

Classics Alive!



An Educator's Guide

Designed for middle and high school audiences, Classics Alive! brings the literary work of renowned authors to life through the spoken art of storytelling. The program repertoire includes short stories by Edgar Allan Poe, O'Henry and/or Mark Twain. Each story and author is introduced to establish creative context. It is designed to run the length of one class period, allowing for the rotation of classes throughout a school day.

Relevant State Standards

LAFS.6.RL.1.3 Describe how a particular story's or drama's plot unfolds in a series of episodes as well as how the characters respond or change as the plot moves toward a resolution.

LAFS.6.RL.2.6 Explain how an author develops the point of view of the narrator or speaker in a text.

LAFS.6.RL.3.7 Compare and contrast the experience of reading a story, drama, or poem to listening to or viewing an audio, video, or live version of the text, including contrasting what they "see" and "hear" when reading the text to what they perceive when they listen or watch.

LAFS.7.RL.1.3 Analyze how particular elements of a story or drama interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot).

LAFS.7.RL.2.6 Analyze how an author develops and contrasts the points of view of different characters or narrators in a text.

LAFS.7.RL.3.7 Compare and contrast a written story, drama, or poem to its audio, filmed, staged, or multimedia version, analyzing the effects of techniques unique to each medium

LAFS.8.RL.1.2 Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text.

LAFS.8.RL.1.3 Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.

LAFS.8.RL.2.6 Analyze how differences in the points of view of the characters and the audience or reader (e.g., created through the use of dramatic irony) create such effects as suspense or humor.

LAFS.8.RL.3.7 Analyze the extent to which a filmed or live production of a story or drama stays faithful to or departs from the text or script, evaluating the choices made by the director or actors

LAFS.910.RL.1.2 Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

LAFS.910.RL.1.3 Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

LAFS.910.RL.2.5 Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.

LAFS.1112.RL.1.2 Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.

LAFS.1112.RL.1.3 Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).

LAFS.1112.RL.2.5 Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.

TH.68 (912).C.1: Cognition and reflection are required to appreciate, interpret and create with artistic intent.

TH.68 (912).S.1: The arts are inherently experiential and actively engage learners in the processes of creating, interpreting, and responding to art.

TH.68 (912).S.3: Through purposeful practice, artists learn to manage, master, and refine simple, then complex, skills and techniques.

TH.912.O.3: Every art form uses its own unique language, verbal and non-verbal, to document and communicate with the world.

Before the Show

Students may express a disinterest in the program because they perceive themselves far too old for storytelling. Assume they will very quickly be surprisingly engaged in the program. Ask only that they listen politely, without disrupting the storyteller. Cell phones are to be muted and out of sight.

Middle and High School students often perceive storytelling to be an art only for the very young, much too childish for their advanced age. Engage your students in a discussion of storytelling as an art, the many ways that stories are presented and the history of “the oral tradition.”

- In what ways are stories presented? (books, movies, TV, plays, poetry, music, dance, cave pictures) How are these media alike and how are they different?
- What is “the oral tradition” of storytelling?
- What makes stories a powerful means of communication? How do we use stories as a means of everyday communication?
- How did the printing press, radio, television and modern technology impact the oral tradition?
- What books-into-movies have they both read and seen? (e.g. Hunger Games) What did they enjoy more, book or film? Why?
- What artistic decisions must be made when adapting a written story to another medium?
- How do they think hearing a story will be different than reading a book or watching a movie?
- How do they feel about attending a storytelling program? What do they expect?

Give each student an index card as they enter the program. At the conclusion of each story, they will be asked to quickly record their emotional, physical and intellectual reactions. Collect the cards as they exit program.

- How did the stories make me feel?
- How was hearing the stories different than reading?
- What questions did the stories raise?

After the Show: Discussion and Activities

- Convert one story into a TV mini-series, outlining the episode sequencing and character development.
- What words would you use to describe a main character at the beginning, middle and end of the story? Did your feelings about him change as the story progressed?
- How did the setting contribute to the overall affect of the story?
 - How did the catacombs and the Gray's home shape the stories?
 - How would these stories change if they were placed in different settings?
- How does point of view shape the stories?
 - Retell Cask of Amontillado from Fortunado's point of view
 - Retell A Dog's Tale from Mr. Gray's point of view
 - Retell The Ransom of Red Chief from the boy's point of view
- How did you feel about the characters as you listened to each story? How was your point of view as a listener different than that of the characters?
- Read either story in print. Compare and contrast the written narrative to the live, adapted performance.
- What were the turning points in each story? What did those moments make you feel and/or think? How did they move the story forward?
- Write a newspaper article as though you were reporting on the incident within each story (Who, What, When, Where, Why, How?)
- What questions or messages did the stories raise? How did the story lead you to those questions or messages?
- What motivated Montresor, Fortunado or Mr. Gray to behave as they did? Were they "bad guys?" Why or why not?
- Using the index card "reflections" discuss the experience of hearing the story as performance art versus reading or viewing as a movie.

About Kaye Byrnes

Kaye Byrnes began her storytelling career in 1996, following two decades of working in corporate America. With an undergraduate degree in Theatre, she was always drawn to the performing arts and found her niche in storytelling.

Byrnes has developed a broad repertoire of stories, appropriate for audiences of all ages, pre-kindergarten children through senior citizens. This repertoire represents numerous genre, including:

- Folktales, fairy tales, fables, legends, myths
- Personal narrative
- Historical events and individuals
- Classic literature

She has performed in a wide-variety of venues throughout Florida and beyond:

In 2012 Byrnes recorded her first storytelling CD, embarking on an expansion of her work to a national audience.

Byrnes also delivers high quality workshops to educators, librarians and others interested in the art of storytelling. Her workshop offerings focus on general storytelling technique as well as the many applications of storytelling.

Byrnes has been a member of the Florida Storytelling Association since 1996, serving on the Board of Directors from 1999 through 2007 as Secretary, Treasurer, President-Elect and President. From 2012 through 2018, she served as Director of the annual Florida Storytelling Festival. The Florida Storytelling Association has awarded Byrnes both a Distinguished Service Award and a Lifetime Achievement Award in recognition of her time and talents.