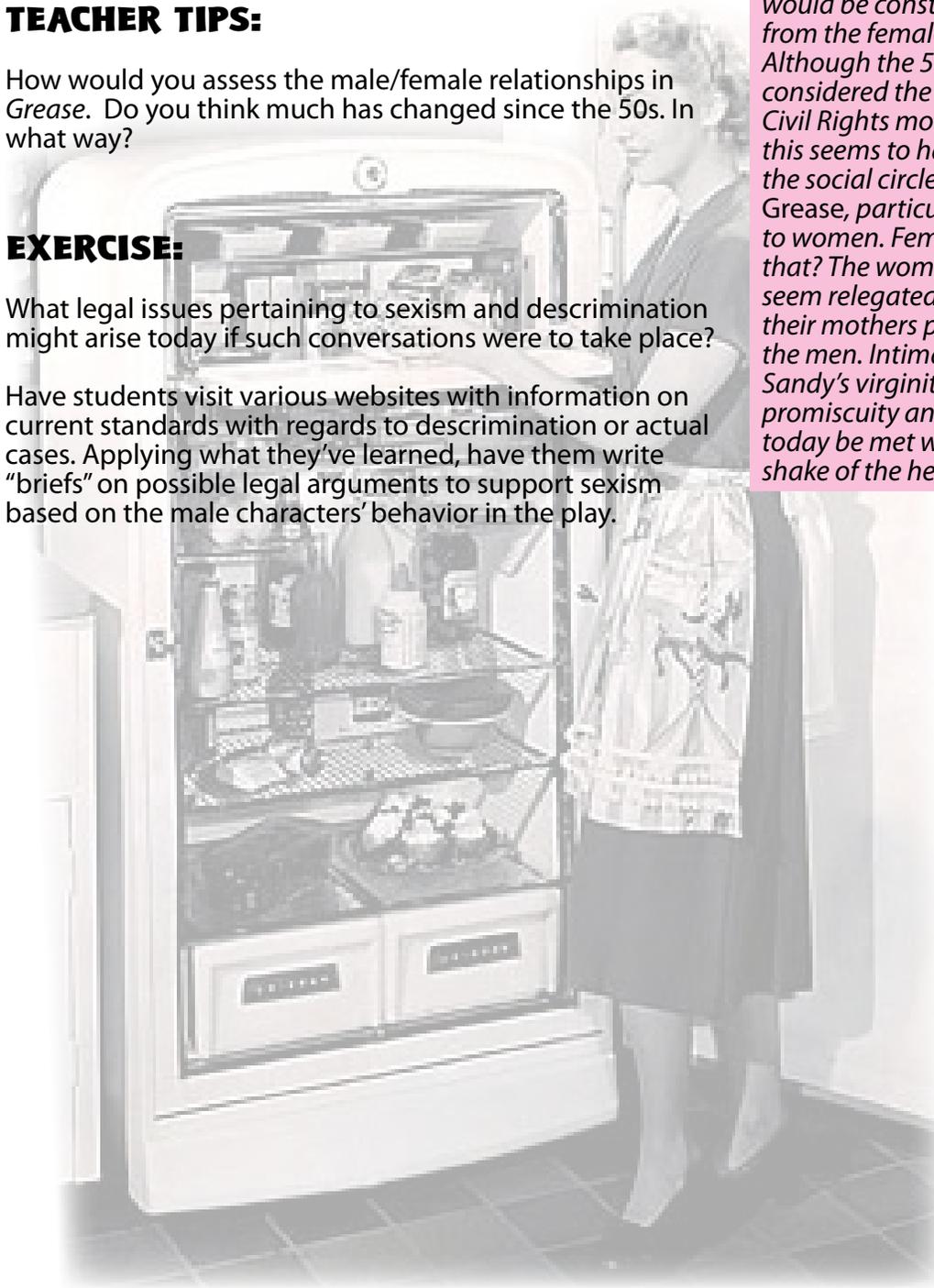
EXERCISE:

What legal issues pertaining to sexism and discrimination might arise today if such conversations were to take place?

Have students visit various websites with information on current standards with regards to discrimination or actual cases. Applying what they've learned, have them write "briefs" on possible legal arguments to support sexism based on the male characters' behavior in the play.

A SITUATION FROM THE SCRIPT:

Numerous references in Grease in today's liberated environment would be construed as degrading from the female perspective. Although the 50s are generally considered the beginning of the Civil Rights movement, none of this seems to have penetrated the social circle presented in Grease, particularly as it pertains to women. Feminism? What's that? The women in the play seem relegated to the same roles their mothers played—pleasing the men. Intimations concerning Sandy's virginity, Rizzo's promiscuity and others would today be met with more than a shake of the head.



HISTORY EXPERIENTIAL

EXPERIENTIAL OBJECTIVE:

Measure levels of concern in the 50s with those of today.

TEACHER TIPS:

Back then students practiced nuclear attack drills. Sirens went off and students throughout the country dove under desks, as if that would protect them! To this day no one really knows what authorities were thinking. Today comes with its own fears. 9/11 saw to that. What measures are we taking to protect ourselves from attack. Do you think they are reasonable?

EXERCISE:

Students write down five major issues concerning the world today. Have them survey ten peers, grading each on a scale of one to ten for their knowledge, interest and concern (fear, if appropriate) regarding these issues. When finished, total the scores.

Next students write down five issues pertaining to relationship and image. Have them interview the same ten peers, scoring each as above. Total the scores.

Compare the scores from the two surveys. On which survey did students score higher? Did it surprise you? Why? Why not? Draw a conclusion: How different are your peers in this respect from the young people in the play?

A SITUATION FROM THE SCRIPT:

The characters in Grease seem little concerned with anything that does not immediately impact their personal lives. Sex and image are all; they are insensible to social and political issues of the day. Hair, clothes, male/female relationships, peer perception, and social events override all other concerns.



BERT THE TURTLE WARNED AMERICAN CHILDREN EVERYWHERE DURING THE COLD WAR TO "DUCK AND COVER" IN THE EVENT OF A NUCLEAR BLAST.

HISTORY TO GO

CHALLENGE #1 ~ SOCIAL/POLITICAL HISTORY

While Danny, Sandy and company were hoppin and boppin, happily oblivious to the national and world events swirling around them, a lot was happening. Numerous websites list events that occurred in the 1950s that continue to impact our lives today. Find these websites and select a topic that interests you from 1958-59—the years in which *Grease* takes place. Go to some high school essay contest websites and see what they are looking for in terms of a prize-winning essay. Pick a topic, research it then write the essay adhering to the contest rules. Enter the essay in the contest.

CHALLENGE #2 ~ PERSONAL HISTORY

Someone who grew up in the 1950s would today be in their 60s. Write the personal history (anonymous, of course) of a person in that age category willing to speak frankly. You might try talking to an older family member like a grandparent. Using the attitudes of the Greasers as a guide, ask them if they knew any kids like this. What was their own attitude toward school, cliques, girl/boy relationships, drinking at that age? How did their attitudes change over time? How their behavior as teenagers impact their adult lives? Knowing what they know today,



OVERTURE TO LANGUAGE ARTS

“DON’T MIND HER, SANDY. SOME OF US LIKE TO SHOW OFF AND USE SCURVY WORDS!”

In the original Broadway production of *Grease*, Marty’s line above (from the published version of the script) used the word “dirty” in place of “scurvy.” In fact, the colorful dialogue in *Grease* is characterized by the abundant use of “dirty” words or slang. Actually, the word “slang” is itself a corruption of a French expression: “sale langue” meaning “dirty language.” The Oxford Dictionary first applied the term “slang” in the mid-eighteenth century to identify “the special vocabulary used by any set of persons of a low and disreputable character.” Some contemporaries of the greasers might have agreed with this definition of the irreverent language used by the Burger Palace Boys and the Pink Ladies in *Grease*.

Summary of Standard for Language Arts

Writing

- Demonstrates competence in the general skills and strategies of the writing process
- Prewriting, drafting and revising, editing and publishing
- Demonstrates competence in the stylistic and rhetorical aspects of writing
- Uses grammatical and mechanical conventions in written compositions
- Gathers and uses information for research purposes

Reading

- Demonstrates competence in the general skills and strategies of the reading process
- Demonstrates competence in the general skills and strategies for reading a variety of literary texts
- Demonstrates competence in the general skills and strategies for reading a variety of informational texts

Listening and Speaking

- Demonstrates competence in speaking and listening as tools for learning



Developing a language of one's own is one means of self-invention. In this case, the invented language or "special vocabulary" of the greasers is all part of the self-conscious creation of a rebellious persona. The central characters in *Grease* represent that generation of teens from working-class neighborhoods who first carved out a separate youth culture and identity within the social landscape, laying the groundwork for the counter-culture of the 60's and 70's. The cars they drove, the music they played, the way they dressed and spoke, all contributed to that identity. Greasers displayed the deliberate look, sound, attitude and language of rebellion; the burgeoning backlash of the repressive 1950's could be heard in their every exchange.

