HOT Season for Young People 2011-2012
Teacher Guidebook

Zorro
Visible Fictions
A note from our Sponsor
~ Regions Bank ~

Jim Schmitz
Executive Vice President
Area Executive
Middle Tennessee Area

For over 125 years Regions has been proud to be a part of the Middle Tennessee community, growing and thriving as our area has. From the opening of our doors on September 1, 1883, we have committed to this community and our customers.

One area that we are strongly committed to is the education of our students. We are proud to support TPAC’s Humanities Outreach in Tennessee Program. What an important sponsorship this is – reaching over 25,000 students and teachers – some students would never see a performing arts production without this program. Regions continues to reinforce its commitment to the communities it serves and in addition to supporting programs such as HOT, we have close to 200 associates teaching financial literacy in classrooms this year.

Thank you, teachers, for giving your students this wonderful opportunity. They will certainly enjoy the experience. You are creating memories of a lifetime, and Regions is proud to be able to help make this opportunity possible.

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Dear Teachers,

Visible Fictions is one of the most exciting theatre companies in Scotland, producing highly creative work that tells important stories in entertaining ways.

Director Douglas Irvine revels in exploring our shared mythologies of heroes, and how those myths are re-interpreted and renewed for modern day audiences. His approach to Zorro reflects his perfectly balanced sense of play and serious meaning. His focus is not on the violence in the myth, but on the need for a hero to begin with, as well as the character challenges and the choices of someone who wants to make a difference. The true emphasis and depth is placed on a solution for bullying that requires justice and not revenge.

The piece is perfectly suited to its elementary and middle school audiences, allowing them to put themselves in the place of the hero, Diego de le Vega as Zorro, and vow to save the day!

TPAC Education

Find out more about Visible Fictions on their web site www.visiblefictions.co.uk
Zorro* adaptation by Davey Anderson

Chapter One - Spanish California, 1809
The young Diego de la Vega is playing at being a swordsman, and his father, Alejandro, is teaching him techniques as well as the moral responsibility of using a sword. Two masked figures ambush the boy and his father. There is a fight, and Alejandro is fatally stabbed. Before he dies, Alejandro urges his son to “fight only for justice.”

Chapter Two - Soon after
The orphaned Diego goes to work as a stable boy for his father’s friend, Don Carlos Quintero, who is the governor of California. Diego tries to convince the governor that he saw his father killed not by bandits, but by soldiers. Quintero does not believe him.

Chapter Three - Three years later
Diego has been practicing to avenge his father and has grown into a skilled swordsman. He begins his dual life as Zorro by stopping corrupt members of the guard from stealing a peasant woman’s money. He also makes the sneering soldiers apologize to her. News of his exploits begins to spread, and with it, fear among the guard and hope among the peasants.

Chapter Four - One morning
When Diego is the stable boy, he is shy and respectful and makes friends with the governor’s daughter, Isabella. She has her hands full deflecting the awkward marriage offers of the captain of the guard, Esteban. Out riding, Diego and Isabella encounter two members of the guard harassing peasants for money. When Isabella confronts them, the soldiers claim that Captain Esteban ordered them to do it.

Chapter Five - That night
Though Isabella is angry with Diego for not attempting to stop them earlier, as Zorro, he finds and terrifies the superstitious guards. He leaves them with a warning for Esteban. He recovers the silver they stole and returns it anonymously to the home of the villagers.

Chapter Six - The following morning
Diego drives Isabella and her father in a carriage to San Gabriel. During the trip, the governor refuses to believe his daughter’s information about the corrupt and greedy behavior of Esteban, and Diego meekly gives no comment. When they reach San Gabriel, a ranchero shows the governor a piece of gold he has discovered. Meanwhile, Esteban orders a vicious and merciless search of the villages, seeking the whereabouts of Zorro.

