

GRADE FOUR THEATRE CURRICULUM  
**Lesson Sequences/Lessons**

## THEATRE HAS A RICH HISTORY IN CALIFORNIA

**Introductory Lesson: Literature:** *Musical Career and Standing is Stupid* by Shel Silverstein

**Module 1: Foundational Skills: Actors use theatre strategies to create character.**

Lesson	Title	Recommended Literature	Comments
One	Introduction to Character Development	<i>A Story, A Story</i> by Gale E. Haley	
Two	Characters in Improvisation	<i>Charlotte's Web</i> by E.B. White	
Three	Developing Character Voices	<i>The King's Fountain</i> by Lloyd Alexander	
Four	Realistic Characters in Groups	<i>Sarah, Plain and Tall</i> by Patricia MacLachlan	
Five	Historical Characters	<i>Two Tickets to Freedom</i> by Florence B. Freedman, Mae Jemison, <i>Space Scientist</i> by Gail Sakurai	
Six	Fantasy Characters	<i>The Girl Who Loved the Wind</i> by Jane Yolen, <i>Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH</i> by Robert C. O'Brien	
Seven	Mythological Characters	<i>Daedalus and Icarus</i> retold by Geraldine McCaughrean (OCR)	

**Performance Task** - Working with a partner, choose two characters from a familiar story. Create a "new" scene to perform through improvisation. Demonstrate the emotional traits of your character through gesture and action.  
 NOTE: A "new" scene is one not originally written but that could have happened in the story.

**Module 2: Stories in Action: California has a rich heritage of stories based on distinctive historical characters.**

Lesson	Title	Recommended Literature	Comments
One	Moving to California	<i>Nine for California</i> by Sonia Levitan	
Two	Personal History		

Three	Business Men & Women of California History (Part 1)	<i>Boom Town</i> by Sonia Levitan	
Four	Business Men & Women of California History (Part 2)	<i>Boom Town</i> by Sonia Levitan	
Five	Business Men & Women of California History: Levi Strauss (Part 1)	<i>Mr. Blue Jeans</i> by Maryann N. Weidt and <i>Wells Fargo</i>	
Six	Business Men & Women of California History: Levi Strauss (Part 2)	<i>Mr. Blue Jeans</i> by Maryann N. Weidt and <i>Wells Fargo</i>	
Seven	Business Men & Women of California History: Biddy Mason (Part 1)	<i>With Open Hands</i> by Jeri Chase Ferris	
Eight	Business Men & Women of California History: Biddy Mason (Part 2)	<i>With Open Hands</i> by Jeri Chase Ferris	
Nine	Chinese Contribution (Part 1)	<i>Chang's Paper Pony</i>	
Ten	Chinese Contribution (Part 2)	<i>The Iron Dragon</i>	
Eleven	Women's Contribution		
Twelve	Pony Express (Part 1)		
Thirteen	Pony Express (Part 2)		
Fourteen	Wild West Show		

**Performance Task - Become part of a wax museum tableau of an event from California history. Come alive and perform a scene as that character.**

### **Module 3: Theatre in the World: Theatre draws upon the many storytelling traditions of California.**

Lesson	Title	Recommended Literature	Comments
One	Introduction to Storytelling	Classic Journeys or Tableaux of Contents featuring <i>The Heroic Climb of Itsy-Bitsy Spider</i> with David Novak or <i>Songs and Stories of My People</i> with Geri Keams or <i>The Tale of Beatrix Potter, Peter Rabbit and Friends</i> with Judith Helton; CDs of storytelling such as <i>Around the World</i> with Lou DelBianco or <i>Abiyoyo</i> with Pete Seeger; copies of the fable <i>The Tortoise and the Hare</i>	
Two	Native American Storytelling: Chumash	<i>Old Ways New Songs</i> by Lew Silva; Chumash clapperstick (or homemade replica); Books: <i>Chumash Indian Games</i> by Travis Hudson and Jan Timbrook, <i>The Rainbow Bridge</i> by Audrey wood, <i>The Rainbow Bridge</i> by Kerry Nechodom; DVD of Geri Keams or other Native American storyteller	

Three	Mexican Storytelling: Corridos	<i>El Corrido de Durango</i> by Los Creadores del Pasito Duranguense, <i>El Señor Don Gato</i> by Grupo Chiquitos, <i>Señor Don Gato</i> by Terri Thurman Finck, <i>La Cucaracha</i> by Louis Armstrong, <i>La Cucaracha</i> by Mariachi Garibaldi, <i>La Cucaracha</i> by Orquesta Internacional de Niños; Books: <i>Señor Don Gato</i> illustrated by John Manders	
Four	Japanese Storytelling: Rakugo	<i>A Kid's Guide to Asian American History</i> by Valerie Petrillo, Bill Crowley YouTube demo; <i>The Story of the One Inch Boy</i> adapted by Lisa Blau; <i>Under the Cherry Blossom Tree</i> by Allen Say; <i>The Boy of the Three-year Nap</i> by Dianne Snyder	
Five	Introduction to Melodrama (Part 1)		
Six	Melodrama Development (Part 2)		
Seven	Melodrama Performance (Part 3)		

**Performance Task** - Working with an ensemble, adapt and perform a short story using a storytelling tradition and style that comes from one of the diverse cultures of California.

#### **Module 4: Playmaking: We can dramatize events in California history.**

Lesson	Title	Recommended Literature	Comments
One	Plot		
Two	Character Development		
Three	Improvising Dialogue		
Four	Technical Theatre		
Five	Dress Rehearsal		

**Performance Task** - Work with an ensemble to dramatize an event in California history and perform it for an audience.

**Audience Participation Module: Attending Live Theatre: The audience analyzes elements of the play that help to tell the story.**

Lesson	Title	Recommended Literature	Comments
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One			
Two			
Three			
Four			
Five			

**Performance Task** - Develop criteria to evaluate the actor's characterization, diction, pacing, gesture, and movement for a live theatre performance. Use the criteria to write a critique of the performance and tell how it made you feel.