Greaser slang isn't the only "special vocabulary" used in *Grease*. A later Oxford definition of slang describes it as: "the special

vocabulary or phraseology of a particular calling or profession." Kenickie may not be the expert with girls that he imagines, but he knows cars – or at least sounds like he does. His wannabe hot rod "Greased Lightning," is his dream machine

In *Grease*, Kenickie, Doody and Sonny prepare to confront a gang from the other side of town, but they're missing a key member of their gang: Danny.

SONNY

Who'da ever thought Zuko'd punk out on us.

KENICKIE

Nice rumble! A herd of Flaming Dukes against you, me and Howdy Doody.

and the lyrics of the song titled after it are loaded with the "special vocabulary" of the automotive expert.

Today, this type of profession-specific language is generally

referred to as "jargon." Virtually every profession has its own unique vocabulary but some seem to have a whole language all their own which is incomprehensible to outsiders. If you've ever overheard physicians conferring about a medical procedure, or sports casters analyzing a game, you know that they may as well be speaking a foreign language to the uninitiated. Technology, in particular, has always created its own vocabulary and there's no better example than the

GREASERS WERE NOT ALL GANG MEMBERS BUT THEY SHARED AND ASSIMILATED THE TOUGH LANGUAGE OF THE STREET. MANY OF THE TERMS BELOW, FIRST HEARD IN THE 50'S, HAVE SINCE BECOME PART OF OUR EVERY DAY VOCABULARY.

- BOP**fight
- BREAD**money
- BUSTED**arrested
- COOL IT**take it easy
- DIG**understand
- HUSTLE**a racket, a con
- JAZZ**meaningless talk
- PAD**room
- PIECE**gun, weapon
- PUSHER**drug dealer
- REP**reputation
- RUMBLE**gang fight
- SNEAKY PETE**cheap wine
- TIGHT**close

syntax of the cyber world. Most of us have stared, uncomprehending, into the patient eyes of an IT guy as he talked to us in numbers and initials. By extension, text messaging and internet slang represent a current form of coded language.

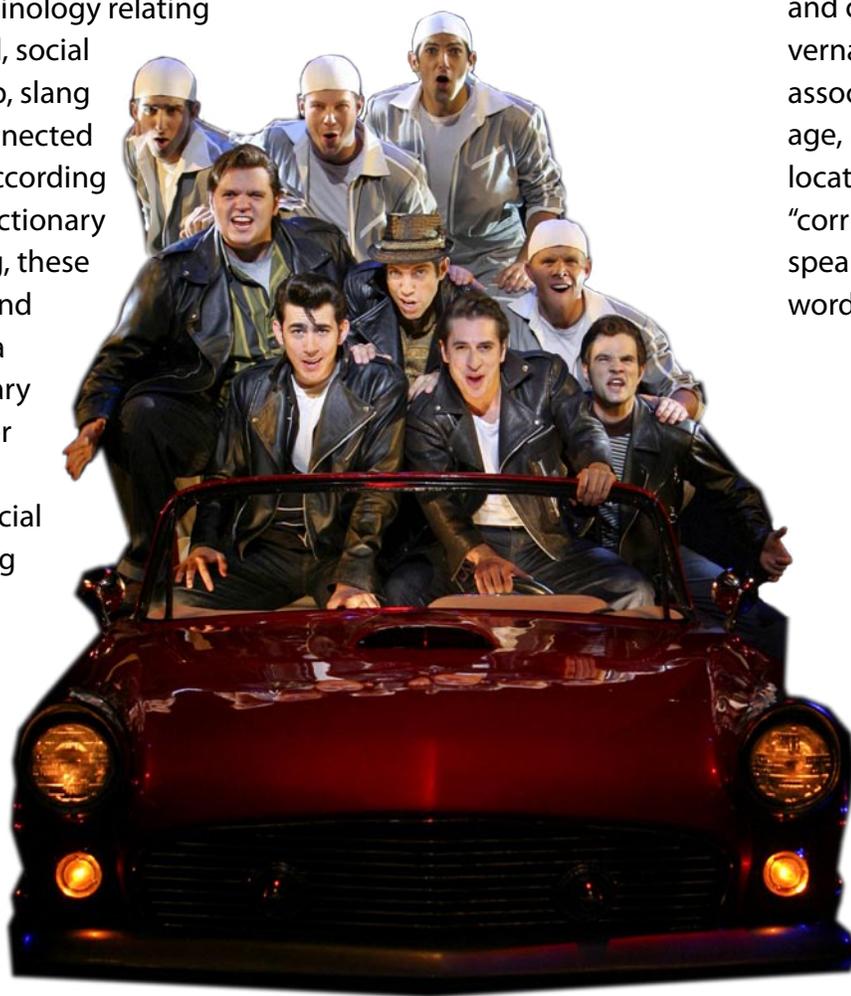
Whether it's the invented language of the "low and disreputable character" or the specialized terminology relating to a professional, social or cultural group, slang is intimately connected with identity. According to the Oxford Dictionary of Modern Slang, these colorful words and phrases create "a private vocabulary binding together members of a subculture or social group, conferring upon them an individuality distinct from the rest of the community."

Hand in hand with the special circumstances

of slang's creation and usage is its temporal nature. The product of a specific group seeking definition in a specific place and at a specific time, the charged new words lose their edge as things change and the moment passes. Some words will have staying power and eventually move into standard speech. Some simply begin to sound old-fashioned over time and are lost to nostalgia. This

temporal aspect makes the use of slang an efficient and effective tool in storytelling, immediately and entertainingly orienting a reader or an audience in a particular historical situation.

Most importantly, though, language defines character. Greaser slang, as well as rap/hip-hop, grunge talk, ebonics, "Valley girl" speak, spanglish and countless other forms of vernacular, immediately invoke associations with regard to age, race, class, education, location, era and attitude. These "corruptions" of language can speak volumes in just a few words.



**"GREASED LIGHTNIN'"
VOCABULARY**

- CHROME-PLATED RODS**
- DUAL MUFFLER TWINS**
- FINS**
- FOUR-SPEED ON THE FLOOR**
- FRENCHED TAIL LIGHTS**
- FOUR-BARREL QUADS**
- FUEL-INJECTION CUT-OFF**
- HEAT-LAP TRIALS**
- OVERHEAD LIFTERS**
- PISTONS, PLUGS AND SHOCKS**
- QUARTER MILE PALOMINO DASHBOARD**

In Sandy's first encounter with the Pink Ladies, the characters and the conflict are crystal clear:

FRENCHY
WAIT'LL YOU HAVE THE CHIPPED BEEF.
BETTER KNOWN AS "BARF ON A BUN!"

MARTY
DON'T MIND HER, SANDY. SOME
OF US LIKE TO SHOW OFF AND USE
SCURVY WORDS.

RIZZO
SOME OF US? CHECK OUT MISS
TOILETMOUTH OVER HERE.

MARTY
UP YOURS, RIZZLE!

JAN
HOW DO YA LIKE THE SCHOOL SO FAR,
SANDY?

SANDY
OH, IT SEEMS REAL NICE. I WAS
GOING TO GO TO IMMACULATA BUT
MY FATHER HAD A FIGHT WITH THE
MOTHER SUPERIOR OVER MY PATENT
LEATHER SHOES.

JAN
WHAT DO YA' MEAN?

SANDY
SHE SAID BOYS COULD SEE UP MY
DRESS IN THE REFLECTION.

MARTY
SWEAR TO GOD?

JAN
HEY, WHERE DO YA GET SHOES LIKE
THAT?



LANGUAGE ARTS DISCUSSION

DISCUSSION OBJECTIVE:

Trace the evolution of current slang.

TEACHER TIPS:

How do you view people who use a lot of slang? Do your friends use slang? How often? Is the use of it a way of fitting in with a particular group? So certain groups of students use slang more than others? Which group do you belong to? Are better words available?

A SITUATION FROM THE SCRIPT:

We use many words every day considered slang. Dialogue in Grease is intentionally replete with such words to accentuate the character's personas as "greasers" and to transport the audience back in time. While its use may seem over the top to modern audiences, its effect is undeniable.

EXERCISE:

Think hard. Make a list of words you use that might be considered slang. Add to the list words your parents, friends and other acquaintances use. Combine the list with lists compiled by other students, leaving out duplicates.

Guided Discussion: Analyze each word and try to explain its origin. Are the words and expressions overused? Why do you think so? Suggest alternate words and expressions that could be used in their place. Would these be as effective in communicating the particular idea? Why? Why not? Should slang words be admitted as formal communication, or relegated to private interpersonal conversations only? How would you feel if your nightly news anchor inserted these expressions into his or her report? Provide your personal opinion of the dialogue in *Grease*.



LANGUAGE ARTS WRITING

WRITING OBJECTIVE:

Character development and analysis.

TEACHER TIPS:

Dialogue between friends in *Grease* may strike you as a bit harsh? Do they seem to care about each other? What do their responses as individuals to the problems of others say about them. Would you choose any of them as friends? Why? Why not?

EXERCISE:

Show the movie, *Grease*, in class. Have students write down the names of the various characters with positive and negative columns next to each. As the movie progresses, have them assess each character's interaction with peers as one or the other. It may be helpful for them to jot down notes on the scene as they go. At the end of the movie, have students list each character and the number of positive or negative interactions they had with another character in the movie.

Students pick one character with more positives than negatives, and one with more negatives than positives. Have students analyze each in writing and propose reasons why they think they behave the way they do.

A SITUATION FROM THE SCRIPT:

Several scenes in the play illuminate the characters' positions vis a vis their relationship to their peers. Danny joins the track team and is mocked on several occasions by his peers. Rizzo, who is promiscuous, intimates that Sandy is a virginal tease. "Cool" is an attribute reserved for Greasers and Pink Ladies—nerds, anyone not belonging to the groups—are treated as, at best, outsiders.

"MORON"

"CHICKS"

"JERKS"

"SHUT UP"

"SCREWS UP"

"DORKS"

"CREEP"

"NUTS"

"FRUITCAKE"

LANGUAGE ARTS EXPERIENTIAL

EXPERIENTIAL OBJECTIVE:

Explore the nature of self-inflicted limitations in the maturing process.

TEACHER TIPS:

What are your major goals in life? Do you expect to achieve them? What will you have to do to get there? What obstacles do you see? How can you overcome them? Do you think the power to succeed is in your hands, or are there obstacles beyond your control? Can you speak honestly to your friends about your goals, or do you hold back thinking they might be critical or find your goals too lofty?

EXERCISE:

Gather your thoughts about something you would like to do in life. Be honest. Find the right moment and share your thoughts with your immediate peer group. Assess their reactions. Are their reactions supportive of your plans; do they mock them as unattainable; do they seem interested? Look for key words in their responses that tell you how they feel.

Now, assess how well you presented your case. Did you forcefully press the discussion of your goals, or if your peers were critical did you back off and change the subject? Given that one expects friends to be supportive, do you now feel the same about your peers? Ask yourself this: will your peers help you achieve your life goals, or will it be up to you?

A SITUATION FROM THE SCRIPT:

Danny's decision to go out for the track team seems to come from nowhere. He not only accepts the challenge but succeeds. Criticism from some of his peers that he now sees himself as better than them does not seem to bother him. Why might that be? What does this say about Danny? What does this say about friendship?



LANGUAGE ARTS TO GO

CHALLENGE #1 ~ WORD ASSOCIATION

In "Nice Talk" there are 14 words listed as examples of 1950s street slang. Look at each of these words and their meanings. Find a comparable word in today's slang and start a *New Millenium Slang Dictionary*. Add other words that you can think of. Combine your book with entries of fellow students to make the most complete book possible. Using desk top publishing software, self-publish the final draft and sell as many copies as you can.

CHALLENGE #2 ~ PAYOLA WHAT?

Research the 1950s *Payola* scandal and prepare a short essay on the topic. Include information on the etymology of the term, where it came from and who made it up.



OVERTURE TO LIFE SKILLS

“YOU GOT THE DREAM BUT NOT THE DRIVE!”

Summary of Standard for Life Skills

Thinking and Reasoning

- Understands and applies the basic principles of presenting an argument
- Understands and applies basic principles of logic and reasoning
- Effectively uses mental processes that are based in identifying similarities and differences (compares, contrasts, classifies)
- Understands and applies basic principles of hypothesis testing and scientific inquiry
- Applies basic trouble-shooting and problem-solving techniques
- Applies decision-making techniques

Working With Others

- Contributes to the overall effort of a group
- Uses conflict-resolution techniques
- Works well with diverse individuals and in diverse situations
- Displays effective interpersonal communication skills
- Demonstrates leadership skills

Self-Regulation

- Sets and manages goals
- Performs self-appraisal
- Considers risks
- Demonstrates perseverance
- Maintains a healthy self-concept
- Restrains impulsivity

Life Work

- Makes effective use of basic tools
- Uses various information sources, including those of a technical nature, to accomplish specific tasks
- Manages money effectively
- Pursues specific jobs
- Makes general preparation for entering the work force
- Makes effective use of basic life skills
- Displays reliability and a basic work ethic
- Operates effectively within organizations

In one sense, Frenchy is lucky. She knows what she wants to do with her life even before she's finished high school. She dreams of becoming a beautician and constantly practices her skills on herself and her friends. The only problem is that she can't seem to negotiate her way through school...of any kind.

At the beginning of *Grease*, she's already flunking out of high school and soon decides to try Beauty School instead. When that plan fails, she drops out but rejects the idea of going back to high school which leaves



her...nowhere. By the end of the show, she's found a job demonstrating a new "miracle make-up" at Woolworth's, but we know that her prospects for moving on from there are limited.

We also know from the opening scene that the greasers are absent from the Rydell reunion. We can imagine them in a suspended state of adolescent rebellion somewhere nearby, working at the uninteresting jobs they always knew awaited them. Ironically, a group that helped usher in a new social and cultural era, they were, in a sense, betrayed by the future. They were left behind as the status of their working class world eroded. Whereas their parents carved out a respectable living from their "blue collar" jobs, for the greasers, "the times they were a-changing."

“DROPPING OUT OF HIGH SCHOOL TODAY IS TO YOUR SOCIETAL HEALTH WHAT SMOKING IS TO YOUR PHYSICAL HEALTH!”

~TIME MAGAZINE - 2006

Since the time of the greasers, factory work and other low-paying jobs available to previous generations of high school drop-outs or those without benefit of a high school education, have increasingly gone to overseas workers and immigrants – both willing to work for lower wages than most Americans can or will.

The Time Magazine article identifies likely outcomes for dropouts today including a higher probability of criminal activity, limited lifetime earning potential, and the probability of perpetuating the cycle through their children who will also drop out.

Current research shows dropout rates at an alarming 1 out of 3 students overall and the numbers are higher for Latinos and African-Americans. But these numbers are also hotly disputed, particularly by government studies that reveal significantly lower rates, primarily because they include as graduates, those who’ve obtained, or, in some cases, those who plan to obtain a GED. Most agree that this gives a false picture of the actual number

of students leaving school and downplays what many consider to be a serious problem. However, it does point to the large numbers of students opting to take the GED instead of finishing high school, giving life to a whole new controversy.

leave school with the intention of taking the exam, never do. Passing the test typically requires weeks or months of preparation.

“JEFFERSON THOUGHT SCHOOLS WOULD PRODUCE FREE MEN: WE PROVE HIM RIGHT BY PUTTING DROPOUTS IN JAIL!”

~ ANONYMOUS

Created 60 years ago, the test was designed to assist returning WWII veterans in being able to collect the GI Bill by quickly providing them with a high school equivalency certification. Now, some fear that the exam, originally intended for adults, has become a lure to teens who are teetering on the brink of dropping out of school. The trouble is that many who



The exam is rigorous and will serve those who take it well in applying for higher education. In fact, 95% of Community and four year colleges accept the exam in lieu of a high school diploma. But few who are accepted into college on this basis go on to complete a degree. And many prospective employers show a preference for a candidate with the actual diploma, including the military which limits its non-diploma recruits to 10% or less. The consensus is, and the research bears it out, that the same lack of initiative that prevented completion of high school seems to inhibit completion and success in later endeavors.

In times past, dropping out of a conventional education that failed to address the radical social and political changes of the times, might have been seen as almost a badge of honor. Alternative paths were possible. This was still the land of opportunity after all. Today, dropping out can mean dropping off the map.

So why are students leaving school in such large numbers? A collection of studies spanning 30 years of research beginning in 1959 (the year our story takes place), showed that, through all that time there were three principal reasons that students left school: low academic achievement, the need to make money and/or the desire to work and, above all, boredom, lack of motivation and a feeling that the high school courses were irrelevant to their lives.

One proven educational tool that can help address all three of these issues is vocational training, sometimes called "career tech" which gives students specific career training while they are still in high

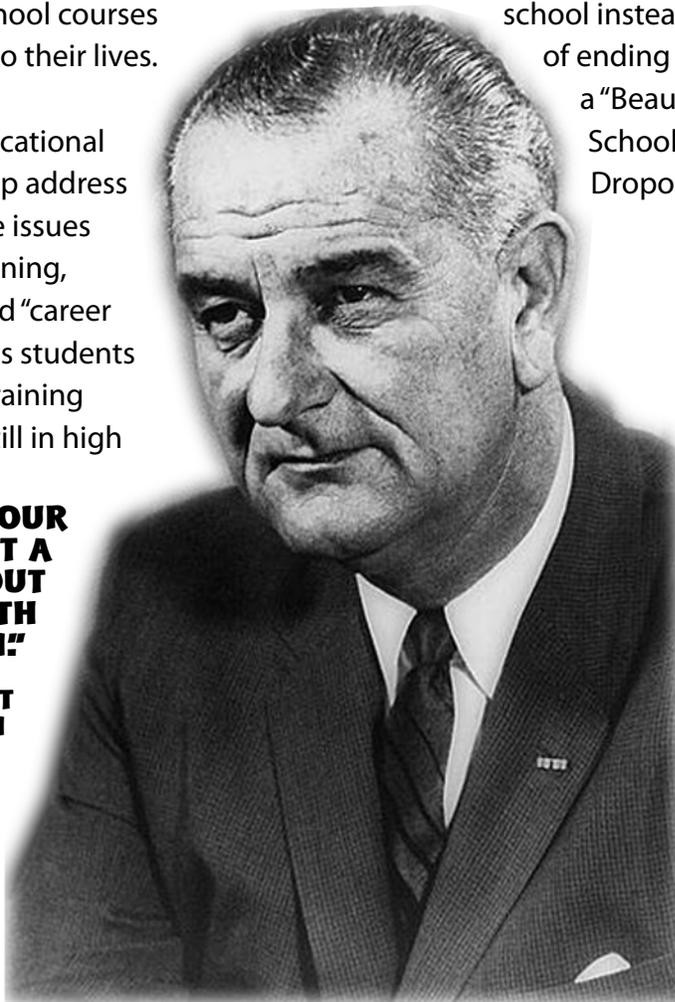
who had no college prospects or intent, but today, students with vocational training are entering college at the same rate as other high school graduates.

Frenchy was not lucky. She had a dream but not the drive to make it a reality. Perhaps if Rydell High had offered "career tech" for aspiring beauticians she'd have found success in high school instead of ending up a "Beauty School Dropout."

"NO MEMBER OF OUR GENERATION WHO WASN'T A COMMUNIST OR A DROPOUT IN THE THIRTIES IS WORTH A DAMN!"

~ PRESIDENT LYNDON B. JOHNSON

school. In the past, these classes typically attracted kids



LIFE SKILLS DISCUSSION

DISCUSSION OBJECTIVE:

Reinforce a positive attitude toward education and its value.

TEACHER TIPS:

Do you look at work as merely a means to make money, or would you like to do something you really love? Would you not pursue a career because you'd have to work too hard to get there? How does learning something new make you feel? Are you happy to get up in the morning and come to school? Would you rather be doing other things? Like what?

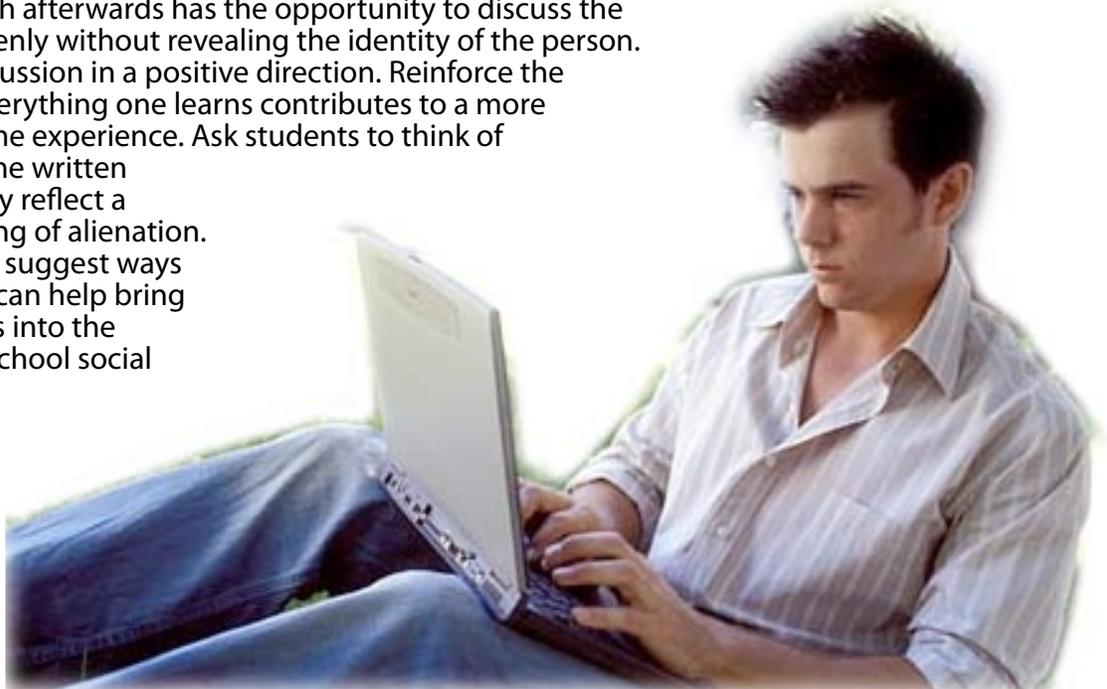
A SITUATION FROM THE SCRIPT:

The characters in Grease seem to have varying views on their high school experience. While the Greasers and Pink Ladies see it as a painful oppressive experience, others, like the nerds, seem to find joy in the camaraderie and learning. Why these attitudes emerge and how they develop is an interesting discussion.

EXERCISE:

Each student writes an honest anonymous assessment of their high school experience (academic and social). This is not a writing assignment and can be in the form of informal notes if the student wishes. A good idea is to have the students type the notes so that even the handwriting is not recognizable. Whatever is written must be sufficiently intelligible for another person to read.

Students turn in their notes to the teacher. Each is read aloud to the class, which afterwards has the opportunity to discuss the comments openly without revealing the identity of the person. Guide the discussion in a positive direction. Reinforce the notion that everything one learns contributes to a more fulfilling lifetime experience. Ask students to think of examples. Some written comments may reflect a student's feeling of alienation. Have students suggest ways in which they can help bring those students into the general high school social fold.



LIFE SKILLS WRITING

WRITING OBJECTIVE:

Using personal insights to develop realistic career goals

TEACHER TIPS:

What do you want to do as an adult? People often ask you that. Do you feel intimidated when you can't answer? Perhaps you don't know at this point in your life. Maybe you have an idea but aren't sure yet.

EXERCISE:

Have students think of a career goal they might like to pursue. Each creates a two-part outline. The first part lists personal strengths and weaknesses (academic and personality). The second, based on research, lists in chronological order the requirements necessary to the career they've chosen.

Using information in both the first and second parts of the outline, have each student write a personal essay analyzing why this career may or may not be a good one for them to pursue.

A SITUATION FROM THE SCRIPT:

Frenchy seems to simply wake up one day and say she is leaving school to attend classes to become a hairdresser. You get the feeling that she's decided to take this path because she sees it's as easier--more fun than school. A better bet is that she's lazy and doesn't want to put the effort into getting good grades. In the end, she gives up on hairdressing too. The assumption can be made that she doesn't put much thought into her future.



LIFE SKILLS EXPERIENTIAL

EXPERIENTIAL OBJECTIVE:

Reinforce the responsibility for providing emotional support to others.

TEACHER TIPS:

If one of your friends has a problem, do you offer help or mind your own business? If people don't ask for help should you offer it anyway? Why?

EXERCISE:

Are you the type of person in whom people confide? Are you comfortable when people do confide in you? Any student who answers "no" to these questions becomes part of the class "student counseling" group. For at least one semester have this group meet once a week to address concerns of other students wishing to discuss issues.

Learning to be compassionate and emotionally supportive is an important life skill. Without divulging specifics, have students from the group report to the class at the end of the semester. How, if at all, did this exercise help them become more supportive of others.



A SITUATION FROM THE SCRIPT:

Sandy tries to show concern for Rizzo when Rizzo suspects she's pregnant by Kenickie. Rizzo plays tough and rejects Sandy's kind overture. She chooses to interpret Sandy's comments as critical and disingenuous, or at least that's the impression one gets. For her to confide in Sandy would be, for Rizzo, a sign of weakness. Throughout the play Rizzo neither gives quarter nor accepts any. What does this say about her ability to relate to her peers?

LIFE SKILLS TO GO

CHALLENGE #1 ~

In the Writing section you prepared an outline of personal strengths and weaknesses. Applying these, you determined whether you have the skills it takes to pursue a particular career. But was your assessment accurate?

KNOW THYSELF!

Go online and find sites that list important life skills. There are many. Write as many down as you find. Next to each write yes or no, indicating whether you have these skills or not. Now comes the hard part. Take your list and show it to at least six other people—friends, family members, whomever—people that know you well. Ask each if they agree with your assessments. You may find you do not know yourself as well as you think you do, and that there are areas you need to work on.

CHALLENGE #2 ~

The Greasers and Pink Ladies are not what one would call motivated students. Their interests lie elsewhere. That's obvious.

Look up the term motivated. Have a secure grasp of its definition as an important life skill. Now write a motivational speech that you would give before the Greasers and Pink Ladies to convince them to abandon their current priorities and to take their academic pursuits more seriously. Good luck!



OVERTURE TO BEHAVIORAL STUDIES

YOU GOTTA GET WITH IT!

THE YOUNG ALWAYS HAVE THE SAME PROBLEM - HOW TO REBEL AND CONFORM AT THE SAME TIME. THEY HAVE NOW SOLVED THIS BY DEFYING THEIR PARENTS AND COPYING ONE ANOTHER.

~QUENTIN CRISP

It's significant that Sandy and Danny's summer romance happens at the beach, an environment far removed from school life, friends and peer pressure. In that relaxed setting, without gangs, neighborhoods or, for that matter, much clothing to label them, the two form what would otherwise be an unlikely bond. Everything changes when they are back at school and Sandy, the quintessential goody, goody, shows up on Danny's turf.

Peer groups can be a great source of strength for teenagers, providing a sense of security, belonging and identity during the tumultuous and confusing years between childhood and adulthood. They can also have a destructive influence, creating pressure by dictating prescribed behavior with a tyranny as bad as or worse than the larger society from which they are trying to differentiate themselves. In

Grease, Sandy and Danny experience both the power and the pressure of the group.

Why was acceptance by the group so important anyway? It's no accident that the term "teenager" was coined in 1944 toward the end of WWII

of WWII when life for teens was rapidly changing. Parents who had survived the Depression and the war years wanted a better life for their children and they got it. For many families, the prosperity of the post-war years meant that teens were not required to get jobs and, in fact, indulgences were possible such as weekly allowances. This free time and disposable income created, not only a whole new consumer segment of the population, but a social life for adolescents, separate and distinct from home and family. Even in working class families, if teens were expected to work, the money they earned was used at their discretion. Kenicke's summer job earnings were earmarked for buying a

Summary of Standard for Behavioral Studies

- Understands that group and cultural influences contribute to human development, identity, and behavior
- Understands various meanings of social group, general implications of group membership, and different ways that groups function
- Understands that interactions among learning, inheritance and physical development affect human behavior
- Understands conflict, cooperation, and interdependence among individuals, groups and institutions



car, the essential equipment for successful dating.

Regardless of class, teens were now free to gather at the local burger joint or record store after school or at the drive-in in the evening. There, they congregated in groups which became the new, all-important means of defining one's identity. At the same time, they were distancing themselves from their parents' generation, creating what came to be known as "the generation gap." For the first time, teens, en masse, were consciously defining the behavior of adolescence. Rejecting the social codes of their parents, they adopted new codes of behavior as prescribed by the group or gang which provided the strength of solidarity but

which also brought its own pressure to conform.

Danny is a Greaser, a product of the increasingly disenfranchised working class and the antithesis of the 1950's image of propriety that Sandy, his summer romance embodies. In front of his friends, he at first denies knowing her. Later, when he tries to impress her by joining the track team, he catches grief from the other Burger Palace Boys for doing something so un-cool.

"JEEZ, NEXT THING YA' KNOW HE'LL BE GETTING' A CREW-CUT!"

Ultimately, it is Sandy's transformation that closes the gap between she and Danny. At the top of the show, she

embodies the conservative '50's that are on their way out.

"LOOK SANDY, IF YOU THINK YOU'RE GONNA BE HANGIN' AROUND WITH THE PINK LADIES. . .YOU GOTTA GET WITH IT!"

She does her best to fit in with the Pink Ladies at Marty's pajama party by drinking the cheap wine, smoking cigarettes and getting her ears pierced but fails miserably at all attempts. In the end, the change in her comes, not in this peer pressured situation, but in a moment alone when she decides there must be more to her than an artificial image of virtue. And so she then bids:

"GOODBYE TO SANDRA DEE"

GREASER SLANG AND ATTITUDE REQUIRED THE RIGHT PACKAGING. FASHION WAS KEY. HERE'S PART OF THE GREASER CODE FOR COOL...

MANDATORY GREASER WARDROBE

- BLUE OR BLACK LEVI JEANS
- GREY OR GREEN "BAGGIES" (WORK TROUSERS)
- DENIM JACKET
- BLACK MOTORCYCLE JACKET
- WIFE BEATER T-SHIRT (WHITE TANK-STYLE UNDERSHIRT WORN EXPOSED)
- SHORT SLEEVED WHITE OR BLACK T-SHIRT WITH SLEEVES ROLLED UP
- CONVERSE ALL-STAR BASKETBALL SHOES
- BROTHEL CREEPER SHOES (DANNY'S ARE BLUE SUEDE)
- MOTORCYCLE BOOTS



ACCEPTABLE HAIRSTYLES

(CREATED WITH THE HELP OF HAIR POMADE SUCH AS BRYLCREEM, I.E. GREASE)

- FOLSOM
- POMPADOUR
- QUIFF

DE RIGUEUR ACCESSORIES

- CIGARETTES (SOMETIMES ROLLED IN THE T-SHIRT SLEEVE)
- BANDANA
- MEDALLION ON A CHAIN
- SWITCH-BLADE
- TATTOOS

BEHAVIORAL STUDIES DISCUSSION

DISCUSSION OBJECTIVE:

Recognize how peer groups effect decisions.

TEACHER TIPS:

How much do you care about what people think? Do you express honest opinions in front of your peers, or do you always go along with the crowd? Do you fear being ostracized from your peer group? If it came down to hurting someone's feelings or offending your peers, which would you choose?

EXERCISE:

Consider the quote by Quentin Crisp:

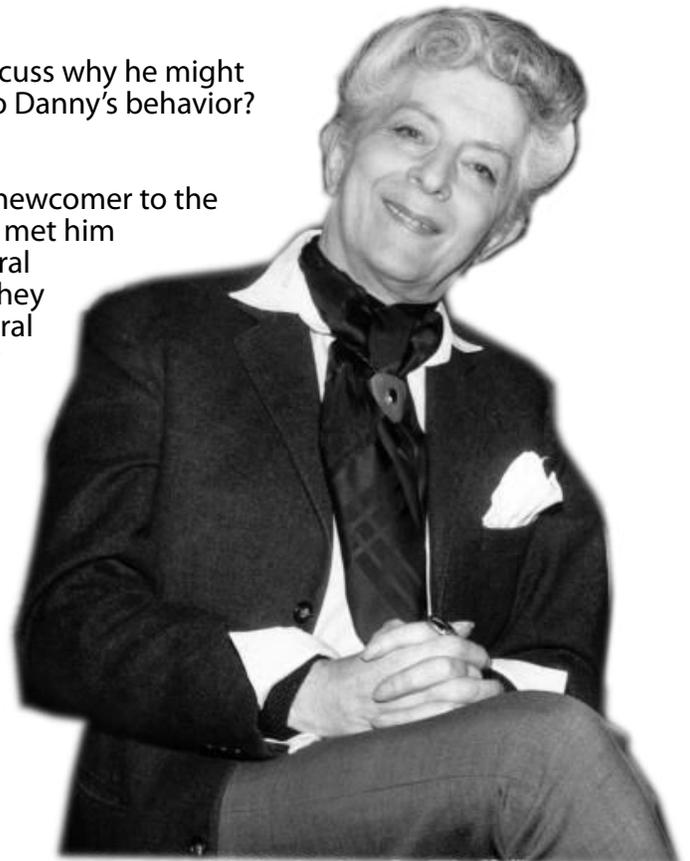
"The young always have the same problem - how to rebel and conform at the same time. They have now solved this by defying their parents and copying one another."

Research the life of Quentin Crisp. As a class, discuss why he might have said this. Do you think the quote applies to Danny's behavior? How so?

Tell students to pretend that Quentin Crisp is a newcomer to the class. He lives in their neighborhood, so they've met him over the summer. They've spoke to him on several occasions. Considering his gay lifestyle, would they admit to their peers that they knew him? If several of the peers were unfriendly to him, would they stand up for him, join in the bad behavior, walk away? Divide the class into three groups. Put students who chose each option in the same group. Students in each group talk among themselves; one member presents reasoning behind the group's position to the rest of the class.

A SITUATION FROM THE SCRIPT:

Danny and Sandy were obviously quite chummy over the summer when his peers were not around. Now that school has started, and she's the unaccepted newcomer, he acts as if he barely knows her.



QUENTIN CRISP

BEHAVIORAL STUDIES WRITING

WRITING OBJECTIVE:

Compare and contrast behavior of characters in the play with today's teens.

TEACHER TIPS:

Petty jealousies and other negative aspects often exist among friends. Someone is smarter, prettier or more handsome, dresses better, gets better grades. Are you guilty? If you are, what do you think prompts your behavior? How does it affect your relationships with your friends and others?

EXERCISE:

Use notes taken from the Language Arts Writing Lesson section while watching the movie. Have one student agree to read his or her interpretation of a particular character's behavior in the scene. Ask how many agree or disagree with the interpretation. A student who disagrees reads their interpretation and repeat the process until everyone's interpretation has been discussed. Students take additional notes.

Students write a short essay on the overall behavior of the characters and how it compares with what they see on a daily basis within their own social environments.

A SITUATION FROM THE SCRIPT:

The actions of the characters in Grease while seemingly simplistic are actually quite complex. Low self-esteem, arrogance, meanness, jealousy and competitiveness are all exhibited along with confidence, kindness and, on occasion, even sensitivity.



BEHAVIORAL STUDIES EXPERIENTIAL

EXPERIENTIAL OBJECTIVE:

To reinforce the need for respect among peers.

TEACHER TIPS:

How do you think friends should speak to friends? Do your friends speak to you in a respectful manner? Do you ever feel intimidated by the way they speak to you? Do you think making fun of people is “funny?”

EXERCISE:

Discuss your school’s policy regarding bullying. Ask students to conduct three interviews with younger students about times when they may have been bullied by older students. Report the results to the class.

Have the class write anonymous assessments of how their friends speak to them. The teacher collects the papers and reads them aloud to the class. Class reaction is intrinsic to the exercise.

Students research and report on one article they’ve found about the tragic results of bullying.

A SITUATION FROM THE SCRIPT:

Listening to the dialogue in Grease one can’t help but think a bit of sensitivity training might be in order. The characters often talk to each other in what amounts to disdain. Yet their reactions seem strangely robotic, as if they’re used to being spoken to this manner. Characters such as Rizzo today might even be considered a bully and subject to censure by school authorities.



BEHAVIORAL STUDIES TO GO

CHALLENGE #1

Research articles on the tragedies of Columbine or another similar event. What were the personalities of the perpetrators in relationship to acceptance by their peers? Were they loners? Did they express feelings of alienation? Find as many similarities as you can in the attitudes and perceptions of the teens involved. What does this say about the importance of peer acceptance?

CHALLENGE #2

Define the term *clique*. Do the Pink Ladies and Greasers fall into that category? Why? Why not? Take the position of either defending or condemning cliques from the position of their overall effect on your school's social life.

A SITUATION FROM THE SCRIPT:

No one wants to be an outcast. Everyone on some level wants to "fit in." The character of Sandy typifies that need, and the lengths to which she will go (allowing her peers to perform an ear piercing) to achieve that goal. The question is: what happens when some teens feel they do not fit in or are not accepted by their peers



OVERTURE TO THE ARTS

DIRECTING: THE ART OF COMBINING VISION, COLLABORATION, COMMUNICATION AND LEADERSHIP.

Summary of Standard for The Arts

Art Connections

- Understands connections among the various art forms and other disciplines

Music

- Sings, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music
- Performs on instruments, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music
- Improvises melodies, variations, and accompaniments
- Composes and arranges music within specified guidelines
- Reads and notates music
- Knows and applies appropriate criteria to music and music performances
- Understands the relationship between music history and culture

Theater

- Demonstrates competence in writing scripts
- Uses acting skills
- Designs and produces informal and formal productions
- Directs scenes and productions
- Understands how informal and formal theater, film, television, and electronic media productions create and communicate meaning
- Understands the context in which theater, film, television, and electronic media are performed today as well as in the past

Visual Arts

- Understands and applies media, techniques and processes related to the visual arts
- Knows how to use the structures (e.g., sensory qualities, organizational principles, expressive features) and functions of art
- Knows a range of subject matter, symbols, and potential ideas in the visual arts
- Understands the visual arts in relation to history and cultures
- Understands the characteristics and merits of one's own artwork and the artwork of others

StageNOTES had the opportunity to pose some questions about the director's role in the creative process to Marc Bruni, the Associate Director of *Grease*.

Marc recently won the 2007 New York Musical Theatre Festival Directing Award for his production of *Such Good Friends*. He is currently the Associate Director of *Legally Blonde* and *Grease* on Broadway. He has been associated with industry heavyweights Jerry Zaks, Kathleen Marshall, Walter Bobbie and Jerry Mitchell on twelve Broadway productions. Marc also stages two productions of *Irving Berlin's White Christmas* annually for Walter Bobbie and has worked on many other major New York City and regional productions.



StageNOTES: What are your primary responsibilities as the Associate Director?

Marc Bruni: To collaborate with the director, Kathleen Marshall, on all aspects of the production including casting, design, and staging from preproduction through to Opening Night and then to maintain her vision of the show.

SN: Have you worked with this director before?

MB: I first assisted Kathleen on *Wonderful Town* and we have done several

shows together since including *The Pajama Game*, *Two Gentlemen of Verona* at NYSF, and *70, Girls, 70* at Encores.

SN: In adapting to the work style of a director, is chemistry a factor?

MB: Sure, you spend so much time together during the production process that certainly personality comes into play. The production team turns into a de facto family, and it's much easier to support the show if you share the creative values and aesthetic of that family.

SN: What insights can you share about how the Director guides the creative team through the collaborative process on a musical? What style or approach do find most productive?

MB: Though musicals are unique in the number of people who need to collaborate to make the whole, it's important that there be one person who is helming the ship. The director must have the final say in all the creative decisions of the production. Jerry Zaks calls the director the "muscle" of the show. That's not to say that the director needs to act as dictator. The most successful collaborative moments I've witnessed came from a "best idea in the room" mentality. At the end of the day, though, the director needs to be the one to say "that's the idea-let's run with that."

SN: Is a period piece more difficult?

MB: I don't think so. In any show, the director must create a believable world of the play, to make sure the audience and cast have an appropriate frame of reference to appreciate the story. Yet even on a contemporary play, you can't assume the audience will come in with the same knowledge of the world around them, so you need to make sure the show offers enough explanation of the period to make the character's motivations clear.

Research plays a big part in directing a period piece (and in fact Kathleen provided the cast with a wealth of research on teen life in the 1950s), but ultimately I believe theatre is an exercise in humanity, not academics. Avoiding anachronism should be a goal, but as a costume designer I know once put it, "nobody cares if it's period accurate if it's ugly."

SN: Does this show have relevance for us today?

MB: Definitely. At the heart of the show is a human story about love, pride, and community: those themes are timeless. Everyone can relate to the first time they fell in love, got a car, thought their friends would "always be together." One of the

biggest laughs in the show comes when Danny first enthusiastically greets Sandy, then notices that his friends are agape and quickly changes his tone to "Well, that's cool..." That's a laugh of recognition, of all those audience members instantly understanding how teenagers change to conform to peer norms.

SN: What have been the challenges of this particular production of *Grease*?

MB: Everyone who comes to see *Grease* comes with a personal relationship to the material: either they've seen the movie, done the show in high school, seen the last Broadway revival, etc. It's next to impossible to simultaneously deliver the expectations of all of those people, so that was the general challenge of this process: to revisit this material in an honest way and make it feel fresh while not straying so much from what makes the piece so enduring.

SN: What have been the rewards of this production?

MB: After the first preview, Max and Laura tried to get out of the stage door and were overwhelmed with fans desperate for a photo and autograph. We've subsequently had to get security for them and set up fences to control the crowds. These are people who bought their tickets right after the TV show happened, and who likely would not have thought to buy a ticket to a Broadway show. To introduce a live theatrical event to a new generation of theatregoers feels rewarding. As technology like You Tube, Facebook, and text messaging causes more and more social isolation, I think the shared communal experience of watching a story performed live becomes more unique and vital.

SN: What kind of education/training do you have?

MB: I have a degree in Economics and Drama from Dartmouth College.

SN: Have you always been interested in directing or did you start out as an actor? If so, is it important for a director to have had that experience?

MB: I acted in high school and college and then found out that as a director, I got to in a sense play all the parts; to think about a story from a number of different vantage points. I think communication is the most important quality in a director, and understanding where an actor is coming from, how they are approaching the material, is critical to successfully communicating your ideas to them.

THE ARTS DISCUSSION

DISCUSSION OBJECTIVE:

To understand art as a reflection of culture.

TEACHER TIPS:

What role does art play in your life? What is your personal definition of art? A critic might contend there's good art and bad art. Based on your definition, do you think that's true? Should anyone judge art except the viewer? Isn't it all relative?

EXERCISE:

Present a slide show in class of at least five major pop artists of the 50s and 60s, including Andy Warhol and Peter Max. Give no background on the artists. Have students take notes and discuss the works from the following perspectives: the idea conveyed (interpretation); technical merit; overall impact on the senses. On a scale of one to ten have students score each work based on the three criteria. Which work wins the favor of the "masses."

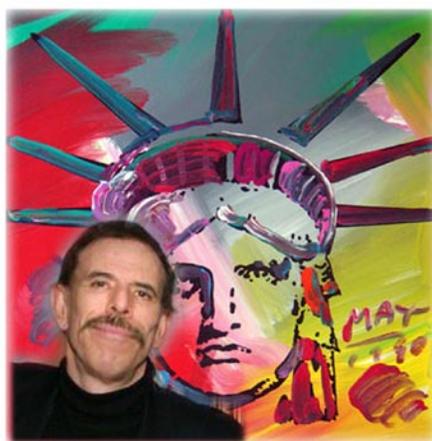
Discuss the winner in relationship to a masterwork from an earlier period. How does the work reflect the culture of the period in which it was painted.

A SITUATION FROM THE SCRIPT:

Pop art, originally born in Great Britain, found a welcome home in the United States in the late 50s, the time setting of Grease. As a reaction to "elitist" art themes and the heavily intellectual movements of abstract expressionism, the form exhibited popular themes geared toward appreciation by the masses. The simplistic nature of the dialogue in Grease is similarly a reflection of that time and movement. In the words of Andy Warhol, the wunderkind of the pop art movement, "I am a deeply superficial person." And so, say many, was his art.



ANDY WARHOL



PETER MAX

THE ARTS WRITING

WRITING OBJECTIVE:

Analyze lyrics of 1950s music in relationship to today's musical vernacular.

TEACHER TIPS:

Today's pop music is far more sophisticated than that of the *Grease* era. Topics including religion, politics, social issues, and sex are common themes today. Do you think musical lyrics have become too sexual? How do you feel about artists expressing political and social views within their music?

EXERCISE:

Music, as it is for today's teens, was an intrinsic part of the 50s lifestyle. Disc jockey's Alan Fried and "Moon Doggie" were taking over the airways. Rock and roll was well on its way to becoming the newest American cultural craze. The "hop" was an important social event as evidenced in *Grease*. Not since the 1920s, when flappers shortened their skirts and shook The Shimmy, had society been as shocked as it was with Elvis and his undulating hips.

The excerpts from the songs above typify for us a more innocent time. It's hard to imagine anyone expressing these sentiments today in such banal terms.

Divide the class into three groups. Give each group a song. Dissecting the lines, have students rewrite the song in musical language of today's pop music. Have them perform their work in class.

Write a short essay critiquing the original music from the standpoint of today's musical tastes.

Write a short essay critiquing the original music from the standpoint of today's musical tastes.

SONGS FROM THE SCRIPT:

FREDDIE MY LOVE

*Freddie my love, I miss you more
than words can say
Freddie my love, please keep in
touch while you're away
Hearing from you can make the
day so much better
Getting a souvenir or maybe a
letter
I really flipped over the grey
cashmere sweater
Freddie my love
Freddie my love, Freddie my love,
Freddie my love*

HOPELESSLY DEVOTED

*Guess mine is not the first heart
broken
My eyes are not the first to cry
I'm not the first to know there's
just no getting over you...
I know I'm just a fool, who's
willing,
To sit around and wait for you
But baby can't you see
There's nothing left for me to do
I'm hopelessly devoted to you*

SUMMER NIGHTS

*Summer lovin, had me a blast
Summer lovin, happened so fast
Met a girl crazy for me
Met a boy cute as can be
Summer day drifting away, to oh
those summer nights
Tell me more, tell me more...*

THE ARTS EXPERIENTIAL

EXPERIENTIAL OBJECTIVE:

To recognize art as a conduit for understanding and coping with experiences.

TEACHER TIPS:

Have you ever watched a film or read a book and felt as if the author was talking about you? How does that make you feel? Do you think people who do not see films or read books or view or create art are missing out? Does art help us understand ourselves? How?

EXERCISE:

While essentially a lighthearted romp, several of the characters in *Grease* are experiencing some serious growing pains masked by upbeat music and “cool” teen banter.

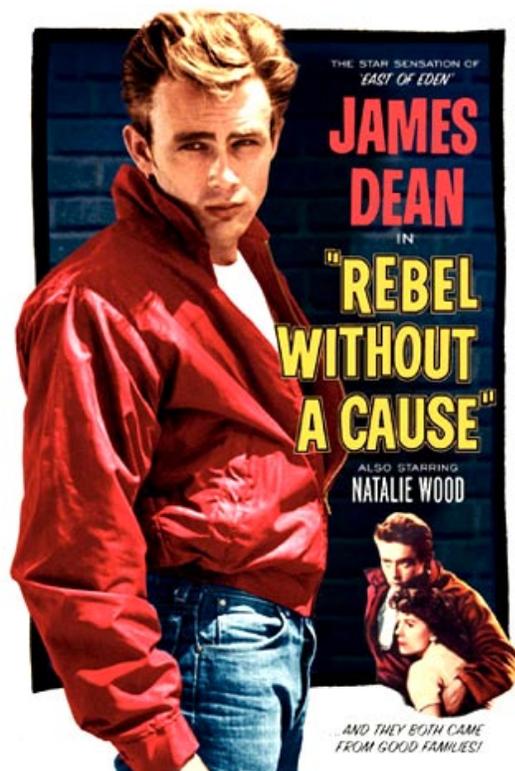
The Academy Award-winning film *Rebel Without a Cause* presents the story of disaffected teens in a far more serious light. In the film rebellious middle class youth defy authority, deal with their own sexuality, and juggle difficult peer relationships. One of the most praised films in its genre, problems confronted by its characters will seem familiar to today’s teens. In short, some things never change.

Rent the film and show it in class. As they watch, have students take notes on how many circumstances seem familiar. Lead a discussion: In what ways have things changed for teens in the 50 some odd years since the film was made? In what ways are they the same?

Have students jot down several instances where they have acted in a rebellious way. What was the outcome?

A SITUATION FROM THE SCRIPT:

While essentially a lighthearted romp, several of the characters in Grease are experiencing some serious growing pains masked by upbeat music and “cool” teen banter. Frenchy’s struggle with finding her future; Rizzo’s suspected pregnancy; Sandy’s reluctance to go “all the way” versus her attraction for Danny.



THE ARTS TO GO

CHALLENGE #1 ~

Walking the halls of any high school in the 1950s one would find students wearing one or more of the items listed below. Use the internet to find other items and hints on the 1950s look. As a for-credit art project, sketch or paint (use whatever medium you like) a male and female student dressed appropriately for a "greaser" event. Then draw the same students as they might dress today for a similar event. Display your work.

CHALLENGE #2 ~

It would be a mistake to think that the only art produced in the 50s was "pop art." Go online and research traditional artists of that period. Find as many images as you can, enlarge and print them, and make a collage. Identify all of the artists you have found on the back of the work. Write a five-paragraph paper on the artist whose work you like best. Say why you like it.

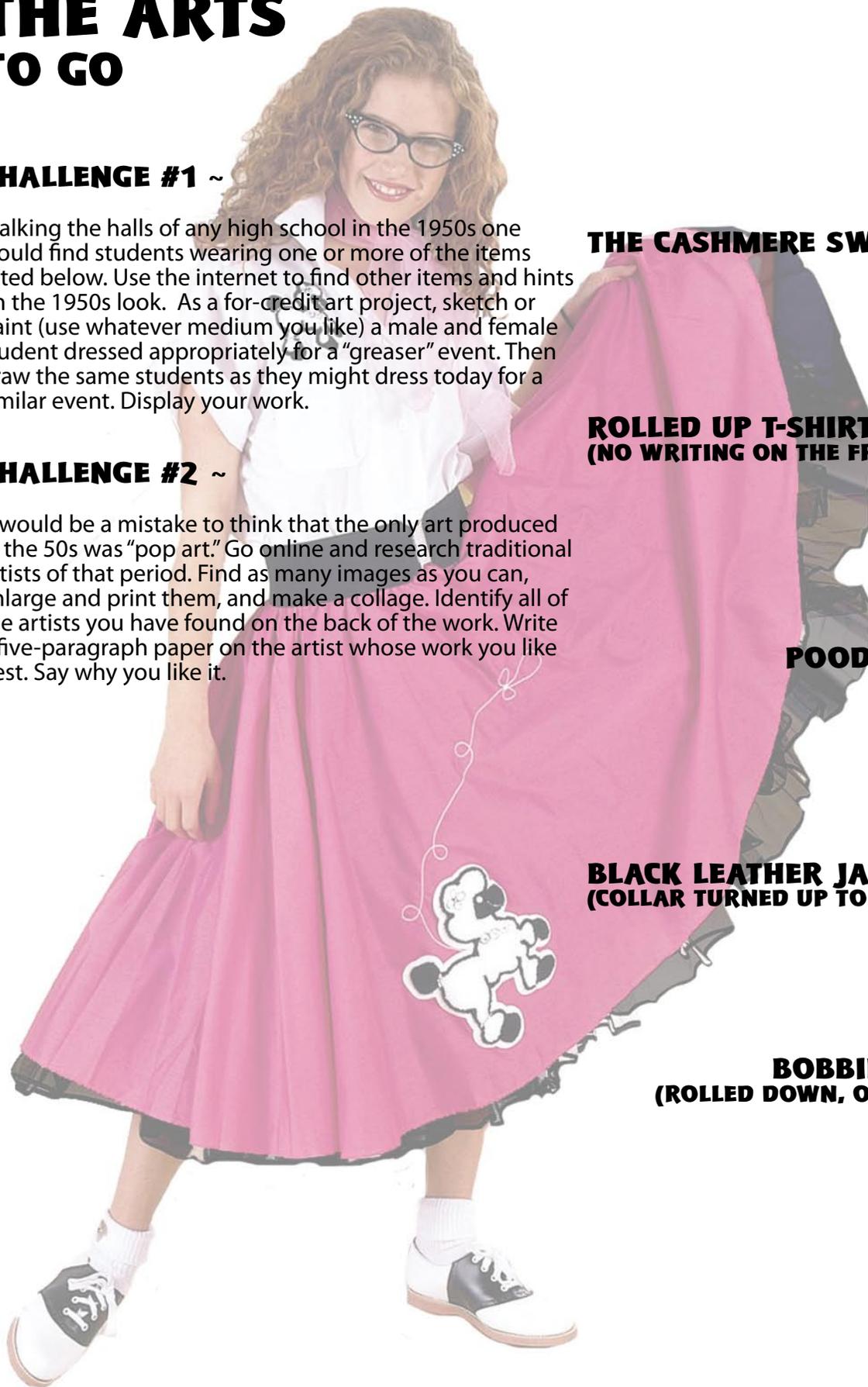
THE CASHMERE SWEATER

**ROLLED UP T-SHIRT SLEEVES
(NO WRITING ON THE FRONT, PLEASE)**

POODLE SKIRT

**BLACK LEATHER JACKET
(COLLAR TURNED UP TO BE "HIP")**

**BOBBIE SOCKS
(ROLLED DOWN, OF COURSE)**



The ^{CAMP} *Broadway* Guide to Theatergoing Etiquette

In the early part of the nineteenth century, theatrical performances usually began at six o'clock. An evening would last four or five hours, beginning with a short "curtain raiser," followed by a five-act play, with other short pieces presented during the intermissions. It might be compared roughly to today's prime-time television, a series of shows designed to pass the time. With no television or radio, the theater was a place to find companionship, light, and warmth on a cold winter's evening.

As the century progressed, the theater audience reflected the changing social climate. More well-to-do patrons still arrived at six o'clock for the full program of the evening, while half price admission was offered at eight or eight-thirty to the working class. This allowed for their longer workday and tighter budgets. Still, the theaters were always full, allowing people to escape the drudgery of their daily lives and enjoy themselves.

Because of this popularity, theaters began to be built larger and larger. New progress in construction allowed balconies to be built overhanging the seats below—in contrast to the earlier style of receding tiers. This meant that the audience on the main floor (the section called "the orchestra") were out of the line of sight of the spectators in the galleries. As a result, the crowds became less busy peopleshooting and gossiping among themselves, and more interested in watching the performance. The theater managers began the practice of dimming the lights in the seating area (called the "house lights"), focusing the attention of the audience on the stage. The advent of gas lighting and the "limelight" (the earliest spotlights) made the elaborate settings even more attractive to the eye, gaining the audience's rapt attention.

By the 1850s, the wealthier audiences were no longer looking for a full evening's entertainment. Curtain time was pushed back to eight o'clock (for the convenience of patrons arriving from dinner); only one play would be presented, instead of four or five, freeing the audience for other social activities afterward. Matinee (afternoon) performances were not given regularly until the 1870s, allowing society ladies,

who would not have ventured out late at night, the opportunity to attend the theater.

Now in a new millennium, many of these traditions are still with us. The theater is still a place to "see and be seen"; eight o'clock is still the standard curtain time; and the excited chatter of the audience falls to a hush when the house lights dim and the stage lights go up, and another night on Broadway begins.

You can make sure everyone you know has the very best experience at the theater by sharing this Theater Etiquette with them. And now, enjoy the show!

Being a Good Audience

Remember, going to the theater isn't like going to a movie. There are some different rules to keep in mind when you're at a live performance.

Believe it or not, **the actors can actually hear you.** The same acoustics that make it possible for you to hear the actors means that they can hear all the noises an audience makes: talking, unwrapping candy, cell phones ringing. That's why, when you're at a show, **there is no food or drink at your seats** (eat your treats at intermission; save the popcorn-munching for the multiplex)

No talking (even if you're just explaining the plot to the person next to you)

Always keep cell phones and beepers turned off (This even means no texting your friends during the show to tell them how great it is...)

Of course, what the actors like to hear is how much you're enjoying the performance. So go ahead and laugh at the funny parts, clap for the songs, and save your biggest cheers and applause for your favorite actors at the curtain call. That's their proof of a job well done.



RESOURCES

BOOKS

Grossman, Loyd. *A Social History of Rock Music: From the Greasers to Glitter Rock*. New York: McKay, 1976.

Lee, Cotton. *The Golden Age of American Rock n Roll*. Ann Arbor, MI: Popular Culture, 1985.

Dunn, Jerry Camarillo. *Idiom Savant: Slang as It Is Slung*. New York: Henry Holt, 1997.

Feller, Robyn. *Everything You Need to Know about Peer Pressure*. New York: Rosen Pub. Group, 1997.

Ewing, Elizabeth. *History of Twentieth Century Fashion*. Totowa, NJ: Barnes and Noble, 1986.

WEBSITES

www.greaseonbroadway.com
The Official website for *Grease*

www.kidshealth.org/kid/feeling/emotion/peer_pressure.html
Dealing with Peer Pressure

kclibrary.nhmccd.edu/decade50.html
Kingwood College Library: American Cultural History

ojjdp.ncjrs.org/jjbulletin/9808/youth.html
Youth Gangs and Violence (A Historical Look)

www.childtrendsdatbank.org/indicators/1HighSchoolDropout.cfm
Drop Out Trends

VIDEO

Grease. Dir. Randal Kleiser. Perf. John Travolta, Olivia Newton-John. Paramount, 1990.

StageNOTES™

A FIELD GUIDE FOR TEACHERS

A Camp Broadway, LLC Publication

Editor

Philip Katz

Art Director

Michael Naylor

Writers:

Jennifer Wollerman

Jennifer Wollerman is a freelance writer, producer and dramaturg. She has worked with theatre organizations as diverse as Dragone, Radio City Entertainment, Alexander H. Cohen, Second Stage and La Mama, and has had numerous dramaturgical and writing assignments along the way including, most recently, an article on the fall Broadway season for Frontier's in-flight magazine, *Wild Blue Yonder*. With C2 Creative, a marketing services company she has produced for a wide variety of clients including RHI Entertainment and Qubo, a children's television network. Jennifer holds an MFA from Columbia University in Dramaturgy/Theatre Criticism.

Sue Maccia

Sue Maccia worked as a senior copywriter in the college textbook division of Macmillan Publishing, Inc. New York. She has also worked for several New York educational development companies and taught creative writing at a specialized program hosted by East Stroudsburg University. As a journalist she covered both hard news stories and wrote feature articles for major newspapers including the Newark Star Ledger. Ms. Maccia was chief copywriter for Films for the Humanities and Sciences of Princeton, a major supplier of educational films to the high school and university markets. At this position she also handled Spanish language film acquisitions. She has worked for the New Jersey Council for the Humanities as a public relations writer

Special Thanks

Adam Aguirre

For *Grease*:

Production photography by Joan Marcus.

Publicity photos and key art of Max and Laura shot by Scott Gries/Getty Images.

About Nederlander Group Sales...

Nederlander Group Sales is committed to providing our guests with superior service and effective solutions to your group needs on and off-Broadway. In addition to group ticketing, our team of industry professionals is available to help plan educational programs, talk-backs with members of the cast, VIP events and other exciting opportunities for you to build a truly enriching theatre experience.

