

# Theater, Leadership, and Local Stories Project

## Introduction:

This project, co-developed by the National Museum of American History and the National Council of La Raza, is meant to encourage students to explore leadership examples from national and local history and to create dramatic interpretations. The project is targeted toward middle level learners (approximately grades 5–8) in informal learning environments and is designed to take approximately five hours of instruction. The ideal number of students would be 12–24 students working in 3–4 groups.

## Objectives:

Students will be better able to:

- Describe characteristics of a good leader.
- Articulate a story through writing and theater.
- Name and tell the story of a leader in his/her community.
- Work collaboratively.

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\*- Additional student worksheets for each session are available at [http://americanhistory.si.edu/militaryhistory/resources/Extra\\_Handouts.doc](http://americanhistory.si.edu/militaryhistory/resources/Extra_Handouts.doc). They are editable Microsoft Word Documents that you can adapt to fit your students and the schedule of the project at your site.



# Session 1

**Overview:** In this session, students will experiment with two theater activities, view a video of historically-based theater, and explore the characteristics of leadership.

## **Session at a Glance:**

- Introduction (8 minutes)
- Museum Theater Video and Discussion (20-35 minutes)
- ACTivity 1: Bring Characteristics of Leadership to Life Through Acting (10-15 minutes)
- Wrap-Up (1 minute)

**Time Spent:** 39-65 minutes

## **Staff Preparation:**

- Watch the museum theater video (online at <http://americanhistory.si.edu/freedomandjustice/torpedoes.aspx>).
- Review the Farragut Historical Information Sheet (page 25) and Museum Theater Information Sheet (page 27).
- Consider watching the short video with a sample of students completing ACTivity 1, available online at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U1S7z64SqN4>.
- If you plan to use the student handouts, download the files at [http://americanhistory.si.edu/militaryhistory/resources/Extra\\_Handouts.doc](http://americanhistory.si.edu/militaryhistory/resources/Extra_Handouts.doc) and adapt them as needed. Print at least one copy per group.

## **Staff Choices:**

- In Part 2C: Plan whether to use the museum theater video as a whole piece (16 minutes) or in five acts (2-6 minutes each). If your students tend to get restless during videos, shorter acts might be a good idea. Use the suggested discussion questions in between each act. If necessary, the activity can still be done using only acts 3 and 4 (6 minutes total).
- In Part 2D: If you have a computer with a projection screen and Internet, consider trying the “tech option” to create online word art with the students as they brainstorm about leadership.

## **Classroom Set-Up:**

- TV or projection screen with computer or DVD player
- Open space for students to form a circle

## **Step-By-Step:**

1. Introduction:

- Over the next few sessions, we're going to work together to learn a story about our community and tell it through acting. Along the way, we'll do lots of games to help us practice our acting.*
- What are some of the ways that we learn stories? (television, movies, books, textbooks, comic*

books, out loud from relatives, friends, and family, online, newspapers, theater, dance, puppet shows)

## 2. Museum Theater Video and Discussion

a) *Acting (in movies, on TV, in a theater) can be a powerful way to tell a story because it includes real people pretending that the story is happening to them. Some museums use acting as a way to tell stories about the past. Let's take a look at an example of an actor pretending to be a man named David Farragut. David Farragut lived about 150 years ago, so the actor is pretending it's a long time ago and that his audience is also from 150 years in the past.*

c) Watch the video together (<http://americanhistory.si.edu/militaryhistory/video/torpedoes.aspx>).

Suggested Discussion Questions (if you choose to watch the video in acts)

- Act 1 (<http://americanhistory.si.edu/militaryhistory/video/torp1.aspx>):
  - What qualities do you think make a good leader?
  - What hints do you see or hear that tell you something about David Farragut?
- Act 2 (<http://americanhistory.si.edu/militaryhistory/video/torp2.aspx>):
  - What activities or ideas are you passionate about?
  - Retell the story the actor told about the young sailor who wouldn't work hard.
- Act 3 (<http://americanhistory.si.edu/militaryhistory/video/torp3.aspx>):
  - What reasons motivated Farragut to fight for the North during the Civil War?
  - Talk about a time when you had to make a hard decision like Farragut.
- Act 4 (<http://americanhistory.si.edu/militaryhistory/video/torp4.aspx>):
  - What were some of the most memorable words in Farragut's speech to his men during the Battle?

d) After the video, discuss:

- 1) *Just from watching the video, what hints do we have that the actor is pretending to be in the past? (costume, very formal style of speaking)*
- 2) *The actor playing Farragut was very specific about four specific qualities of a good leader. Can you remember any of them? (passion and commitment, willingness to work hard, strength of character, and perseverance and courage) What examples did he use to talk about those qualities?*

**Note to staff:** If students struggle with these concepts, consider discussing these definitions, to have a common understanding.

- passion- intense liking or desire for or devotion to some activity or concept
- commitment- the attitude of someone who works very hard to do or support something
- willingness to work hard- hard work that is accepted or done by choice or without reluctance
- strength of character- the good qualities of a person that usually include moral or emotional



strength, honesty, and fairness

- perseverance- the quality that allows someone to continue trying to do something even though it is difficult
- courage- the ability to do something that you know is difficult or dangerous

3) *Do you agree or disagree that those are important qualities of a good leader? Who would you say are good leaders and how would you describe them? Write these qualities on the board as students list them.*

**Tech-option:** If you have access to computers, you could consider creating Wordle word art (<http://wordle.net>) with your qualities. This art could be used just during ACTivity 2, or it could be saved to use as the background for your theater performance or on the flyer promoting the performance. If the technology is easily available, consider doing the wordle in class. If not, consider asking a tech-savvy student to work on the wordle after class or during computer time.

4) *Do you remember how old Farragut was when he was first put in charge of a ship? (10 years old) Do you think a leader must be a certain age?*

5) *What were the most memorable parts of the story he told? What parts were most important for the audience to remember?*

### 3. ACTivity 1: Bring Characteristics of Leadership to Life Through Acting

- Have students gather in a circle in the center of the room and face away from the circle.
- Name out a characteristic from the board and have students take the form of of each characteristic.
- After running through each of the characteristics, have students form pairs. With each pair, only one of the students will initially take the pose, then the other student in the pair will mirror the pose. Then switch, so the student who made the pose is now mirroring his/her partner.

**Note to staff:**

- Consider either stretching out this thought or moving quickly through, depending on your class. If your students know each other well, consider having students name qualities that their classmates hold. For example, “Katie is perseverant. She is good at helping me with my math worksheets no matter how many times she has to explain the answers to me.”

### 4. Wrap-Up

*During the next few sessions, we'll learn more about a leader from our own community, write a performance to go with his or her story, and then we'll perform the story. Our final project will be a theater presentation about a leader, like the video we watched today. Tonight, talk with your family about the characteristics of a leader we discussed and listed on the board. See if your family agrees on these qualities, and if they have any suggestions of “good leaders” from your community. Or just think about whether you know of any local leaders you think are interesting.*



## Session 2

**Overview:** In this session, students will experiment with two theater activities, get an introduction to tableaux style theater, and identify and research a local leader.

### **Session at a Glance:**

- Introduction (1 minute)
- ACTivity 2: Human Machine (10 minutes)
- Identifying a Local Leader (10 minutes)
- Researching a Local Leader (15-20 minutes)
- ACTivity 3: Farragut in Tableaux Theater Style (20 minutes)
- Wrap-Up (1 minute)

**Time Spent:** 57–67 minutes

### **Staff Preparation:**

- Plan working groups for your students that will stay together over the next four sessions.
- Review the Farragut Tableau for Staff (page 19) and Tableaux Information Sheet (page 26). Consider watching an example tableau with the fairytale “Jack and the Beanstalk,” available online at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ePQHqn8rcOc>.
- Print copies of the Farragut Tableau Worksheet (pages 21–22). Print at least one copy per group.
- Consider watching the short videos with a samples of students completing ACTivity 2, available online at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J-NfJBECWYM>, and ACTivity 3, available online at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a6UldiG53BY>.
- If you plan to use the student handouts, download the files at [http://americanhistory.si.edu/militaryhistory/resources/Extra\\_Handouts.doc](http://americanhistory.si.edu/militaryhistory/resources/Extra_Handouts.doc) and adapt them as needed. Print at least one copy per group.

### **Staff Choices:**

- For Part 3, students may need additional support in identifying one or more local leader. Consider one or more of these brainstorming ideas:
  - Ask the principal of your school or director of your community center to speak with the students and respond to the prompt questions.
  - If you have the time and resources, consider asking for a visit from someone from the local historical society or history museum. The speaker might recommend a specific local leader and/or offer suggestions for research sources.
  - Find the website of your local newspaper or review a printed copy of the newspaper. Are there any names that seem to appear over and over again?
- For Part 4, students will need access to research sources, such as a library, computers with Internet, and/or local newspapers. Decide which research sources can be made available for your class.



- For Part 5 C and D, if you think your students will struggle with the idea of tableaux theater, consider sharing a sample tableau with them, available online at [XX](#) and [XX](#). It tells the story of “Jack and the Beanstalk.”
- For Part 5 G and H, students use the idea of a plot diagram to understand action in a story. Depending on the reading and interest levels of the students, consider skipping this portion, but also remember to skip the plot diagram discussions later on.

### **Classroom Set-Up:**

- Research sources (such as a library, computers with Internet, and/or local newspapers)
- Open space for students to act in together
- (optional) Digital projector to share sample tableau

### **Step-By-Step:**

#### 1. Introduction:

*Today we'll start to focus our learning about leaders and theater. We'll select a local leader that will be the focus of our projects and we'll learn a kind of “frozen” theater called tableaux (tabl-loh) that we'll use for our project.*

#### 2. ACTivity 2: Human Machine:

- Instruct one student to go to the center of the stage area and begin to move their body as though it is part of a machine. The student's movement should be repetitive and continuous.
- One by one, add students to the “human machine.” As students add themselves to the machine, they should perform actions that connect with, balance, or respond to the actions of the machine. For example, if one student is raising and lowering one knee, the next student might mirror the raising and lowering with an opposite knee at the same pace, balance the movement by raising and lowering a hand at the same pace or twice as fast, or connect with the movement by acting as if (without contact) the first student's knee is pushing the second student forward.
- Encourage students to move without touching each other and complete the exercise with seriousness.
- After trying to activity with the entire class, try breaking the students into smaller groups. Experiment with the ideal size for group collaboration. Once groups have proven themselves able to do the Human Machine together, assign them as a single group for research and the rest of the project.

**Note to Staff:** The goal of this ACTivity is to encourage group awareness, think about group dynamics, and build focus with the students. Also consider pointing out to students that stories are made up of many moving parts that need to come together as a coherent unit, like their Human Machine was built of many parts but worked together, as well.

3. Have students break into groups to identify a leader connected to the story of your community. The ideal group will include 4 to 6 students. Ideal classes will include 3 or 4 tableau groups.

a) Prompts:

- Try to name some important events in your community's history. Start with the recent past and then think further back in history. Was any one person an important leader in helping your community through that milestone?
- Find out the names of your mayor, governor, Congressional representatives and Senators.
- Now think about other people who are leaders in your community. Is your principal a good leader? Who is the leader of your community center? Does your community have a sports team? Who is its coach?
- Have you ever met someone important to your community? Did you think s/he was a good leader?

**Note to Staff:** Depending on the size of your community, you might want to consider your "larger" community, such as the rest of your county or state, for ideas.

If the students are struggling to find a local leader or are very excited about a national or international leader, don't be afraid to follow their enthusiasm.

b) Other sources of ideas:

- Ask the principal of your school or director of your community center to speak with the students and respond to the prompt questions.
- If you have the time and resources, consider asking for a visit from someone from the local historical society or history museum. The speaker might recommend a specific local leader and/or offer suggestions for research sources.
- Find the website of your local newspaper or review a printed copy of the newspaper. Are there any names that seem to appear over and over again?

4. Researching Community Leaders:

a) Encourage students to begin researching the local leaders they have selected. Different sources of information could be useful depending on how famous the leader is or how recently the leader acted.

b) Recommended Sources of Information:

#### Web

- Local newspaper web site
- Local public radio station web site
- Homepages for government institutions, such as your city's web page, <http://senate.gov/>, or <http://house.gov/>

**Note to Staff:** A basic Internet search can turn up a lot of resources, but it can be difficult to know what resources are valuable. Here are a few tips to consider:

- Look at the URL. The domain (.gov, .com, .edu, etc.) says a lot about who is publishing



the resource. Be careful with .com sites since they are likely trying to sell an idea or product, and be especially careful with sites that include a person's name since an individual has little to lose from posting incorrect information.

- How recently was it updated?
- Who is the author? Has he or she been published anywhere else? Does the information about her suggest that she is an expert on this topic?
- For more tips, an in-depth guide to evaluating web resources is available from the University of California at Berkeley (<http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib/Guides/Internet/Evaluate.html>).

### Paper

- Local newspaper
- Library books

### Interviews

- With the leader himself/herself
- With someone who has met the leader
- With someone who was inspired by the leader and knows something about him/her

**Note to Staff:** Encourage students to take written notes and photocopy or print sources. Collect all of the notes at the end of the session so nothing gets lost between sessions.

5. ACTivity 3: *Let's remember the story of David Farragut: there are many ways that his story could be acted out. In the video, the actor was alone, he spoke lines out loud, and he sometimes moved or gestured like he was a part of the story he was telling. For example, when he was telling the story about the young sailor who didn't work hard, he pulled out a chair to represent the young sailor, and retold the story like it was all happening again with two people. Let's try acting out the story of David Farragut in a method called tableau (tab-loh). I'll read a story out loud and you will recreate the story in frozen scenes without words, sounds, or movement. There will be six scenes in this tableau presentation, and each one will have a frozen scene to go with it.*

- First, just read through the Farragut Tableau for Staff (page 19) and ask students to listen.
- Hand out the Farragut Tableau Worksheet (pages 21–22). Have students underline keywords and/or sketch what each scene would look like if it was a comic strip.
- Ask for 4-5 volunteers to take part in acting out this story in tableaux-style theater.
- For this exercise, people can take on one or more role (so sometimes they can be Farragut, sometimes they can be the “bad guys” and sometimes there will be more than one person acting as each part. Now, after I finish each chunk of the story, you should take on a pose together that shows what is happening.

**Note to Staff:** If students are struggling, try suggesting the underlined words in the “for Staff” version of the tableau (Page 19).



e) *Let's talk about that first run through.*

- Ask your volunteers: What was your favorite part to act out? What part was hard to act out? How could we work together to make the hard parts a little easier?
- Ask your audience: What part or parts do you think did a good job telling the story through poses? Do you have specific recommendations for ways to improve other parts?

f) Repeat the activity, considering the discussion from 5D.

g) (*optional*) Organize portions of the story into a plot diagram, similar to the format of <http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/plot-diagram/>.

- Let's figure out how these chunks of story fit together to build excitement. A plot diagram format will help us. Has anyone seen one of these before? The line represents the energy in the story. The beginning of the story is on the left side, and the end of the story is on the right side.
- At first, we need to learn the basics about this story. Which parts of the tableau fit there?
- Then it gets exciting and starts to move up the line. Which parts of the tableau are exciting? Which one is the most exciting?
- After the most exciting part, things start to calm down. Which parts of the tableau fit here?

h) (*optional*) Knowing how the different parts of the story fit together to form an exciting plot, act out each part as a tableau once more. Try to make the different parts of the story more or less energetic, depending on its place in the plot diagram.

## 6. Conclusion:

*Now that we've learned this new way of acting and we know about the story of a local leader, we'll work together to tell that story through acting.*



## Session 3

**Overview:** In this session, students will revisit the model tableau, write and practice their local leader tableaux, and hone their acting skills with another performing exercise.

### **Session at a Glance:**

- Introduction (9 minutes)
- Writing the Local Leader Tableau (25-35 minutes)
- ACTivity 4: Emotion Party (10 minutes)
- Practice Local Leader Tableaux (10-30 minutes)
- Wrap-Up (1 minute)

**Time Spent:** 55-85 minutes

### **Staff Preparation:**

- If you discussed plot diagrams during Session 2 and plan to continue using them in Session 3, review the plot diagram format used in Session 2 and the Farragut Tableau Analysis (page 20).
- If you plan to use the student handouts, download the files at [http://americanhistory.si.edu/militaryhistory/resources/Extra\\_Handouts.doc](http://americanhistory.si.edu/militaryhistory/resources/Extra_Handouts.doc) and adapt them as needed. Print at least one copy per group.

### **Staff Choices:**

- Plan who will be in the audience for the Session 5 performance. Consider inviting:
  - Parents, family, friends, and other caregivers (if they tend to be available during the time of your performance)
  - Older or younger students from the same school or community center
  - Staff and teachers from the same school or community center
- Consider watching the short video with a sample of students completing ACTivity 4, available online at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YYVQv1UDxS8>.

### **Classroom Set-Up:**

- Open space for students to act in together
- If you will be doing the tech option for part 2, make one or more computer available for each group.
- Consider creating a wall chart of the text of the Sample Farragut Tableau, writing the text on the blackboard, or projecting it on a wall for students to use as a reference.

### **Step-By-Step:**

#### 1. Introduction

- a) Ask the groups to describe the most exciting parts of the local leader stories researched in your class.



- b) Have students draw a comic strip style scene for that part of their local leader stories.
- c) Have each group report out on their “most exciting” scenes. Compare the scenes across local leaders and to the Farragut tableau.

2. *Now you'll work together to bring the story of your community leaders to life through an exciting tableau.*

- a) (*optional*) Using the plot diagram format from the Session 2, have each tableau group create their own plot diagram for the story of their local leader. Identify the beginning, middle, and end of the story they are telling.
- b) Encourage students to consider the characters and settings involved at each point on the plot diagram. If students are struggling, consider using the tech option or the prompt questions below.

**Setting:** You don't need an elaborate background to describe a setting. You'll just need to tell the audience about the setting through actions or in your narration.

- **Narration:** Do you want to include all of the setting details at once, toward the beginning? For example, “The year is 2008. The place is 150 Main Street, at the Liberty School.” Or do you want to add them as hints throughout the performance. For example, “In 2008, Cathy Treehorn was the principal of a school. She taught at that school on Main Street for 10 years.”
- **Actions:** Can you use mime (acting without words or props) to tell the audience about your setting? For example, pretend to pick vegetables if your setting is a farm, wipe the sweat from your forehead if your setting is hot, or use a very formal posture if your setting is at a fancy party.

**Character:** Most of your character's traits and actions will be conveyed through narration and tableau poses.

- Characteristics or actions that are hard to act out can be described in the narration.
- Characteristics or actions that are really important to the story should be in both the narration and in the tableau poses.

**Tech Option:** Multiple students who are working on the same leader should work together to complete the parts of the Drama Diagram (character, setting, conflict, and resolution) from Read Write Think (<http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/student-interactives/drama-30012.html>).

The Drama Diagram can be completed as interactive diagrams online that students can add text to and print, or they can be printed and completed by hand.

As students work on the parts of the Drama Diagram, have them brainstorm ways to convey those points of the story through action/poses AND words.

- c) As students begin to write their narration, encourage them to consider the following tips:
  - Keep each scene to approximately four to six sentences.
  - Try to have at least one scene for the beginning, middle, and end parts of the story. You don't want to cut off any important details at the beginning or leave your audience wondering about the ending.



- Keep each tableau to about five or six scenes, but definitely no more than ten scenes. Otherwise it can get hard to remember what poses happen in which scenes.

**Note to Staff:** If students have more scenes than they can handle, suggest combining scenes that don't have much action in them. For example, a scene that mostly defines the setting (such as Scene 1 in the Farragut Tableau), could be combined with a scene that has more action. The acting students would mostly focus on portraying the actions in the scene, and the narrator would describe the setting outloud for the audience.

d) *Let's take a break from all our writing to do another theater exercise. Shifting gears a little bit will help us to think fresh about our local leader tableaux.*

### 3. ACTivity 4: Emotion Party Acting Exercise

Bring the class together for an “emotion party,” where each guest at the imaginary party has a strong emotion that was included in their local leader tableau. One student begins as the host of a party. S/he expresses an emotion from his/her local leader tableau. The next student comes to the party, knocking on the door (real or imaginary), talking to the host, and acting out an emotion from his/her local leader tableau. If the guest has the same emotion as the host, then both students continue with the same emotion. If the guest is a different emotion, then the host mirrors the emotion of the guest as they talk. Continue adding more guests. Each guest brings an emotion and changes the mood of the host and other guests when they enter the party.

**Note to Staff:** Students can enter the party one at a time or as pairs or small groups. If they enter as pairs, both new guests act out the same emotion.

4. *Before we break into our groups again, let's decide on a narrator for each group's tableau. Select the narrator(s).*

**Note to Staff:** More than one student in each group might want to be the narrator. This is ultimately a staff decision. Here are some options to consider:

- See if both students could take turns being the narrator, with one reading the first half of the narration and the other reading the second half. If the students are working in very small groups, two narrators might not leave enough other performers.
- Have students persuade staff by writing three reasons that s/he should be the narrator.

5. Have groups practice their tableaux. Encourage the students to refine their narration and acting as they practice. Consider circulating to observe and coach each group, or ask one student to step out of each group and assist another group as a coach. Coaches should offer specific suggestions, name specific parts that worked well, and be mindful that the tableaux are all “works-in-progress”

6. Conclusion:

If appropriate, remind students to invite friends, family, or other supporters to the performance.



## Session 4

**Overview:** In this session, students will hone their silent performance skills with two acting exercises and collaboratively refine their local leader tableaux using theater critique techniques.

### **Session at a Glance:**

- Introduction (1 minute)
- ACTivity 5: Wordless Telephone (10 minutes)
- Practice Local Leader Tableaux (10 minutes)
- ACTivity 6: Walking Around the Room (5-10 minutes)
- Critique (20-30 minutes)
- Wrap-Up (1 minute)

**Time Spent:** 47-62 minutes

### **Staff Preparation:**

- Review the Critique Information Sheet (Page 28).
- Consider watching the short videos with a samples of students completing ACTivity 5, available online at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Hp3lWzeQfw>, and ACTivity 6, available online at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pv0TC0qzZYg>.
- If you plan to use the student handouts, download the files at [http://americanhistory.si.edu/militaryhistory/resources/Extra\\_Handouts.doc](http://americanhistory.si.edu/militaryhistory/resources/Extra_Handouts.doc) and adapt them as needed. Print at least one copy per group.

### **Staff Choices:**

- Part 4 (ACTivity 6, Walking Around the Room) is optional. It can be a great exercise to get students thinking about body language, but if you have limited space or time, feel free to skip this ACTivity.
- In Part 5C, students will be offering each other critique comments that are kind, specific, and helpful. If you think your students might have difficulty developing “good critique,” consider asking students to write their critique and submit to the staff. You can then filter the critique and read only those that match the criteria of “good critique.” The drawback to this method is that students would then feel less responsibility to treat others as they would like to be treated, since the staff will be filtering.

### **Classroom Set-Up:**

- Open space for students to act in together and for students to act in small groups.



## Step-By-Step:

### 1. Introduction:

*Now that we have a good idea of what our local leader tableaux will be about, let's spend this session sharpening our acting skills and working together to improve everyone's tableaux.*

### 2. ACTivity 5: Wordless "Telephone"

This is a game like "telephone" where students pass along a word or statement from one person to another and hope that the last person in the story had the same idea as the first person. In this version, students will mime, rather than whisper the idea.

a) Have the students sit down and line up facing in a single direction. The last student in line taps the shoulder of the second to last person so that the two students face each other. The last student does a pantomime of a thing (such as eating a slice of pizza) or an emotion without using any words or sounds. Then the last student turns around so she can't see the next pantomime. The second-to-last student taps the shoulder of the third-to-last student to have him or her turn around and attempts to do the same pantomime. And so forth, down the line. When the first student in line sees the pantomime, ask him or her to do the pantomime for the entire line. Ask that first student in line what s/he thought the pantomime message was. Check with the last student in line to see if the pantomime message was correctly sent.

b) Guide students to pick emotions or actions that can be acted out in 2-3 seconds. Examples include:

- Emotions: happy, sad, angry, tired, in love, excited, scared
- Actions (especially actions with a noun): Eating pizza, talking on a cell phone, taking a picture with a camera, opening a can of soda

c) You can begin this activity in the tableaux groups, with each group in a their own line, doing the same pantomime, and then combine groups to include more students in each iteration, or simply run the activity once.

3. Have groups practice their local leader tableaux. Once again, encourage the students to refine their narration and acting as they practice.

### 4. (optional) ACTivity 6: Walking Around the Room

a) Set up an area to which the group is confined

b) Clearly give instructions: *Don't touch each other or talk to each other, the main idea is just to move through the space. I will give commands and you will have to move through the space with different feelings.*

c) Instruct students to "Walk through the space" (Students walk around freely)

d) Give commands such as "Freeze," "Walk Sad," "Walk more excited that you've ever been," etc.

### 5. Critique

a) Introduce students to the key aspects of critique, "kind, specific, and helpful."

**Note to Staff:** If students need help, offer the following example:



*Let's say I just read a poem to the class and I asked for critique. Here are two examples of good critique feedback. "I think you read too quickly, so I had trouble understanding each word. Please read more slowly." or "You moved your hands a lot as you read. Sometimes it was helpful because it related to the story, and sometimes it seemed random. Try to plan out your hand movements." Bad critique might sound like "That poem was stupid." or "It was good."* If your students need additional practice, have them make imaginary critique for any of these situations: An iceskating performance, A football play. A short essay. A painting.

- b) Let students know that critique is a useful skill in theater, but is also an important part of being a good leader and can help build positive relationships. Good leaders are able to help others through being kind, specific, and helpful, and are able to accept critique from others.
- c) Instruct each group of students to present their tableau, and ask the other groups to be the audience. Have students take turns offering critique on the performances.

**Note to Staff:** Consider limiting each student in the audience to two pieces of critique for each performance. This can keep the activity moving and make students prioritize their comments for others. When possible, have students try to act out some of the feedback from their peers. For example, if an audience member specifies a scene that was confusing, have students work with that audience member to make adjustments. The students don't need to take every suggestion, but it's a worthwhile exercise to make sure they really understand the suggestion and see how it might work.

- d) Encourage the narrator to take notes on the critique.

## 6. Wrap-Up

- Remind students to invite friends, family, or other supporters to the performance.
- Offer a few words of encouragement about stage fright. The students have spent a lot of time preparing, so there's no reason to be too worried about the final performance. Just have fun.



## Session 5

**Overview:** In this session, students will warm-up and present their performances to an audience. The students will reflect on their performances, offer and consider advice, and wrap-up the entire project.

### **Session at a Glance:**

- Introduction (1 minute)
- ACTivity 7: Warm-Ups (5-20 minutes)
- Performance (10-30 minutes)
- Critique (10 minutes)
- Wrap-Up (5 minutes)

**Time Spent:** 34-65 minutes

### **Staff Preparation:**

- Review the Critique Information Sheet (Page 28).
- If you plan to use the student handouts, download the files at [http://americanhistory.si.edu/militaryhistory/resources/Extra\\_Handouts.doc](http://americanhistory.si.edu/militaryhistory/resources/Extra_Handouts.doc) and adapt them as needed. Print at least one copy per group.

### **Staff Choices:**

- In Part 3: Decide if you will offer an introduction to the audience. Consider explaining the overall process your class has used to create the performances they are showcasing.
- In Part 3: If you have more than 2 groups presenting, you might consider doing the critique of the performance immediately after each small group performs. Otherwise, the audience and performers may have forgotten the earlier performances and not have specific feedback.
- In Part 4: Decide how you would like your group to run critique. Options include:
  - Allowing the students and audience members to offer critique, and running the critique in front of the audience.
  - Allowing only students to offer critique and running the critique in front of the audience.
  - Allowing only students to offer critique and running the critique after the audience has left or in a separate session.

**Note to Staff:** As you decide, consider these factors:

Sharing the critique process with the audience can be an opportunity to showcase the maturity of your students. If your students have mastered critique, consider running the critique in front of the audience.

Over the past several sessions, if you noticed that your students are shy, easily embarrassed, or tend to take critique personally, consider running the critique without the audience or in a separate session. The audience will be new to critique and may not offer “good critique.”



If your audience is somewhat familiar with your students (such as a group of parents who frequently engage with the program, or a mentor class of older students), they might offer useful and respectful critique. Consider allowing them to offer feedback.

### Classroom Set-Up:

- Open space for student performances
- Seats (or designated area) for audience to watch

### Step-By-Step:

#### 1. Introduction:

*We've spent several sessions working on these performances and on your skills at performing. Today let's warm-up, perform our masterpieces, and recap how the performances went.*

#### 2. ACTivity 7: Warm-Up for the Show

- Have students warm-up physically by shaking or stretching every part of their bodies. Start with one foot for 5 seconds, then the other, then work the way up the body until everyone has shaken or stretched out their heads, hair, and neck.
- Have students or stand in a circle and practice expressing emotions through their facial expressions. Each time the instructor calls out a new emotion, the students must change their faces. Students should not speak during this exercise.

**Note to Staff:** Possible emotions include: Happy, worried, sad, tired, in love, excited, confused, busy

- Have the narrators say a few tongue twisters.

**Note to Staff:** Possible tongue twisters include:

- She sells seashells at the seashore.
- A regal rural ruler.
- Wrist watch, wrist watch.
- Green glass grass gleams.

#### 3. Perform:

If you have three or more separate tableaux groups, consider assigning each group to focus intently on one other group's performance to improve specific feedback during the critique period.

**Note to Staff:** The length of your performance might vary greatly, depending on the number of small groups that will present, the length of the narrations, number of tableau scenes per presentation, and how quickly groups can transition between audience space and performing space.

#### 4. Critique:

- Guide the students to offer critique on the performances.
- Remind students (and audience, if they will be participating in the critique) that critique is KIND, SPECIFIC, and HELPFUL.
- To spark discussion, consider asking students to repeat a scene of the tableau and specifically



ask the audience to respond to that portion. *What did you think was happening in the scene? In the scene, what character did each student represent? What worked well about the scene? Was any part confusing?*

5. Wrap-Up:

*We've done a lot of hard work over the past several sessions and I think our performances were really successful.*

- a) *What was your favorite part of working on this project? What was your least favorite part of working on this project?*
- b) *What new information did you learn while working on this project?*
- c) *What skills did you improve or learn while working on this project?*



# Farragut Tableau for Staff

**Note to Staff:** If your students are having difficulty with this sample tableau, consider pointing out the underlined words as clues for especially “tableau-ready” material.

## Scene 1:

Mobile Bay is part of the Gulf of Mexico near the state of Alabama. During the Civil War, Mobile Bay was one of the largest remaining ports and industrial centers of the Confederacy (the South).

**Note to Staff:** This scene is probably the most difficult to act out. Because this scene focuses on creating the setting, students must dig into the words of the scene. Possible prompt questions include: *What would happen in a port or industrial center? How can those actions be shown in through poses? What kind of people would live along a bay? How can those people be shown through poses?*

## Scene 2:

The city was defended by two forts, plus Confederate warships and large torpedo minefields. All of these were very dangerous, but the President of the United States wanted David Farragut and his navy ships to take over Mobile Bay anyway.

## Scene 3:

When the Battle of Mobile Bay started on August 4, 1864, Farragut had 18 warships. As the ships approached Mobile Bay, one of the strongest ships was struck by a mine and exploded. The explosion meant that there were only 17 warships left, but it also scared Farragut’s sailors.

**Note to Staff:** In tableaux style theater, performers can compress action and reaction. In this scene, some performers can be on the ship that is exploding and others can be on the other warships, showing how scared they are.

## Scene 4:

Farragut gave a speech to his sailors. “While under my command, you will not surrender. You will not retreat. Men, we have a job to do, a direct order from the President of the United States. We’re going to take Mobile. You must have courage. Men, we will win this war. We will win by fighting. Now go to it. Jump to your stations.”

## Scene 5:

Farragut’s sailors fought hard and drove away the Confederate gunboats. The forts surrendered. Not only did the sailors have the glory of a great win and the gratitude of their country, but they learned the meaning of perseverance and courage during that battle.

## Scene 6:

After the battle, President Lincoln promoted Farragut to a higher position in the Navy. And when the Civil War was over, Congress created an even higher position in the Navy and awarded the position to Farragut for all of his good work.



# Farragut Tableau Analysis for Staff

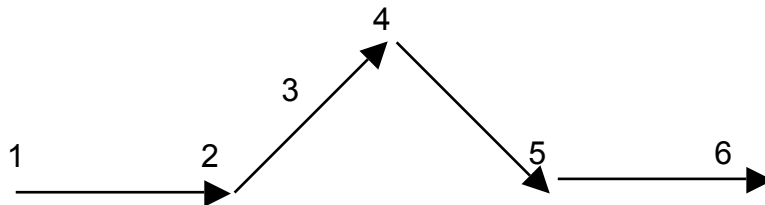
**Character(s):** Farragut, Southern sailors, Northern sailors, Abraham Lincoln, Congress,

**Setting:** On the water outside Mobile, Alabama, mid-1800's

**Conflict:** The Civil War (the South and the North are fighting), The North wants to take over an area that the South has protected.

**Resolution:** A brave navy leader from the North rallies his sailors to take over the Bay and is rewarded with a promotion.

## Farragut Tableau Plot Diagram



### **Beginning:**

Scenes 1 and 2 are low energy introductions to the setting and characters of the story. In Scene 2, you learn the problem that the characters will face.

### **Middle:**

Scene 3 introduces action and increases the energy and drama of the story.

Scene 4 is the climax, or most dramatic point in the story, where the energy is high and the audience does not know what will happen next.

### **End:**

Scene 5 is the result of the most dramatic point in the story. Characters respond to the action of the scene before.

Scene 6 includes the final details about how the story concludes after the action of the earlier scenes.

# Farragut Tableau Worksheet- Page 1 of 2

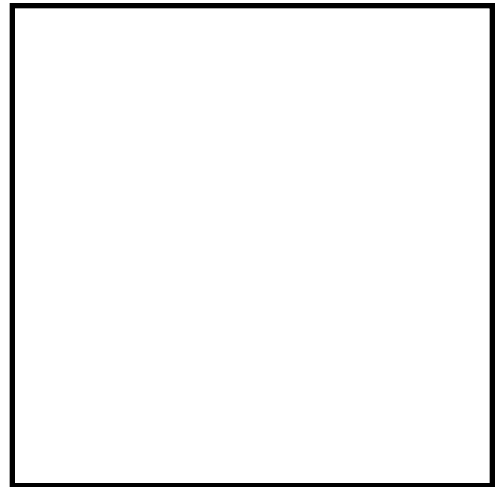
Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Group: \_\_\_\_\_

*For each scene, use the boxes to sketch a comic strip version of the words. Use those comic strip pictures as brainstorming for how you could act the scene in tableau.*

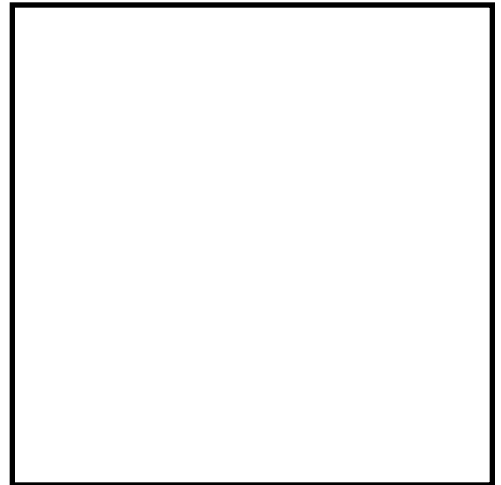
## **Scene 1:**

Mobile Bay is part of the Gulf of Mexico near the state of Alabama. During the Civil War, Mobile Bay was one of the largest remaining ports and industrial centers of the Confederacy (the South).



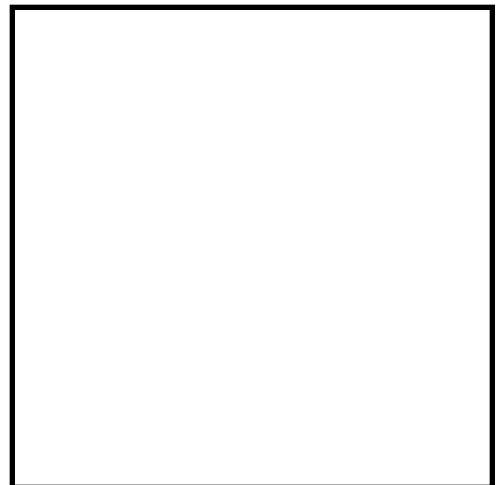
## **Scene 2:**

The city was defended by two forts, plus Confederate warships and large torpedo minefields. All of these were very dangerous, but the President of the United States wanted David Farragut and his navy ships to take over Mobile Bay anyway.



## **Scene 3:**

When the Battle of Mobile Bay started on August 4, 1864, Farragut had 18 warships. As the ships approached Mobile Bay, one of the strongest ships was struck by a mine and exploded. The explosion meant that there were only 17 warships left, but it also scared Farragut's sailors.



# Farragut Tableau Worksheet- Page 2 of 2

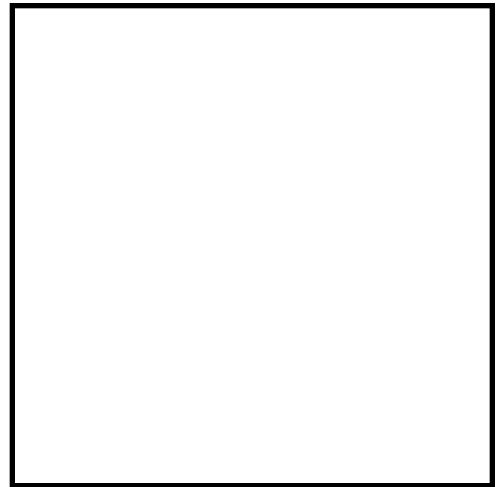
Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Group: \_\_\_\_\_

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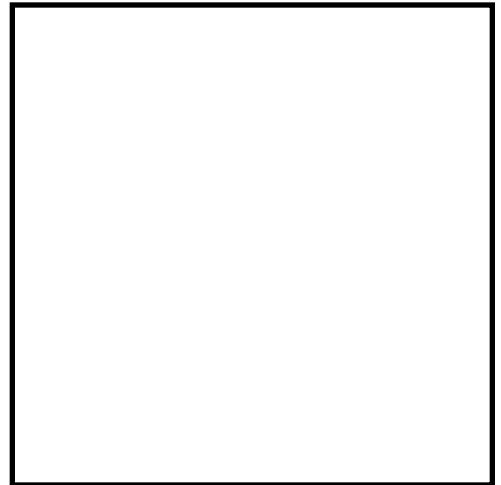
## **Scene 4:**

Farragut gave a speech to his sailors. "While under my command, you will not surrender. You will not retreat. Men, we have a job to do, a direct order from the President of the United States. We're going to take Mobile. You must have courage. Men, we will win this war. We will win by fighting. Now go to it. Jump to your stations."



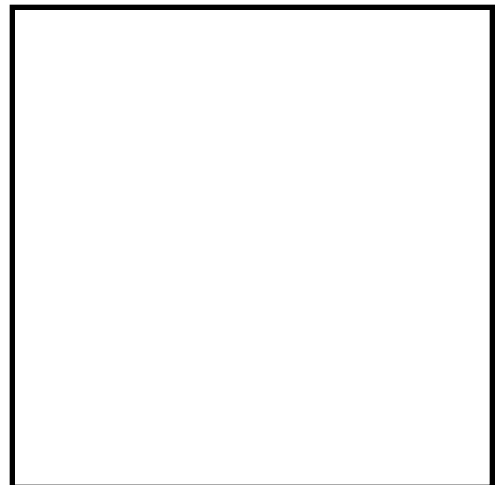
## **Scene 5:**

Farragut's sailors fought hard and drove away the Confederate gunboats. The forts surrendered. Not only did the sailors have the glory of a great win and the gratitude of their country, but they learned the meaning of perseverance and courage during that battle.



## **Scene 6:**

After the battle, President Lincoln promoted Farragut to a higher position in the Navy. And when the Civil War was over, Congress created an even higher position in the Navy and awarded the position to Farragut for all of his good work.



# Local Leader Tableau Drafting Worksheet- Page 1 of 2

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Group: \_\_\_\_\_

For each scene of your story, write a narration that is 4-6 sentences long. Be sure to include a beginning, middle and end for your story. As you practice, consider using the boxes to sketch comic strip pictures for each scene.

## Scene 1:

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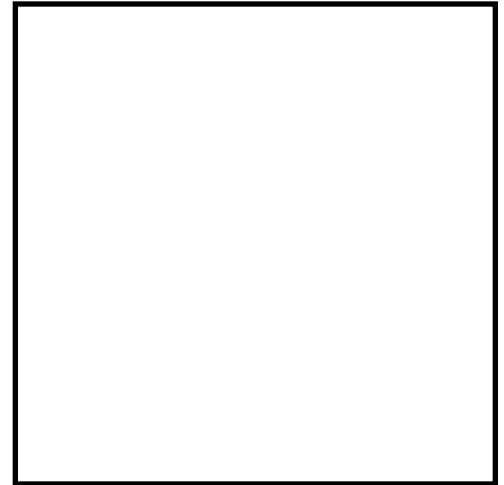
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## Scene 2:

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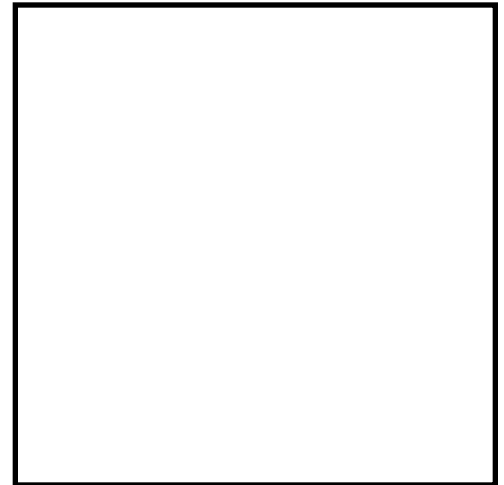
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# Local Leader Tableau Drafting Worksheet- Page 2 of 2

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Group: \_\_\_\_\_

## Scene 3:

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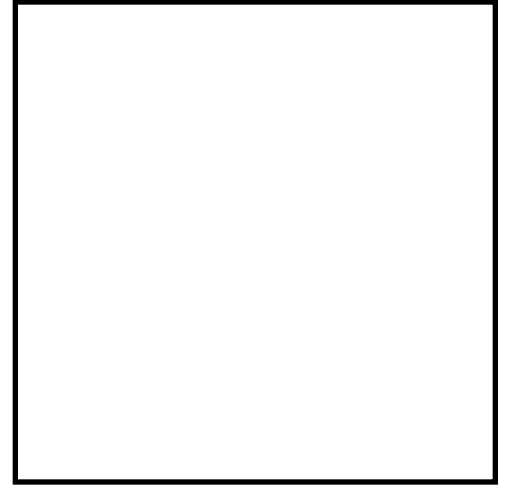
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## Scene 4:

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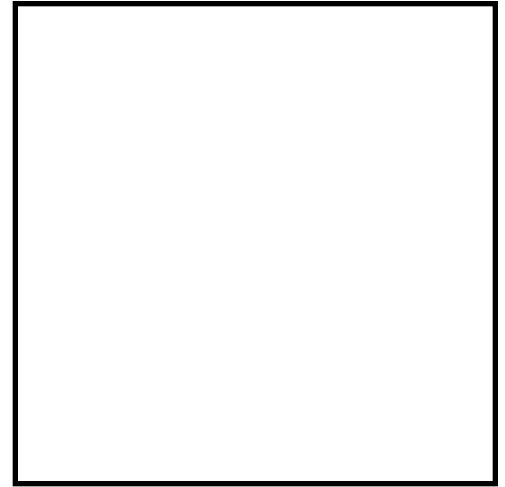
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## Scene 5:

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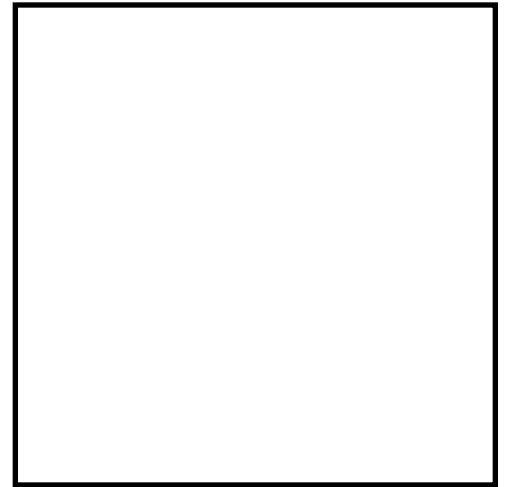
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# Farragut Historical Information Sheet

## The Civil War

Americans battled over preserving their Union and ending slavery. Both sides envisioned easy victories after eleven Southern states seceded (or removed themselves from the United States of America) and war broke out in 1861. But the bitter, ruthless fight lasted four years, and proved to be the nation's bloodiest and most divisive conflict. More than three million American saw battle: 529,332 lost their lives; another 400,000 were scarred, maimed or disabled.



Bacon's Military Map of the United States  
Courtesy of Library of Congress



Service jacket and cap worn by Rear Admiral David G. Farragut while directing the fire of the flagship Hartford during the Battle of Mobile Bay on 5 August 1864. It was during the Battle of Mobile Bay that Farragut uttered the infamous words, "Damn the torpedoes! Full speed ahead."

## Admiral David Farragut

Farragut was born in Tennessee, raised in Louisiana and lived in Virginia but at the outbreak of war he moved his family to New York and fought for the Union. The Battle of Mobile Bay was the culmination of a long naval career which began as an 11 year old midshipman during the War of 1812. In 1866 Farragut became the first person in the history of the United States Navy to be awarded the rank of Admiral.

For more information on the Civil War, including a brief introduction video, visit the online exhibition *The Price of Freedom: Americans at War* (<http://americanhistory.si.edu/militaryhistory/exhibition/flash.html>).



# Tableaux Information Sheet

Tableaux performance uses actors in still poses to convey a story. In our version of tableaux performance, a group of actors will take a pose in a scene and a narrator will read aloud a description of that scene. The tableaux actors will not speak or move in their scene, but will instead freeze like statues. Think of it like a comic strip, where a story happens over several frozen scenes. Between scenes, the narration pauses and the actors move silently and smoothly to their positions for the next scene.

*Tableaux* is used to talk about the type of theater or multiple tableau performances.

*Tableau* is used to talk about a single work of art in the tableaux style.

## Why Tableaux?

We recommend using a tableaux style performance for the following reasons:

- Students do not need to memorize lines.
- Students who struggle with public speaking can still participate meaningfully.
- Tableaux performances tend to be easier to produce in a shorter amount of time, compared to other forms of theater.
- Writing a tableau encourages students to distill a story into its most important parts.

## Specific Tips for Great Tableaux

Select a clear and confident narrator for each tableau.

Encourage students to use expressive faces and body language. The ACTivities in the session outlines will allow students to exercise their skills at communicating through facial expressions and body language.

Students should plan for smooth transitions between scenes. When the narrator finishes with the scene's narration, s/he should pause to allow the actors to move, then begin again once the next scene is set.

If the narration for a scene is short, have the actors hold their positions for a short period after the narration is complete. The audience should have at least 20 seconds to see each scene.

In each scene, the visual focus should be clear. When the visual focus is clear, the audience knows what actor or group of actors is most important. To increase the focus on a specific



# Museum Theater Information Sheet

Many museums use theater performances to encourage visitors to think about the content presented in the museum. Some museum theater presentations are interactive or include discussion with visitors to prompt their learning or imaginations.

Since the late 1800s, museums have experimented with using theatre. Some students might be familiar with reenactments of battles (in places like Gettysburg, PA) or costumed presentations at living history sites (such as Colonial Williamsburg in Virginia or the Henry Ford Museum in Michigan).

## Comparison to Traditional Theater

Similar to traditional theater, there are typically actors who are performing content that has been previously agreed upon. Also, props, costumes, sets, lighting, and sound are frequently incorporated into both museum and traditional theater performances.

Unlike traditional theater, museum theater performances tend to be less than 30-minutes long and usually relate directly to the artifacts and information presented at the museum.

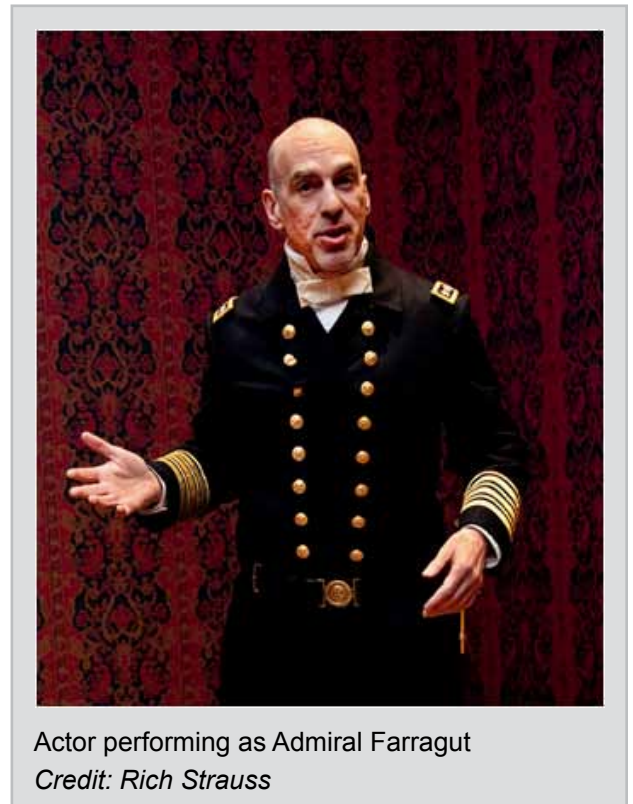
## About This Piece of Museum Theater

The piece of museum theater incorporated into this project is called *Damn the Torpedoes! Full Speed Ahead*. It was written for the Smithsonian National Museum of American History for performance during fall 2009. The actor presented the performances at the Museum to audiences of museum visitors near the military history exhibitions. At a few points, you may notice the actor ask a question and then pause; these pauses were meant for visitor responses. The Museum also recorded a version of the presentation and posted it online.

## For More Information

Bridal, Tessa. *Exploring Museum Theatre*. New York: Alta Mira Press, 2004.

"Frequently Asked Questions," International Museum Theatre Alliance, accessed December 21, 2010, <http://www.imtal.org/faqs.asp>.



Actor performing as Admiral Farragut  
Credit: Rich Strauss



# Critique Information Sheet

critique (kre-teek): a careful judgment in which you give your opinion about the good and bad parts of something (such as a piece of writing or a work of art)

*Merriam-Webster's Learner's Dictionary*, <http://www.learnersdictionary.com/search/critique>

Although the word “critique” can sound like a negative idea, it is used much more broadly in the world of the arts. Critique helps artists refine their works of art by considering the opinions of others. It includes positive and negative feedback and can also offer suggestions for improving the artwork.

## Why Critique?

Critique focuses on a straight-forward two-way exchange of ideas. Critique involves evaluation, speaking thoughtfully, listening carefully, and considering the feelings of another person. These skills are all part of leadership and career development and can contribute greatly to a positive learning environment. Critique touches upon several aspects of 21st-Century Skills, including communication and collaboration, social and cross-cultural skills, and leadership and responsibility.

## Examples of Good and Bad Critique

Consider these examples of critique on the Farragut theater video from Session 1.

| Bad Critique   | Good Critique   |
|--|---|
| It was boring.   | The part when you say the speech to your sailors could be more exciting if you moved around the space more. |
| The costume didn't look right.                                     | The costume looked different than the uniform in the exhibition. Your costume jacket is much longer.        |
| The accent you used wasn't right. It made me confused and unhappy. | I had trouble understanding the accent during some points, especially when you spoke quickly.               |

## Specific Tips for Great Critique

Inform students that critique comments must be kind, specific, and helpful. Remind them of these guidelines as necessary.

Critique works well when students understand the process that has brought the artists to their works of art. For example, knowing that students are doing a project on local leaders will prevent comments recommending doing an international leader. In addition, if a student knows that he is going to be critiqued, he may be more kind, specific, and helpful with his classmates, rather than simply offering the first thing that comes to his mind.

## For More Information

Berger, Ron. *An Ethic of Excellence*. Portsmouth, NH, Heinemann Publishing, 2003.

Soep, E. (2004). *Visualizing Judgment: Self-Assessment and Peer Assessment in Arts Education*. In *Handbook of Research and Policy in Arts Education*, Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., Publishers, 667-690.

“Art Critiques Made Easy” <http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/educators/how-to/tipsheets/art-crit-made-easy.aspx>