Chapter Seven - Afternoon
The governor tries to send the gold to Spain under guard protection, but Esteban finds out the secret contents and steals the gold. After he reports the “theft by Zorro” to the governor, Esteban meets Diego, the son of his old adversary, Alejandro, for the first time. Diego retains his polite, submissive role as only the stable boy, and Esteban has no idea that Diego is really Zorro.
Chapter Eight – Nightfall
Certain that Captain Esteban is deceiving the governor, Zorro searches his office for proof, avoiding the attack of the captain’s pet parrot, Felicity. Esteban tries to capture Zorro, but he escapes. Zorro goes to Isabella’s room to give her a sample of the gold he found in Esteban’s safe. Zorro asks her to give the governor a message that the captain is the real thief of the gold.

Chapter Nine – At first light
Isabella tells her father of Zorro’s visit, but Don Carlos does not believe her. He goes to confide in Esteban but discovers the truth too late, and the captain takes him prisoner.

Chapter Ten – At sunset
In the dungeon, Captain Esteban tries to make a bound and gagged Don Carlos appoint him as the new governor. Meanwhile, Isabella confesses to Diego that she may be in love with Zorro. Esteban shows up and forces Isabella into the house, where he demands that she marry him. Zorro breaks in and confronts the captain with knowledge of his treachery. They duel, but Esteban is taken by surprise by the fight and escapes. He later plots a trap for Zorro and has his guards arrest Isabella.

Chapter Eleven – High Noon
The execution of Isabella awaits the strike of the clock. Just in time, Zorro rescues her. They ride off on his horse, Tornado, and the guards set off in pursuit.

Chapter Twelve – After a while
Isabella demands to know Zorro’s real identity. He promises to tell her when he has brought his father’s murderer to justice. Just then the soldiers appear, and during the chase, Zorro is shot and appears to fall off a cliff to his death.

Chapter Thirteen – A moment later
Diego realizes the bullet has hit the medallion his father gave him and offers his thanks. He sets out to find Isabella.

Chapter Fourteen – The dead of night
Esteban has taken Isabella to the dungeon. By threatening her, he forces Don Carlos to sign the succession papers. Isabella must also agree to marry Esteban to save her father.

Chapter Fifteen – The day of the wedding
Having freed the governor, Zorro appears in the middle of the ceremony and challenges Esteban. They fight, and Zorro disarms him. Zorro finds that the captain does not bear the scar on his hand of Diego’s father Alejandro’s sword. Though Esteban is heading to prison, Zorro has not brought his father’s killer to justice. He does not reveal his true identity to Isabella. He kisses her and vanishes until the next time he is needed to outsmart bullies and villains.

*This play is based upon the works of Johnston McCulley. The underlying rights in and to the property of Zorro are controlled by Zorro Productions, Inc., of Berkeley, California, which has provided Producer with the use of its copyrights and trademarks for the purposes of this production. © 2011 Zorro Productions, Inc. All rights reserved. ZORRO®.
The Man Behind the Mask...

...is a fictional character created in 1919 by pulp writer Johnston McCulley. He has been featured in numerous books, films, television series, and now in our theatre production. Zorro (Spanish for fox) is the secret identity of Don Diego de la Vega (originally Don Diego Vega), a nobleman and master living in the Spanish colonial era of California. The character has undergone changes through the years, but the typical image of him is a black-clad masked outlaw who defends the people of the land against tyrannical officials and other villains. Not only is he much too cunning and foxlike for the bumbling authorities to catch, but he delights in publicly humiliating those same foes.

-excerpted from the Visible Fictions education guide

Johnston McCulley was a popular pulp fiction and serial writer of the 1920-40’s. He was born on February 21, 1883 in Ottowa, Illinois. He worked as a police reporter for The Police Gazette and as an Army Public Affairs Officer during World War I. A history buff, McCulley began his prolific writing career for the pulp magazines, moving into novels and later, screenplays. His stories ranged from crime thrillers to action adventures in Spanish California.

McCulley is most remembered for creating Señor Zorro. Zorro first appeared in All Story Weekly, as “The Curse of Capistrano” in five weekly installments beginning Aug. 9, 1919. Silent film star Douglas Fairbanks, Sr., made McCulley’s story into the screen classic The Mark of Zorro in 1920, setting the fox on a path of cinematic history that complimented his life in print. McCulley died on Nov. 23, 1958, just as the popularity of his creation reached a frenzied peak with Guy Williams starring in Walt Disney’s weekly television show, Zorro.


Zorro Productions, Inc., controls the copyright and trademark of both the character and the name of Johnston McCulley’s Zorro. John Gertz and his company guide the phenomenal international array of creative interpretations of the Zorro story including feature films, television, stage productions, print projects, as well as licensed merchandise including toys and costumes. Visit them to learn more about the history of Zorro at www.zorro.com.
California History

Much effort has been made to pin down the exact age in which Johnston McCulley set his famous stories and to trace the historical situations and people that inspired him. He borrowed cultural, economic, and political details from different historical periods, combining them to suit the purposes of fiction. He primarily mixed descriptions of the state under Spanish rule and then under Mexican rule. He was criticized for this method by historians. However, the attention and popularity he brought to the story of early California and the influence of Hispanic culture excites students and adults alike to explore the true account.

In her comprehensive book about the evolution of all things Zorro, *Zorro Unmasked: The Official History*, Sandra R. Curtis delineates the sequence of California history pointing out details that seem to have most interested McCulley in his first and subsequent imaginings of Zorro. Below is a quick summary of years that group her meticulously researched findings. Many of McCulley’s conflicting elements appear in the written stories but not the play. In fact, Davey Anderson sets the Visible Fictions’ *Zorro* solidly in 1809.

1769 - 1810 - *the story includes Spanish rule*
The era of the missions and their great influence and power came when California was a colony of Spain, 100 years before Jamestown. The political structure with governors under the King of Spain lies in these years. This was also the time of the village communities called *pueblos* under the control of the military *presidios*. Three groups of men vying for power aligned with politics, religion, and the military did not provide ideal conditions for indigenous peoples, though it was a prosperous and relatively peaceful time.

1810 - 1834 - *the story includes increased corruption*
The independence movement to break free from Spanish rule began in South America and eventually led to California being ruled by the new Republic of Mexico. Times were far more unstable, and corruption was rampant. Governors put in place by the new ruling country, dispensed arbitrary and often cruel punishments; soldiers were convicts from Mexican prisons; massive land holdings were redistributed.

1835 - 1848 - *the story includes an individual avenger*
Finally Californians rebelled and ousted the Mexican rulers, but their own rule was fragmented, and they were soon occupied by the American army as part of the hostilities of the Mexican War. The Treaty of Guadeloupe Hidalgo ceded to the United States a huge expanse of land including California. After the war, as the new government and customs clashed with the established Californian culture, the *banditos* arose in the new harsh economic climate, many of them helping groups of followers to survive. In addition, the first gold was discovered in California in 1948.

The Birth of the Comic Book Hero
-excerpted from the Visible Fictions education guide

Zorro is one of the earliest precursors of the superhero of American comic books, originating as an independently wealthy person who has a secret identity which he defends by wearing a mask, and who accomplishes good for the people with his superior fighting abilities and resourcefulness. Zorro became a key inspiration for the characters The Phantom, The Lone Ranger, Batman, Green Arrow, Doc Savage, and other non-superpower-endowed pulp fiction and comic-strip action heroes.

The Mark of Zorro was one of many works that inspired comic book artist Bob Kane when he created the Batman character in 1939. This inspiration has been worked into the comics themselves, establishing that The Mark of Zorro was the film which the young Bruce Wayne watched with his parents at the cinema the night he witnessed their murders.

Notes from director, Douglas Irvine
-excerpted from a Visible Fictions informational video for performing arts centers about the production of Zorro.

“One of the things we talked a lot about for creating the show was the superhero nature of Zorro, because he’s got these wonderful skills that take him beyond the ordinary. And so, we had to find a way that we could show that off the best that we could.

We looked at the historical background of Zorro: where he comes from, as well as the pulp fiction kind of history. The more we talked, the more this world of comic books and the comics started to come to our thinking with myself and the designer.

What we’ve created and what people have commented on when they see it, is that it feels very much like a pop-up book or a flicker book, a comic flicker book with a very fast, fluid style.

There’s a lot of interaction between live actors, and, I want to say puppets, but they’re almost like cartoon cutout characters. There’s a real sense of theatricality and thus a sense of fun. It’s incredibly visual, colorful, and bold, but at the same time, as in comics, there are loads of subtleties we can achieve which feed into the story, and our understanding and connection to the characters.”

Cartoon “cutouts”
Visible Fictions’ production of Zorro uses large painted cutouts to serve several functions in the show: additional characters, props, and set pieces. The comics-style feel of these cutouts connects to the myth of superheroes and the exaggerated, heightened world of the comics from which they spring.

Fun Zorro Facts
-excerpted from the Visible Fictions education guide

Puss in Boots, the cat from the Shrek film series voiced by Antonio Banderas (who also played Zorro in The Mask of Zorro and The Legend of Zorro), is based loosely on the fairy tale character of the same name and also Zorro, in his fighting style, accent and personality. While attacking Shrek, he used his sword to scratch a “P”, a parody of Zorro’s trademark move.

Corny Snaps was a Kellogg’s breakfast cereal created in 1975 featuring Snappy the Turtle, a Zorro like character, with mask, sword and steed, who delivered his corny oats “S” shaped cereal to the masses, while carving his trademark “S” as he went.

Many television characters have dressed in Zorro costumes, including on the programs Smallville, That 70s Show, Family Matters, Sesame Street, The Bob Newhart Show, and The Simpsons.
Grades 3-8

Students will create a school hero who fights bullies like Zorro.
Students will write a motto for their hero.
Students will write a scenario in which their hero outwits a bully.

Introduction

One of Zorro’s most appealing traits is his dedication to thwart bad guys and stand up for people who can’t help themselves. He began as a creation of the author, Johnston McCulley, but over the years, many other artists have added details to the hero that have become part of his story. The character influenced the creation of many fictional heroes including The Lone Ranger, The Avengers, and most famously, Batman.

Discuss what qualities are most important for a hero in both real life and fiction. Which qualities are most important to students?

Imagine your hero

Tell students they will create a modern day hero or heroine who stands-up against bullies in a school. Their character may have special talents and abilities but no powers or magic. This exploration may be done in groups or as an individual assignment.

Ask students to think about their hero or heroine and then answer the following questions to help define their heroic person. Encourage them to alter details if they discover the character seems to be changing in their mind as they answer the questions. The adaptation and evolution of ideas is part of the creative process.

- What is his or her name?
- What is your hero’s best quality?
- Describe how your person stops bullies. (There can be more than one way.)
- Describe your heroic character’s personality and moods.
- What is distinctive and unique about how your character looks? Extreme or subtle?
- Does your hero/heroine have dual identities?
- What is his or her weakness?
- Finally, write a personal motto for this heroic person. (Zorro’s motto is “Fight for Justice.”)

Share your hero

Ask students to write a short story or scene that describes their hero or heroine to the class and details an adventure in which they stop a bully. Students can also create a character collage of their heroic person with images that include places, things, and people their character would like.
Grades 3-8

Students will brainstorm ways to portray a horse on stage.

Students will write descriptions and draw designs of their theatrical solution.

Students will compare their ideas to those of the design team of Visible Fictions.

Introduction

The Zorro story includes many elements that cannot be realistically brought on stage: entire armies, horses, canyons. Playwrights, directors, designers, and actors must envision ways to depict these important parts of the plot so they make sense as well as spark our imaginations. The theatre artists must suggest and show us enough so that we will believe with them the story that is unfolding on stage.

Horses play an integral role in the life of Diego de la Vega (Zorro) and in the community of California, the setting of the play. Sometimes, playwrights will choose to place characters or events “offstage” and refer to them through additional characters, telling the audience what we cannot see ourselves, but the theatre artists of Visible Fictions put the horses on stage in full view. The picture on the opposite page shows one technique used in the play to include a horse in a scene, but there are others.

Discuss

Brainstorm with students all the stories they can think of that include horses. Which ones have they read? Which have they seen as movies? As a play? Pick one of their suggestions (preferably one with a horse as a central, not peripheral character) and have a short discussion about how they might portray that horse on stage in a theater.

Use the list below in your discussion as possible theatrical methods to bring horses to life on stage.

A horse on the STAGE ?!!?

- Puppetry:
  - hand puppets
  - shadow puppetry
  - giant puppets
  - marionettes

- Actors as horses:
  - in costume
  - with no costume
  - with masks
  - two actors in a costume

- Set pieces:
  - props representing horses
  - a realistic horse model
  - a horse made of building materials

- Mime

- Dance
Step one

Divide the students into groups of 4-5. They are theatre artists on a production team for Zorro. Their task is to figure out how they want to portray horses on stage in the play, Zorro. They need to consider the following three scenes in the script which include horses:

1. Diego works in the governor’s stables, and he has to groom the horses during some important scenes.
2. The governor and his daughter, Isabella, ride in a carriage drawn by horses to an important meeting.
3. Zorro leaps from a rooftop onto his horse, Tornado, and then gallops away.

As they are problem solving, ask students to consider several options, and think about what the challenges will be for the designers and performers. Will “the horse” require a special, original design? How big or small will it be? Will it require extra cast members? Will it require special skills from the performers? Do the horses need to be portrayed in the same way every time, or can the method change? How and how much do the horses need to move in the play?

Older students may also discover that they need to think about what “genre” they want to most influence their production: action-adventure, mystery, comedy, historical presentation, romance, tragedy. The different productions of Zorro have included elements of all of these styles.

Step two

Ask students to write down descriptions and draw pictures of how they would portray horses in each of the above scenes. It is perfectly appropriate for them to choose to use different methods in each scene. Ask students to present their theatrical strategies to the class.

Post show discussion

- How did the choices of the Visible Fictions team in the matter of horses help tell and show the story?
- How were the choices for portraying horses in Zorro different from their team’s ideas?
- Remind students that another factor the artists from Visible Fictions must consider in their plans is freight transport for an international tour. What challenges would that situation present?

For more ideas, look at the currently running productions of Spirit Horse with Roseneath Theatre Company and War Horse with Lincoln Center Theater. At www.spirithorse.ca view images in the media room of the iron structure that serves as the horse in the play. Go to www.warhorseonbroadway.com to see the innovative horse puppets used in the Broadway production of War Horse.
Grades 5-8
Students will explore creative choice in adapting part of a part of a graphic novel for the stage.
Students will make narration choices.
Students will organize character roles for performers.

Introduction
The original Johnston McCulley Zorro story “The Curse of Capistrano” has been adapted and extended into a variety of different art forms: serial magazines, silent movies, “cliffhanger” movie serials, feature length movies, a Dell comic book series, a Disney television series, a full-length novel, graphic novels, a musical, and plays for theatre. Each time the story must be reinterpreted and rearranged to suit the art form and the audience. Zorro as a hero seems unquenchable!

But for each reinvention, the creator needs to figure out how to tell the story to best suit the medium. As simple examples, a comic book writer and artist would need to figure out which moments of the plot to illustrate and which ones to emphasize with larger panels; a film director and cinematographer would have to figure out which shots to use in each part of a scene: close-ups, medium or wide shots.

Discuss
For theatre, one of the choices the writer makes is which characters give the information that moves the story along: what they say and how they say it to accomplish that goal. Visible Fictions playwright Davey Anderson chose to add a narrator to his script. Another choice both the playwright and director Douglas Irvine made was how three actors would play over fifteen characters.

Translate a graphic novel into theatre! Choose one of your class’s favorite graphic novels and divide the book (and the class) into four sections. Give one section to each group and ask them to do two kinds of work to adapt the graphic novel into a play.

First, as writers, ask them to look at the story and decide which sections might need some additional lines and explanation from a narrator for the play. Most graphic novels have some narration included. Is it enough for a play? Is there information about the story shown only in the visual panels that the audience must know? Should that information be revealed by the actors or the set, or by narrator? