The contents of this study guide are based on the National Educational Technology Standards for Teachers.
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Many pages contain a variety of external links designed to enhance both the content and the lessons. Your cursor will change when a link is available.
Broadway Theatrical, LLC is proud to present the Thru The Stage Door edition of West Side Story, a new and innovative way of using Broadway as an educational tool in the classroom. Thru The Stage Door has been created by seasoned educators and combined with technology to bring lessons alive in the classroom and engage students. Whether you are teaching the Arts, Social Studies or even Science, you will find rich Broadway content and curriculum compliant lessons.

When I was seven years old, my parents took me to see the original Broadway cast of Mame on Broadway. Now, more than four decades later I can still remember every moment of that visceral experience. I knew at that moment that this was the world in which I wanted to work and for 2 decades now, I wake up every morning thrilled that I’ve been fortunate to work in this truly magical world. I was also incredibly lucky to grow up in a school with a dynamic arts program that fueled my desire daily. Sadly, arts programs have been cut in most schools now and an entire generation is growing up without the many skills arts can teach.

Broadway Theatrical, LLC is committed to keeping the arts in the classroom with Thru The Stage Door. As a companion piece to seeing a Broadway show or as stand-alone lessons, Thru The Stage Door is designed to stimulate creativity, inspire collaboration and engage a new generation of theatre-goers.

Thru The Stage Door has been written to be compliant with several curriculum standards including the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE). The International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) is the trusted source for professional development, knowledge generation, advocacy, and leadership for innovation. ISTE provides leadership and service to improve teaching, learning, and school leadership by advancing the effective use of technology in PK–12 and teacher education. ISTE’s National Educational Technology Standards (NETS) have served as a roadmap since 1998 for improved teaching and learning by educators. ISTE standards for students, teachers, and administrators help to measure proficiency and set aspirational goals for the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to succeed.

On behalf of everyone at Broadway Theatrical, Thru The Stage Door and West Side Story we welcome you to the theatre.

Now, it’s time to take you Thru The Stage Door into West Side Story.
The classic tale of “Romeo and Juliet” set in New York City in the 1950s. The two feuding families are replaced by brawling street gangs. The Montagues become the Anglo Jets, led by Riff, and the Capulets become the Puerto Rican Sharks, led by Bernardo. At a dance, Tony, former leader of the Jets and Riff's best friend, and Maria, Bernardo's little sister, see each other across the room and it's love at first sight. With opposition from both sides, they meet secretly and their love grows deeper. However, the gangs are plotting one last rumble, a fight that will finally end the battle for control of the streets. Will Tony and Maria’s love carry through a battle that threatens to destroy the people they love around them?
West Side Story

Synopsis and Musical Numbers

Using the Lessons

Resources

Act I: Birth of a Classic

Act II: Romeo and Juliet Revisited


Act IV: The Artistic Temperament

Act V: From Street Gangs to Social Prominence

Act I: Lessons

Act II: Lessons

Act III: Lessons

Act IV: Lessons

Act V: Lessons
Guide To Using the Lessons inside this edition of Thru The Stage Door®

Each lesson contains three main guides for teachers:


Sub-Curriculum Areas are listed as such and help teachers to better focus on lessons they deem appropriate for their class's interests and that compliment particular areas of interest not included in the basic curriculum. The purpose of the lessons is to allow students to discover information and ideas that broaden the educational experience.

Many lessons can be used across the curriculum and are not relegated to specific subject areas. Teachers can extrapolate from much of the material and extend the lesson into other subject areas.

The purpose of Thru the Stage Door is twofold:

• to use elements of each show to encourage lesson plans as creative as the shows themselves
• to enhance student appreciation of the Broadway theater experience and encourage interest in the arts, particularly live theater
• to introduce students to topics within the culture they might normally not discuss within the standard curriculum. As such, the lessons, while specific to areas taught on particular grades levels, should also be considered enrichment. They are designed to facilitate and inspire student learning and creativity.

Educational Standards

Lessons are based on National Education Technology Standards for Teachers. Each is carefully crafted to adhere to these standards. Particular standards applying to the lessons are listed separately in individual Broadway Theatrical Study Guides. Online interactive use of the guides will be accompanied by specific instructions for teachers on how to use the technology incorporated in the lesson.

The purpose of the online guide is to transform the classroom learning environment and take students beyond the narrow confines of the classroom into a world of educational opportunities, thus broadening and enhancing the educational experience.

The Instructional “Heads Up”

This section is meant to prepare you and the students for teaching/lessons. Each instructional section, on its own, can be repeated to students before lessons begin as an introduction to the lessons they will complete. Lessons will also be available as PDF file handouts.

Begin Teaching

Lesson instructions are bulleted for ease of teaching. Each lesson has been carefully calculated by educational professionals to create a definitive and focused learning experience for students.
The creation of West Side Story represents a gathering of some of the most creative minds ever assembled in theater. The culmination of that gathering, as we now know, produced an American Classic that will live forever as Broadway theatre at its best and most original.

Those involved in the project acknowledged it’s proximity to Shakespeare’s Romeo and Juliet. That may be its enduring and enormous attraction for young audiences. For the older generation it represents the joys and heartaches of youth remembered. In short, West Side Story is a tale for the ages. Its creators are remembered as giants of the theatre.

A presentation was given at Gettysburg College celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the show. Much of the information presented, gleaned from records of The Library of Congress, focused on the work’s creative journey and the personalities involved that produced the West Side Story we know and love today.

The seed for West Side Story was planted in 1949 when a friend of Jerome Robbins was cast as Romeo and asked Robbins’ help to make sense of the character. The friend, it is said, was the highly respected actor, Montgomery Clift.

Robbins, an award-winning film director and choreographer, had worked on everything from classical ballet to contemporary musical theater. Among his achievements in the latter category were On the Town, High Button Shoes, The King and I, The Pajama Game, Bells are Ringing, Gypsy: A Musical Fable, and Fiddler on the Roof as well as West Side Story.

Motivated by the prospect of doing a modern version of Romeo and Juliet in the form of a contemporary musical, Robbins sought out composer and conductor of the New York Philharmonic at Lincoln Center, Leonard Bernstein as his first collaborator.
A close friend of the Kennedy’s, Bernstein’s name is synonymous with West Side Story and with his original score for the show, Candide. He holds the distinction of being the first American born conductor to receive international acclaim.

Robbins then convinced renowned playwright, novelist, screenwriter, stage director and librettist Arthur Laurents to join the project and write the script. Laurents began writing scripts for radio and in 1945 and penned his first play, Home of the Brave about anti-semitism in the military. He wrote and directed many hit Broadway shows. During the McCarthy era, Laurents was “black listed” for a time and his scripts banned from films. With the addition of Laurents the West Side Story’s creative team was complete—almost. They still needed a lyricist.

Records say (Betty) Comden and (Adolph) Green were initially supposed to do the lyrics for West Side Story. They appear in Bernstein’s date book:

9/30/1955  Fri 2:00  Arthur here & Betty & Ad[olph]
“it turned out they couldn’t do the lyrics because of a movie commitment”

Initially Bernstein planned to write the lyrics himself. However he soon realized that the job was big and that he would need a collaborator.

Stephen Sondheim, who would later in his career write words and music for such shows as Sunday in the Park With George and Sweeney Todd ran into Laurents at an opening night party for another show on October 4th, 1955. According to Moore, Sondheim says he is sure Laurents brought him to audition for Bernstein the next day. His name first appears in Bernstein’s datebook around that time.
The creative team was now complete. It was time to get to work.

Amusingly, the original concept for the show involved two feuding families—one Jewish and one Catholic—with the East Side during the Easter-Passover celebration as its setting. The team actually worked with the concept for a while until after some work, outlines, and discussions, the collaborators became frustrated by this version and abandoned it. Other ideas were surfacing...

From left to right: Stephen Sondheim, Arthur Laurents, Harold Prince, Robert E. Griffith, Leonard Bernstein and Jerome Robbins.

From Bernstein’s journal to his collaborators:

Los Angeles Times, Aug. 20, 1955: “Six Arrested in Auto Murder Case. Detectives arrested six suspects in the death by automobile murder attack of Rudy Escobedo, 17, last Saturday night. Escobedo was on his way home after attending a wedding shower in company with two other youths when he was run down. He dies in General Hospital. Wednesday detectives said that Genaro Chavez, 18, admitted helping the aid of six others to ‘get even’ for a beating he had taken earlier in the evening. The youths told officers that Chavez was part of the ‘Downey Gang.’ They told of cruising the Downey area looking for any of the gang they could find when Chavez spotted Escobedo and shouted, ‘That’s one of them.”
Bernstein was formulating a new plotline. Gangs. For a while the show was titled *Gangways*. Bernstein thought *West Side Story* did not fit the location and sounded “too documentary.” He didn’t much like *Gangways* either, saying he didn’t like the naval connotations. In the end, rationale heads prevailed and they eventually settled on *West Side Story* as the title. Laurents’ creative premise for the script also prevailed. He writes to a producer with whom he has creative differences...

Bernstein writes to his wife:

“The work grinds on, relentlessly, and sleep is a rare blessing. Jerry (Robbins) continues to be - well, Jerry: muttering, haranguing, but vastly talented.”

Laurents was right. The show began developing along these creative lines. Robbins insisted on such choreographic nuances as that the opening number be danced not sung. Sondheim agreed...

Speaking of all of the final decisions, Bernstein says, “...This has tremendous potential.” If it comes off Broadway musicals will never be the same again...If it doesn’t, they will.”

From (Stephen) Sondheim’s letter to Lennie (Bernstein) on opening night

Sept. 26, 1957: You know - only too well - how hard it is for me to show gratitude and affection, much less to express them in writing. But tonight...I feel I must. *West Side Story* means much more to me than a first show, more even than the privilege of collaborating with you and Arthur and Jerry. It marks the beginning of what I hope will be a long and enduring friendship...I don’t think I’ve ever said to you how fine I think the score is, since I prefer building you about the few moments I don’t like to praising you for the many I do. *West Side Story* is a big step forward for you as it is for Jerry or Arthur or even me and, in an odd way, I feel proud of you...my best wishes for good luck to our little divinity. May *West Side Story* mean as much to the theater and to people who see it as it has to us.”

It did, it does, and it will.
The text below is from the introduction to the concert held celebrating the 50th Anniversary of West Side Story. In it the narrator clarifies the creative mind set of its choreographer, Jerome Robbins. In Robbins’ mind the relationship between script, music and dance was irrefutable. In the end he got his way. He was, after all, the director and choreographer.

NARRATOR
“Tonight won’t be just any night.” Tonight’s concert, celebrating the 50th Anniversary of West Side Story, is about what might have been, what almost was, what thankfully wasn’t, and what blessedly is. It’s about that most collaborative of artforms, musical theater, and the process whereby a musical is crafted. Most of what we’ll share with you tonight comes from the Library’s extensive Leonard Bernstein Collection, which provides this unique opportunity to explore the creation of this classic musical.

“The first song we’re going to hear is a version of the opening number. Musically, it’s very similar to what you all know, but in its original incarnation, what we now think of as purely a danced number—albeit with some whistles and snaps—had lyrics. It was Robbins who suggested that the lyrics should be cut and the number be danced, not sung. The show’s lyricist, Stephen Sondheim, agrees; as he has said: “The opening of West Side Story is wonderfully effective because you see six juvenile delinquents standing around and then they start to dance, and you say: Oh, I see, it’s about ballet delinquents!”—which perfectly sets up the style of the show.”

Instructional “Heads Up”:
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Begin Teaching:
Part One
- Read the second paragraph of “Heads Up” to students
- Students click on the video clip of the first scene as described in the text
- Tell them to view the clip several times for full effect
- As they watch, have them take notes on the following:
  a. what feelings does the scene conjure
  b. is there a sense of impending doom/violence? (explain)
  c. does the scene “work” for you as a harbinger of things to come?
  d. how do you feel about “dancing delinquents?”
  e. what do you think of Robbin’s creative decision to present the first scene this way?
  f. like it or not, on a scale of one to ten, how would you rate Robbins’ decision given the style of the rest of the work?

Part Two
Analyze and Write
Tell students: You are a theatre reviewer for the New York Times.
- Go on the New York Times website and read some theatre reviews (at least five)
- Take any notes you think will help you write your own review
- Using your notes from Part One, write a review. Include in your review your opinion as to whether and to what degree the scene works as artistic expression.
...I have been receiving four different conceptions from as many directions – which is difficult enough....Let me say, first, how I see the show. It think it is or should be a strong love story against a heightened, theatricalized, romanticized background based on juvenile delinquency. I think the reality should be an emotional, not a factual one. Names, addresses, financial statements, parental situations are clichés and don’t help an audience. They never characterized anybody and I am bored to death with them. I cheerfully leave them to Paddy Chayevsky and the whole dreary old-fashioned garbage school. That goes for naturalistic acting, too.

Arthur Laurents

Clearly the writer (apparently opinionated) of the book (script) for West Side Story had very definite ideas about how he wanted the story conveyed. The “Method Acting” taught by the prestigious Actor’s Studio was out, along with the deep, heavily acted style of playwrights such as Chayevsky.

Founded in 1947 by Elia Kazan, Cheryl Crawford and Robert Lewis, the school is best known for its work in refining and teaching method acting. In the above quote he was actually responding to Crawford who later dropped out of the West Side Story project because of creative differences.

Chayefsky, an acclaimed dramatist who later transitioned from the golden age of live television in the 1950s to a successful career as playwright and screenwriter, wrote such award winning dramas as Marty. The teledrama was later made into an Academy Award-winning film starring actor Ernest Borgnine. Chayefsky’s naturalistic dialogue received much critical acclaim and introduced a new approach to live television drama. Critic Martin Gottfried once wrote, "He was a successful writer, the most successful graduate of television’s 'slice of life' school of naturalism—a style abhorred by Laurents.

Instructional “Heads Up”:

The seed for West Side Story was planted in 1949 when a friend of Jerome Robbins was cast as Romeo and asked Robbins’ help to make sense of the character. I have been told the friend was Montgomery Clift.

The Consummate Method Actor

Actor Kevin McCarthy was rehearsing Romeo for CBS’ “Omnibus” and having trouble with the death scene. “I asked Monty to help me... His Romeo was impetuous, romantic, fumbling with words as he expressed his love for Juliet. He also brought a physicality, an athleticism to the role. His entire body seemed part of the work. And then there was this power - this originality behind the concept. He played young love so intensely, so truthfully.”

Begin Teaching:

Part One

• Students research the principles of method acting.
• As they research they take concise notes on its principles.
• As a class watch the film, Marty.
• Pause the film at intervals and discuss what concepts of method acting are being employed.

Part Two

• As a class watch the film West Side Story, or utilize video clips of scenes provided.
• Stop the film at intervals, or after viewing each clip discuss how the acting style in West Side Story differs from the method acting used in Marty.

Begin Teaching:

• Rent a film starring Montgomery Clift and acquaint the class with this remarkable talent.
Simon Cowell, alias Mr. Nasty or Judge Dread, is known to television audiences as the ultimate audition curmudgeon on “American Idol”—a mean sort who seems to take pleasure in hurting people’s feelings and “telling it like it is” when it comes to their limited talent.

Auditions, as anyone who’s ever been on one will tell you, can be murder—a crushing blow to your ego and self esteem. Reading the excerpts below from West Side Story documents, life for the many hopefuls who auditioned for the show could not have been much better. Even though they were not being publicly rejected in front of millions of viewers, it was rejection none the less.

The audition process for West Side Story is somewhat legendary. We have dozens of pages of Bernstein’s notes. Among them are these excerpts.

5/7/1957 Tue 1:00 Casting (till 5)

5/16/1957 Thu 2-4:30 (auditions)/5:00 St. James Theatre
[Larry Kert (Tony) Too soft for Riff, Carol Lawrence (Maria), Susanne Plechette hoarse, Warren Beatty (Riff) Good voice – can’t open jaw – charming as hell – cleancut, Jerry Orbach (Chino) Good read. Good loud bar. At end of the day came up with this list:

Life is full of rejection. The best we can do is find ways to deal with it.

“If I said to most of the people who auditioned, ‘Good job, awesome, well done,’ it would have made me actually look and feel ridiculous.”

– Simon Cowell, American Idol

Begin Teaching:
The internet is overflowing with sites on how to deal with rejection. Listed below is just one of them.

http://www.wikihow.com/Handle-Rejection

• Have students visit at least three sites that feature tips on rejection and how to handle it.
• Tell them to amass as many suggestions as they can.
• They separate the advice into categories: Love, Jobs, Personal etc....
• Dividing a ring binder into category areas using subject tabs, students should create a booklet titled, Rejection Is Not the End of the World.
• Tell them they will use the booklet for a period of a month as a help reference when they feel rejected.
• At the end of the month ask how many times they used the booklet. Did it help?

. . .and now for Mr. Cowell

What kind of personality is Simon Cowell? Visit various sites that describe different types of personalities and put Mr. Cowell in one that you think suits him. Justify your choice with details that equate the traits he exhibits on “American Idol”.

Life Skills / Behavior
Lesson Focus: How to Handle Rejection
Lesson Level: Middle/High School
One of the best life skills that we can pass along to teens is how to budget. A budget can teach students how to live within their means, and it can show them how to handle the money that they have. Students can grow into financially responsible adults with your help and guidance.

- The original production budget for *West Side Story* (then titled, *Gangway*) along with definitions of words used in the budget appear on the following pages. Print both and hand them out to students.
- Go over the budget in class, discussing the definitions as you go. Be sure to relate the concepts to everyday life.

**Student Weekly Budget**

Different students have different spending needs. Some may work; some may receive an allowance. Some may simply receive money from their parents as they need it. No matter what their funding source, all of them need to get a clear picture of what it costs to live.

- Ask students to suggest every budget item they can think of that might be included as an expense on a personal weekly budget.
- Write the items on the board
- All items will not be appropriate for all students
- Students do an Excel Spread Sheet of their budget items and add up expenses
- How much money would they need to earn if they were supporting themselves?
- If they had a job, how many hours would they need to work and how much money would they need to make per hour in order to live?
- What items might they eliminate to bring their cost of living down?
Gangway (West Side Story) Production Budget

- capitalized at $300,000/no provisions for overcall
- $65,000 for scenery
- $10,000 for properties
- $55,000 for costumes
- $80,000 for lighting
- $11,000 advance for direction and choreography
- $15,000 preliminary advertising
- $20,000 for orchestrations
- $19,000 rehearsal expense
- $32,500 miscellaneous expense (authors advances, legal fees, hauling, setting up, general and company manager salaries, office expense, payroll taxes, insurance, hospitalization, etc)
- $20,000 for union bonds
- $32,500 reserve.
Budget Definitions

Capitalized:
An estimated the value of an enterprise

Overcall:
The clause in an investor’s agreement whereby the backer agrees to supply an additional amount of money, often 10 to 20 percent of the original amount, should it be required by the producers.

Advance:
Money given to Jerome Robbins before he actually did the work

Miscellaneous:
Expenses not included in main budget items; unexpected expenses.

Union Bonds:
Insurance guaranteeing the union workers will supply the services

Expected Reserve:
The money put aside just in case some unexpected expense arises.
When West Side Story was in its formative stages there was plenty of discussion surrounding Jerome Robbins original concept of the play as a modern remake of Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet. Samples of those discussions live on today in the Library of Congress, where exist papers tracing the play's creative path from concept to reality. Some of them involve questions about whether the play's storyline should even go so far as to paraphrase the original Shakespeare work. Arthur Laurents (pictured at left) had the following thoughts. . .

Looking back, I (Laurents) see that the latter answer was inevitable, if only because the entire second half of Shakespearean play rests on Juliet swallowing a magic potion, a device that would not be swallowed in a modern play. Thus, while this version does have scenes or parts of scenes and characters adapted or suggested by the original, there are also scenes and characters and plot turnings which are new because, in terms of today, they had to be new...
...Just as Tony and Maria, our Romeo and Juliet, set themselves apart from the other kids by their love, so we have tried to set them even further apart by their language, their songs, their movement. Wherever possible in the show, we have tried to heighten emotion or to articulate the inarticulate adolescence through music, sung or danced; wherever possible, we have tried to use everything that is lyrical and fun and exciting in the theater. And always, we have insisted on being true to our characters, speaking, singing or dancing.

Lovely words—but juvenile delinquency is not the most lyrical subject in the world. Nor is the last part of any Romeo and Juliet story the most fun-provoking in the world....

[Jerome Robbins] was explicit about the link to Romeo and Juliet. First, the story deals with star-crossed lovers who come from rival groups. Moreover, the characters have vitality and an impetuosity which makes them kin to the Mercutios and Tybails of Shakespeare’s play. And against this background of violence and fierce energy, there is a poignant love story ("your first love is your greatest").

“What we are trying to do is to make the poetry come alive in 20th Century terms, through the cadence of Arthur Laurents’ lines and Leonard Bernstein’s music.”
Laurents' Juliet (Maria) also has a different character than that of Shakespeare's. Maria is not willing to take her own life for love. This ending would not work for Maria's character as upstanding and devoted to a more positive view of life. Also, the parents of both Romeo and Juliet play a considerable role in Shakespeare's work, while Maria and Tony's parents are barely mentioned. With these differences alone, West Side Story becomes undeniably an original work.

Ways in which the story departs from Shakespeare have been studied and analyzed by literary experts. Romeo is exiled due to public knowledge of his deed. West Side Story's Romeo, Tony, becomes a fugitive because the public is searching for a criminal. The role of Doc (Friar Laurence) takes no active role in the plot as does the Friar in the original. The false report the boy receives of the girl's death is carried in West Side Story by Anita to the gang as a willful act, not as something that just seems to happen naturally. But perhaps the greatest differences occur in the final scene. In Romeo and Juliet everyone expects the main characters to die. Laurents' characters, Paris and Juliet (Chino and Maria) are still very much alive at the end. Tony does not take his own life; he is killed by Chino. Some suggest this ending to be a mere alteration from the original work to please Broadway audiences. However, others argue if that were the case, the author would have saved both of them and reunited them in life.

Laurents' Juliet (Maria) also has a different character than that of Shakespeare's. Maria is not willing to take her own life for love. This ending would not work for Maria's character as upstanding and devoted to a more positive view of life. Also, the parents of both Romeo and Juliet play a considerable role in Shakespeare's work, while Maria and Tony's parents are barely mentioned. With these differences alone, West Side Story becomes undeniably an original work.
It is also important to note that the Romeo and Juliet concept was nothing new, even in Shakespeare’s time and that the storyline goes all the way back to plays written in Ancient Greece. The plot of Shakespeare’s work is actually based on an Italian tale translated into verse as *The Tragical History of Romeus and Juliet* by Arthur Brooke in 1562. It was retold in prose in *Palace of Pleasure* by William Painter twenty years later. Shakespeare borrowed heavily from both. He developed minor characters, particularly Mercutio and Paris, in order to expand the plot. Believed to be written between 1591 and 1595, the play was first published in 1597 in quarto version (a book size of about 9 1/2 x 12 inches created by folding printed sheets twice to form four leaves or eight pages). The text was of poor quality and was corrected by later editors to bring it more in line with Shakespeare’s original text.

In examining *West Side Story* as a work inspired by Shakespeare’s, yet original in its own right, we should bear in mind the words of Jerome Robbins:

“People at their most creative never know what they’re really doing. It comes from deep inside.”
It may shock students to learn that Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*, for all its prominence in English literature, was not exactly an original idea. However, the fact will help them to understand and accept that in art there is little that does not draw to some extent upon something that came before it—as *West Side Story* draws from the original Shakespeare play. While the storyline of Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* appears lifted directly from Arthur Brooke’s poem written in 1562, it’s important to recognize that even Brooke borrowed his idea from material that came before as far back as the ancient Greeks—who we all know loved tragedy! For this lesson’s purpose, however, we will focus on Brooke and his work as the source.

The following website provides a reprint of Brooke’s work, *The Tragical History of Romeus and Juliet*. It includes the Introduction (To the Reader) and The Argument, the latter written in sonnet form. The language is intriguing and the work is certainly worth a read through, especially for students who are now or in future will study Shakespeare’s Romeo and Juliet.

The discussions suggested in the lesson are informal. They are meant strictly to get students thinking and comfortable with analyzing literature—an invaluable tool as they progress in their studies in language arts and literature.

**Begin Teaching:**

(a) • Visit the website [http://www.clicknotes.com/romeo/brooke/index.html](http://www.clicknotes.com/romeo/brooke/index.html)

• Read *The Tragical History of Romeus and Juliet* aloud in class
• Watch the film *West Side Story*.
• Discuss how the story has evolved over time.

(b) • Students read “To The Reader”.
• What do Brooke’s statements tell you about the kind of person he was and what he was thinking in writing the poem.
• Hint: Brookes once went to France to help Protestants there challenge Catholic domination of the country.

(c) • Students read “The Argument,” presented in sonnet form
• Remind them that sonnet is a 14-line verse form usually having one of several conventional rhyme schemes.
• Students pick a theme of their choice and write their own sonnet.

**Shakespeare and Other Borrowers**

*The Tragical History of Romeus and Juliet* by Brooke, said to have been Shakespeare’s inspiration for *Romeo and Juliet*, was retold in prose in *Palace of Pleasure* by William Painter twenty years later. Painter also borrowed story ideas from Herodotus, Boccaccio, Plutarch and others. His works are credited with being the inspiration for so many Italian settings in later Elizabethian dramas. Among the better-known Shakespeare plays derived from Painter’s books include *Timon of Athens*, *Edward III* and *All’s Well That End’s Well*. 
Maria!
Say it loud and there’s music playing,
Say it soft and it’s almost like praying.

In the lines from Maria,” from West Side Story, Tony sings about how the tonal inflection of the word, Maria, conjures different images.

In writing as in speaking, inflections and other factors can drastically change not only the meaning of what we’re saying but the listener’s perception. We often hear parents cautioning their children to “watch their tone.” “It’s not what you say but how you say it” also comes to mind. People can easily misinterpret things we say depending upon our voice inflections and tones, of which the speaker may not even be aware. Inflections in singing are always intended.

Teacher Note: The exercise on the left is challenging. Students may have to make calls to universities to find someone expert in Chinese who can give them this information. Suggest to them that they may have to go this far to get the information.

Begin Teaching:

- Students borrow recording equipment from the school library or from another source. (Perhaps your computers are set up to record or a student might have a simple recording device)
- Write the following list of emotions on the board:
  - Happiness
  - Sadness
  - Anger
  - Confusion
  - Frustration
  - Fear
  - Distress
  - Surprise
  - Submission
- Tell students to think of some more to add to the list
- Write this sentence on the board:
  “I have been studying for two days now, and I still don’t understand the material.”
- Have different students record the sentence using voice inflections that convey each emotion. (They may not add or delete any words.)

Part Two
- Have students write the same statement to reflect different emotions. Tell them they can add a word here or there for emphasis but are not allowed to make significant changes. (Give this example using Fear: Oh God help me, I’ve been studying for two days now...)

Begin Teaching:

Tonal language is one in which pitch is used as a part of speech, changing the meaning of a word. An example of how tone can change the meaning of a word in English can be found in the word, present, which can be used as a verb or noun, depending upon which syllable is emphasized. In tonal languages, the way in which you say a word is very important, as it radically changes the meaning. Tonal languages are found primarily in Asia, Africa, and South America. The most famous tonal language is Chinese, in which the meaning of words are completely changed depending upon high/low pitches
- Students use their research skills to find a word in Chinese whose meaning changes with tonal pitch.
- They pronounce the word in class in both tones and give its meaning.
In the above statement Arthur Laurents explains what he was trying to achieve when putting words into the mouths of his characters. Each character, as he saw it, must not only have his or her own voice, but all of the voices combined had to reflect what the collaborators on the show agreed to achieve. For that very reason writing can be a tricky business.

Many writers struggle with finding their writing voice. "A writer’s voice" is a literary term used to describe the individual writing style of an author. It’s how you not only put words together, but the way you do it—the punctuation you use, how you construct sentences, the way you write dialogue; how you develop characters. In short, voice is like a fingerprint. No two writers have the same one.

In creative writing students are encouraged to experiment with different literary styles and techniques in order to help them better develop their “voice.” In American culture, having a strong voice is considered positive and beneficial to both the writer and his or her audience. When we say we like one author better than another it often has to do with liking or not liking their voice. Just because a reader does not like a particular voice does not mean the author is not a good writer; it simply means the reader, for whatever reason, finds how the writer expresses themself more pleasing or interesting than another writer.

Many new writers try to copy the voice of another whom they admire. This usually does not work. One can not mimic someone else’s voice. You must develop your own.

“What we did want was to aim at a lyrical and theatrically sharpened illusion of reality. In the story, I have emphasized character and emotion rather than place-name specifics and sociological statistics. The dialogue is my translation of adolescent street talk into theater: it might sound real, but it isn’t.”

– Arthur Laurents

**Instructional “Heads Up”:**

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**Begin Teaching:**

- Students find three websites that discuss writer’s voice.
- In reading the text they take notes on what goes into making up a writer’s voice.
- Teachers collect the notes.
- In class, students discuss the various points.
- As the discussion moves forward, teachers list the points on the board.
- Students copy the list for reference.

**Find Your Voice**

- Tell students they have a week to come with a short story idea they would like to write.
- Remind them that a story idea does not necessarily mean a title, but a short description (no more than one paragraph) of the story they plan to write.
- Have them outline the basic events of the story.
- Add the outline to the description they presented.
- Students write their story.
- Remind them that this is a creative project and that they should feel unrestricted by any set format as they work.
- Stress originality both in story content and writing style; the writing will not be judged by grammatical rules such as punctuation, correct English or grammar or any of the other rules that generally apply.
- At the end, each student refers to the elements of writer’s voice they created earlier and lists the ones that apply to their writing.

Teacher Note: The above lesson can be simplified for Middle school students by presenting them with a story idea or topic and having each student write the story in their own way. Tell them just this once to forget about all the rules they’ve learned and write whatever comes into their heads.
Puerto Ricans have had a presence in New York since the mid 19th Century, when Puerto Rico was still a Spanish Colony. Most Puerto Ricans who moved there came from well-to-do families with the means to travel by steamship. Among the first to immigrate were those exiled by the Spanish Crown for their support for Puerto Rican independence. By 1850, Puerto Rico and Cuba were the only two remaining Spanish colonies in the New World. The political immigration to New York came to a virtual halt in 1898 after the Spanish-American War, when Puerto Rico became a possession of the United States. About 1,800 Puerto Rican citizens immigrated during this period.

**World War I**

In 1902, the United States Treasury Department issued new immigration guidelines that changed the status of Puerto Ricans to “foreigners.” A further decision by the Supreme Court stated that Puerto Ricans were not U.S. citizens but “noncitizen nationals,” an ambiguous designation that left residents of the island in political limbo. They could neither vote nor were they independent from the United States.
In 1917 the United States entered World War I; that same year Congress approved the Jones-Shafroth Act giving Puerto Ricans U.S. citizenship. They no longer needed a passport to travel to the U.S. and were allowed to seek public office on the mainland. Conveniently, they could also serve in the army.

The economic situation on the island went from bad to worse when hurricanes destroyed most of its crops, and many Puerto Rican families migrated to New York seeking a better life. There they faced the same hardships and discrimination experienced by earlier groups of immigrants—Irish, Italians, Jews. It was difficult to find well paying jobs because of the language barrier and lack of work skills. Men lucky enough found low paying jobs in factories, or joined the military. Women generally stayed home and tended the children.

Despite the hardships Puerto Rican migrants established a cultural life of great vitality in Manhattan's East Harlem district, home of many previous and subsequent minorities, that eventually spread to the West Side. But as the economic situation in the U.S. worsened before the Great Depression, many Puerto Ricans found themselves competing with other groups for the unskilled jobs. Tensions between other ethnic groups, blacks and Puerto Ricans boiled over in the infamous “Harlem Riots.”
The Great Migration

Several factors besides the Great Depression contributed to what has become known as the “The Great Migration” of Puerto Ricans to New York—World War II and the advent of air travel.

The Great Depression of the 1930s spread throughout the world and was felt in Puerto Rico. Since the island’s economy was and still is dependent upon that of the United States, it was no surprise that the failure of American banks and industries would resonate on the island. Unemployment was skyrocketing and families by the thousands were fleeing to the mainland in search of jobs created by the outbreak of World War II in 1939.

A large portion of the U.S. male population went to war, leaving a shortage of labor. Puerto Ricans—male and female—filled the employment gap in factories and ship docks producing both domestic and wartime goods. In the process, the new migrants were gaining knowledge and work skills that would serve them well in future. Those serving in the military also found a steady source of income.
Migration reached its peak in the 1950s. With 40,000 settled by 1946; 58,500 settled between 1952-53 alone. Puerto Rican soldiers returning from war took advantage of the GI Bill and went to college. Puerto Rican women, despite facing economic exploitation, discrimination, racism, and the insecurities inherent in the migration process, fared better than their male counterparts. Discrimination was rampant in The United States at the time, and it was no different in New York. Signs in some restaurants read, “No dogs or Puerto Ricans allowed. Nevertheless, women left their homes for the factories in record numbers. By 1953, Puerto Rican migration to New York reached its peak when 75,000 people left the island. In April 1958 the first New York Puerto Rican Day Parade was held in the “Barrio” in Manhattan.

The 1960 census showed well over 600,000 New Yorkers of Puerto Rican birth or parentage. By that time a total of more than a million Puerto Ricans had migrated to the U.S. Over the years the Puerto Rican community has grown and prospered as an accepted ethnic group contributing much to the cultural life of the city.
In May 1916 Luis Muñoz Rivera, poet and first democratically elected governor of Puerto Rico, argued in favor of the Jones-Shafroth Act which would give Puerto Ricans U.S. citizenship: “Give us now the field of experiment which we ask of you. . . . It is easy for us to set up a stable republican government with all possible guarantees for all possible interests. And afterwards, when you . . . give us our independence . . . you will stand before humanity as a great creator of new nationalities and a great liberator of oppressed people.”

To some it looked as if the U.S. was willing to leave sleeping dogs lie as far as citizenship for Puerto Rico until the onset of World War I. In 1917, Congress passed the Jones-Shafroth Act which many Puerto Ricans believe was a ploy to allow military conscription (the draft) to be extended to the island. Over 20,000 Puerto Rican soldiers fought in the war. Defenders of the bill say the Act was under consideration long before the United States entered the War, arguing further that male residents of the United States (including Puerto Rico) were eligible for the draft whether or not they were U.S. citizens or nationals. We will never know what foresight went into the passage of this bill. Since then many thousands of Puerto Ricans have served in the military. The “independence,” however, of which Rivera spoke in his speech has not yet been achieved.

Instructional “Heads Up”:

In May 1916 Luis Muñoz Rivera, poet and first democratically elected governor of Puerto Rico, argued in favor of the Jones-Shafroth Act which would give Puerto Ricans U.S. citizenship: “Give us now the field of experiment which we ask of you. . . . It is easy for us to set up a stable republican government with all possible guarantees for all possible interests. And afterwards, when you . . . give us our independence . . . you will stand before humanity as a great creator of new nationalities and a great liberator of oppressed people.”

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Begin Teaching:

Read to students the text in: New York and Puerto Rico--A Long and Storied History. Then read the two paragraphs on the left. Remind students to remember that West Side Story is about the very people who came to this country from Puerto Rico under the same circumstances described in what you’ve read.

Students choose one of the following three projects. All of them require a bit of research and should be rewarded with extra credit.

(a) Create a chronological chart of historical events from the Spanish American War to the present tracing America’s political relationship Puerto Rico

(b) Study the three political parties of Puerto Rico and write a paper comparing their stances on independence for the island

(c) Research the Jones-Shafroth Act, its supporters and detractors. Write a paper in dialogue style presenting arguments for and against the bill.
In 1936, Puerto Ricans were already fighting on European soil in the Spanish Civil War, years before the United States entered World War II. The war was a bloody affair, ending with victory by Generalissimo Franco and over 50 years of harsh dictatorial rule for Spain.

In the late 1930s not all Puerto Ricans were migrating to New York. They were fighting in Spain in the Spanish Civil War. Puerto Ricans fought on behalf of both sides involved, the “Nationalists” as members of the Spanish Army and the “Loyalists” (Republicans) as members of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade.

Instructional “Heads Up”:

- Students research the background of the Spanish Civil War and the issues that prompted it. Many excellent websites provide this information.
- In their research tell them to find information about the Abraham Lincoln Brigade
- Discuss the Brigade in class
- What side did they fight on?
- Why did they choose that side?
- Name some famous Americans who fought in the brigade
- If they can, have them find information on some Puerto Ricans who fought in the war.
- The class views the film documentary, Brother Against Brother.

Begin Teaching:

Another famous brigade made up of U.S. immigrants fought on the side of Mexico in the Mexican American War.

- Name the brigade
- What nationality were the soldiers
- Why did they choose to fight for the Mexicans?
The symbolism of the Sharks and Jets is obvious. The Sharks are a small group of new arrivals (Puerto Ricans); the Jets a larger more established group who see themselves as the legitimate owners of the West Side territory where the story takes place. (It is generally conceded that the setting of West Side Story is somewhere between 34th Street (Hell’s Kitchen and Harlem.) The Jets feel the Sharks, the newcomers, are trying to take over; the Sharks are trying to claim their piece of the neighborhood. It is the traditional interplay between established populations and new arrivals.

Even the authorities tend to favor the established group, seeing the newcomers as trouble. Patrolman Schrank says in the first act, “Boy what you Puerto Ricans have done to this neighborhood.”

How the Jets feel about the Sharks is clear from the beginning. Jets members Action, Baby John, and A-rab challenge the Sharks...

**Action**
You hoodlums don’t own the streets...Keep off the grass

**Baby John**
Get outta the house

**Action**
Keep off the block

**A-rab**
Get outta here

**Action**
Keep off the world. A gang that don’t own a street is nothin’

Some students may have seen the award-winning Martin Scorsese film, The Gangs of New York, set in the infamous area known as “The Five Points”. Many may not have. The film was rated R due to the violence and some parents may have considered it inappropriate. Historical information about that area is plentiful. Known as one of the most crime-ridden, violent sections settled by Irish, German, Jewish immigrants and newly free and newly freed African-American slaves in the early 1800s, “The Five Points” was notorious for violence far beyond that portrayed in West Side Story.

**Instructional “Heads Up”:**
The Sharks are Puerto Ricans; The Jets an anthology of what is called “American”
– From the prologue of West Side Story

**Begin Teaching:**
- Students become cartographers and as a class draw a basic map of Manhattan as it was in the early to mid-1800s. Tell them to include as much detail as possible. They shade in the small area known then as The Five Points. The map should include a color legend indicating a different color for each ethnic group living there.
- Students read Charles Dickens account of his visit to The Five Points in 1842
- Students research the wealth of information available on the area and its history. Divide the class into groups and have each group focus on the following:
  a. ethnic violence among groups
  b. perspective on the area by outsiders
  c. the role of law enforcement in dealing with crime and violence
  d. later movement of the various ethnic groups to other parts of the city
- Groups a-c prepare reports and read them to the class
- Based on information gathered by group d, students use the color legend to shade in areas of the city where ethnic groups later relocated

**Teacher Note:** Development of maps may be done electronically using design software. Teachers/and or students familiar with such software can instruct the group in its use and lead the students in preparing and coloring in the map. Suggestion: you may want to get an art teacher familiar with such software involved in the project.
Great art is a very personal endeavor. Artists often create not only for themselves but for those they work with and the audience they are attempting to reach. This is especially true of art involving collaboration, like West Side Story. Here we have several artists at the top of their game combining ideas and talent to create a work that speaks to their individual creative instincts. Not an easy task.

Temperament as defined is a combination of mental, physical and emotional traits of a person; natural predisposition—an unusual personal attitude or nature as manifested by peculiarities of feeling, temper, action—often associated with a disinclination to submit to conventional rules or restraints.

Artistic temperament fits neatly into that description, with a few nuances related to creativity. Highly artistic people show dramatic swings in emotion. While not only artists show this trait, it is prevalent among most of them—painters, sculptors, musicians, writers. Artists also have passionate views on subjects important to them along with an extreme dedication to their artistic goals. Sometimes they seem hyper-aware of the people around them, at other times quite oblivious. They show the full range of emotions to the extreme.

If an artist gets angry or behaves somewhat irrationally, we chalk it up to “artistic temperament”. Down through art history examples of such
behavior is common. Van Gogh was not the easiest person in the world to get along with, neither were Picasso, El Greco or Jackson Pollock. But rightly or wrongly, when we think of artistic temperament, the personality of Michelangelo often comes first to mind. He was independent, arrogant, aggressive, competitive and indispensable. He’s also said to have had a nasty temper.

It was once said of Jerome Robbins that he could be nasty. As the quote goes, the speaker added, “but when you’re dealing with genius you sometimes have to turn your collar around.” serving in the military also found a steady source of income.

It was once said of Jerome Robbins that he could be nasty. As the quote goes, the speaker added, “but when you’re dealing with genius you sometimes have to turn your collar around.”

Artistic temperament can extend to everyday activities like paying taxes. In many instances artists and taxes don’t mix very well. They often leave such mundane activities to others, paying dearly in the end.
The great singer, actor and star of *The Wizard of Oz*, Judy Garland, comes to mind. Garland, who made millions, left such details to husbands who mismanaged her financial affairs and left her broke and owing the government millions. Her artistic temperament, however, remained gloriously intact.

“I can live without money, but not without love.” Spoke, Judy, like a true artist.

Some say the temperament displayed by certain artists is put on, and that they are merely trying to meet public expectations when it comes to behaving like an artist. “Since I am an artist, I should have an artistic temperament.” While that may be true in some cases, most truly creative people are indeed in a separate temperament category. Their behavior is unique to the work they do. It is a uniqueness that has caused many artists to be criticized for being too demanding—perfectionists. Yet it is this same quality that allows great works to be conceived and developed.

The documents in the Library of Congress reveal that even other artists had doubts about whether the strong artistic temperaments who created *West Side Story* could collaborate successfully on the show.
Arthur Laurents in The Growth of an Idea [West Side Story]:

“‘Abies Irish Rose’ to music,” gibed a part-time witch [ballerina, Nora Kaye]. “The dance of the garbage cans,” she muttered into her steaming cauldron. But the garbage-can naturalism was the last thing any of us wanted to see in the theater, particularly the musical theater. Our hope was to make the stage more theatrical, more lyrical, more magically exciting.

We talked, for example, of the balcony scene played on a gossamer fire escape; the language lifted above modern street level until it soared onto song at the moment the lovers first kissed. And at that moment, the surrounding buildings would disappear, leaving the lovers in space, in their own world.

The “witch” liked that notion and others similar. “Nevertheless, you’ll never write it,” she predicted cheerfully. “Your three [Sondheim was not as yet on board] temperaments in one room and the walls will come down.”

The walls did come down. In fact, the whole apartment building where we first met came down with a great crash. And while conferences were held and actual writing was begun, where our temperaments did not clash, our commitments did.

The show, like the building, fell to pieces, and the witch salted her brew with a knowing smile.

Later, in an eloquent speech after a rehearsal of a certain song the night before it was to be added to the show, Laurents said it would tilt the show into musical comedy. Above all, something all of the collaborators did not want to happen. Robbins wanted the scene left in and was furious, but Bernstein and Sondheim were persuaded and the majority ruled.
Every artist has his own way of expressing his artistic emotions. Whether through music, painting, writing, each draws from within themselves to create the art they make. How often have we watched a great conductor stand before his musicians—eyes closed, seemingly in another world. We see this behavior not only in classical conductors. Rock guitarists exhibit the similar behavior as wildly jump, and crouch and spin across the stage. As we say in the piece The Artistic Temperament in describing outward signs of that trait, “sometimes they (artists) seem hyper-aware of the people around them, at other times quite oblivious. They show the full range of emotions to the extreme.”

Conductor’s behavior is not just for show. Each movement has meaning for the musicians they are conducting. But what do these movements mean?

Begin Teaching:
A Visual Assessment

- Rent several DVDs—one of Leonard Bernstein conducting; the others can be rock musicians and groups the class chooses
- Tell them to observe their behavior when conducting or playing
- How does it contribute to their effectiveness as performers?
- Does it distract your attention from the music they are making?
- How much of this behavior do you think is “showmanship,” and how much is genuine reaction to an inner artistic drive?

Begin Teaching:
A Method To The Madness

- Go to the website below
  http://scienceblogs.com/cognitivedaily/2008/08/what_conductors_are_doing_when.php
- Have students read through the article and watch the the Warner Bros. Cartoon of Bugs Bunny conducting.
- Do you still think conductors are just putting on a show?
Instructional “Heads Up”:
There is no more important skill a person can learn than working together with other people. The collaborators of West Side Story, Bernstein, Laurents, Sondheim and Robbins are a good example of people with strong personalities who nevertheless found a way to work together toward a common goal.

Stretching the point, we might say the Jets work together to achieve goals of their own. While those goals might not seem very productive to the outsider, to them each of their group members together provide security and they believe, at least, that they are achieving the goal of controlling and dominating their neighborhood. While there are certainly more worthy goals, the Jets do have a sense of group achievement. Read/Listen to these words from The Jet Song...

Riff
When you’re a Jet you’re a Jet all the way
From your first cigarette
to your last dying day
When you’re a Jet let them do what they can
You’ve got brothers around
You’re a family man
You’re never alone
You’re never disconnected
You’re home with your own
When company’s expected
You’re well-protected
Then you are set with a Capital J
Which you’ll never forget ’till they cart you away
When you’re a Jet you stay a Jet!...

All
The Jets are in gear
Our cylinders are clickin’
’Cause every Puerto Rican’s
A lousy chicken!
Here come the Jets like a bat outta hell
Someone gets in our way, someone don’t feel so well!
Here come the Jets!
Little world, step aside!
Better go underground!
Better run, Better hide!
We’re drawing the line,
So keep your nose’s hidden
We’re hangin’ a sign
Says visitors forbidden
And we ain’t kiddin’
Here come the Jets!
Yeah!
And we’re gonna beat every last buggin’ gang on the whole buggin’ street.
on the whole buggin’, ever lovin’ street!
Yeah!

Begin Teaching:
Part One
• Go over the lyrics to the song line by line
• Students analyze the elements of group cooperation
• What goals do they aspire to achieve?

Part Two
Let’s Cooperate
• Students discuss a goal they would like to achieve as a class
• Give them time in class to discuss how they plan to achieve the goal, and which students will responsible for what
• Provide a reasonable time frame to achieve the goal (an entire school year is not out of the question)
• At the end of the time period, students reveal the success or failure of their cooperative effort
• They discuss why the project succeeded, or why it failed within the context of how well the group members cooperated
When the rumble is about to start Jets urge Bernardo to shake hands with his opponent before the fight begins. He responds...

More gracious living? Look: I don’t go for that pretend crap you all go for in this country. Every one of you hates every one of us and we hate you right back. I don’t drink with nobody I hate, I don’t shake hands with nobody I hate. Let’s get at it.

Instructional “Heads Up”:

Begin Teaching:

- Explain the scene above to students and ask what they think of Bernardo’s response
- Is there a degree of honesty in it?
- What is the purpose of handshaking between sports opponents?
- Is it a show of sportsmanship, or a fake empty gesture?
- Is it possible to like anyone who is competing with you for anything?
- If not, then why bother with the handshake?

- Discuss civility as a hypocritical concept...
  as an important gesture in recognizing that competition is, by nature, antagonistic, and that, while not happily, the looser will accept his or her fate.

Write A Happy Ending

Consider the definition of civility. Write a new ending for West Side Story based on the premise that The Jets and Sharks decided to be civil to each other.
During the 1950s the barrios of the South Bronx, Lower East Side, South Brooklyn, and Spanish Harlem became the center of Puerto Rican life in New York City. Out of these barrios rose prominent street gangs who united as means of combating the socio-economic struggles they faced while assimilating into American society. Many early street gangs, despite their violent reputations, saw themselves as community-organizers looking to empower fellow Puerto Ricans.

One of the first Puerto Rican gangs in New York City, the Mau Maus, originated in 1950s Brooklyn. Feared by both the police and other gangs because of their exceptionally brutal tactics, even fellow members were not immune. Violent initiations included standing against a wall while a knife was thrown, just missing them.

A prominent member of the Mau Maus, Salvador Agron, is best known for an incident that occurred in 1959, when he and other members of a gang called The Vampires attacked six teenagers in a park with lead pipes and a knife concealed under Agron’s cape. The incident became known as the Capeman Murders and was the inspiration for a Broadway musical written by Paul Simon called The Capeman.
Fortunately many former gang members did not end up like Agron. Despite the violent conditions of barrio life in the 50s, many gangsters were able to rise above the violence and poverty to become well-regarded Puerto Rican residents of their communities.

The number of gangs declined sharply in New York in the 1980’s and early 1990’s. However, when Puerto Ricans began going to prison in large numbers, new gangs emerged both in the prisons and on the streets. These new gangs included the Latin Kings. When increasing numbers of Latin Kings were imprisoned, their female counterparts, The Latin Queens, developed street branches of the group which are generally credited for emphasizing community problem solving and with discouraging violence.
Nicky Cruz, founder and president of the Mau Maus, is one such example. After converting to Christianity in 1958 he became a minister and founded The Nicky Cruz Outreach, a ministry for troubled youth that spans North and South America as well as Europe. He has founded numerous half-way houses which aid in the rehabilitation of drug-addicts. Cruz is also known for his autobiography Run Baby Run, which chronicles his life as leader of The Mau Maus. Today Cruz lives in Colorado and continues to preach his positive message to youth throughout the world.

Miguel Pinero was at age 14 already selling drugs on the streets. Incarcerated at twenty-five with a lengthy criminal record, he wrote the play *Short Eyes* (1972), a graphic depiction of prison life. The play was nominated for six Tony Awards® and adapted into film in 1977. Some of his other works include: *Straight from the Ghetto*, *Eulogy for a Small Time Thief*, and *The Sun Always Shines for the Cool*. Pinero eventually founded The Nuyorican (New York Puerto Rican) Poets' Café, a noted city landmark where Puerto Ricans from throughout the city meet to read their original poetry. Sadly, Pinero remained a drug addict until his death in 1988 but continued writing about the ills of society that cause criminality among Puerto Rican teens. His ashes are scattered over his beloved Lower East Side.

Ada “Ace” Velez, a Puerto Rican female professional boxer and former gang member was brought into boxing by former women’s boxing world champion Bonnie Canino. After a successful undefeated amateur career that included a national title, Velez became the first Puerto Rican to win a women’s world boxing championship in 2001.
While many former gang members rose to prominence over the years, other Puerto Ricans did not fall victim to their violent environment. The number of Puerto Ricans who have become prominent members of American society, particularly in the entertainment field, is quite impressive.

Chita Rivera, a Tony award winner and original lead of Anita in *West Side Story* is the first Hispanic woman to win a Kennedy Center Honors award. A Broadway legend, Rivera appeared in many other productions to rave reviews including *Guys and Dolls*, *Can-Can*, *Bye Bye Birdie*, *Chicago*, and *Threepenny Opera*. A retrospective on her career entitled *Chita Rivera: The Dancer’s Life* opened on Broadway in 2005.

Native born Puerto Rican Rita Moreno rose to fame on the wings of her starring role as Anita in the film adaptation of *West Side Story*, for which she won the Academy Award in 1961 for best supporting actress. Moreno has also won an Emmy, a Grammy, and a Tony, making her the first Puerto Rican woman to achieved this stature. Moreno performed at the inauguration of President Bill Clinton in 1993.
Born in Spanish Harlem, Tito Puente’s cultural contributions in the field of Latin Jazz earned him the title, “The King of Latin Music.” The first musician to bring native Caribbean and Afro-Cuban sounds to American audiences, his accomplishments are many: a 2000 Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award and an honorary doctorate of Arts and Sciences from Hunter College in New York. His star graces the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

One of the most sought after character actors of today, Luis Guzmán, was born in Puerto Rico and raised on New York’s lower east side. Guzman started out as a social worker before becoming heavily involved in street theatre. He quickly became the darling of independent film directors and has appeared in dozens of films including Carlito’s Way, The Salton Sea, and Lemony Snicket’s A Series Unfortunate Events.

Last but not least, we mention 1950s film actress, Mapy Cortés, about whom it has been written...

Maria, Maria. She reminds me of West Side Story. Growing up in Spanish Harlem, she’s living the life, just like a movie star.

From the barrios to cultural prominence, Puerto Ricans of the 1950s and beyond have contributed greatly to American culture in the areas of entertainment, politics, social leadership and the arts. Their accomplishments serve as testimony to the power of the human spirit in overcoming hardship, discrimination, poverty and the violence.
“...they have a fantastic sense of security when they are together,” he went on. “That’s the function of a gang. They don’t talk to you like a younger person talking to an adult. They talk with assurance. ‘This is our world, you keep out of it. We have our answers; we don’t need yours.’ For them, right is right; there are no gray tones. Everything is passionate.” “...they have a fantastic sense of security when they are together,” he went on. “That’s the function of a gang. They don’t talk to you like a younger person talking to an adult. They talk with assurance. ‘This is our world, you keep out of it. We have our answers; we don’t need yours.’ For them, right is right; there are no gray tones. Everything is passionate.”

— Jerome Robbins discusses gangs

Instructional “Heads Up”:

Watching West Side Story it’s hard to think of the Jets and Sharks as anything but two groups that use violence as a means of getting what they want. Yet studies and other evidence indicate that gangs are often more than antagonistic groups at war with each other. Many often help those within their communities, providing positive support in the areas of education, day care services, soup kitchens for the poor and other needed services largely unmet by the “outside” world. It is an interesting social phenomenon. One excellent example of this type of group are the Gaylords.

Begin Teaching:

- Students visit the website below
  
  http://www.gaylords712.com/racism.html

- Divide the class into three research groups:
  - The Historical Society
  - The Crime Investigators
  - The Social Scientists

- Each group will research and write up a report on their respective areas of study on the Gaylords. Tell them there is more information than that appearing on the website.

- The first will gather a history of the gang; the second a report on their criminal activities; the third on their positive community projects.

- Each group presents its findings to the class.

- The activity is followed by a group discussion of gangs as social groups: Does the good outweigh the bad?
Instructional “Heads Up”:

Tony is trapped between two worlds. He is in love with Maria, sister of the Shark’s leader, Bernardo, but feels he owes his allegiance to Riff, leader of his gang. It is an impossible situation for Tony. It is indicative of the trap in which most of the characters in West Side Story find themselves. They are trapped by their poverty, lack of good education, violence of their neighborhoods and poor living conditions. Living in this “pressure cooker,” as Jerome Robbins once described it, Tony must feel anger, frustration, futility.

The set of West Side Story shows the graffiti that has come to be associated with such neighborhoods and the people who live there. While many see graffiti as a defacing of property, many, even artists, have come to accept it as legitimate art—a creative expression of the harsh reality of life in the barrio.

Begin Teaching:

• Students visit the following website and view the graffiti gallery
  www.toddcam.com
• Tell them to study each image carefully
• What emotions do they see?
• Ask students to put themselves in Tony’s place. What emotions must he be feeling—love, anger, frustration, a sense of hopelessness living in the barrio.
• Using the graffiti they’ve viewed as example, have them create with colored markers on very large sketch paper some graffiti as Tony might draw it. Tell them to think about all of the emotions that might contribute to the drawing.
• As a starting point, all students will first draw the names MARIA and TONY in graffiti-style letters, then expand on the graffiti from there.
• “Wallpaper” a section of the classroom with the graffiti
Instructional “Heads Up”:

“Clothes make the man?” Well maybe, but not in California, at least. The following was posted by officials of the Santa Cruz County Fair:

POLICY: The wearing or displaying of clothing, clothing accessories with gang insignias, monikers, or identification, including a specific combination of colors or symbols commonly associated with an “outlaw motorcycle gang,” a “criminal street gang,” or associated clubs or gangs, as those terms are defined by the California Department of Justice, is strictly prohibited.

Most street gangs have special clothing and insignias that identify them as members. These trappings may be perfectly acceptable in some places, but in places like California with its share of street gang violence, wearing such regalia to public events is seriously discouraged. The reasons are obvious. One group antagonistic towards another spots a member by special colors or an insignia or certain clothing and the “rumble” is on. Not a good situation.

Yet these gang “uniforms” and their significance is nonetheless an interesting social phenomena. Every group has its “look.”

Begin Teaching:

- Each student researches the colors, insignias and other defining clothing characteristics of five street gangs.
- They print the photos they find online
- As a class they create a book titled, “Gang Fashion on Parade”
- Each gang gets a page in the book
- Leave one page blank after each gang
- Student volunteers research the symbolism of each insignia, color etc of each gang and write a paragraph on what they’ve learned on the blank page (extra credit, of course).

Class Colors and Insignia

- Students put their heads together and come up with class colors and an insignia.
- They draw the insignia and color it
- One student explains the symbolism involved in the choices.
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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.

Michael Naylor, a graduate of the Temple University School of Communications and Theatre, has spent over two decades working in professional theatre. Prior to working with Broadway Theatrical, he served as the Director of Marketing and Communications for Pennsylvania’s historic Bucks County Playhouse.

Resources

www.broadwaywestsidestory.com
The official website for West Side Story on Broadway

Websites
The Library of Congress, West Side Story Online Exhibition
www.loc.gov/exhibits/westsidestory/introduction/
wwwactors-studio.com/
www.wisegeek.com/what-is-a-tonal-language.htm
www.trincoll.edu/prog/ctpeople/PuertoRicans/history.htm
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Puerto_Ricans_in_the_United_States
www.alba-valb.org/
www.amazon.com/s/ref=nb_ss圭gw?url=search-alias%3Damazonontv&field-keywords=spanish+civil+war&x=13&y=18--(Video: Hemingway in Spain)
http://imagejournal.org/page/blog/on-artistic-temperament-other-paradoxes
www.foundationsmag.com/civility.html
www.hi-ho.ne.jp/taku77/refer/gang.htm

Books/Articles

Video/Audio
www.youtube.com
www.searchforvideo.com
www.biography.com

Production Photography by Joan Marcus

Editor
Philip Katz
Art Director
Michael Naylor

A Broadway Theatrical Publication

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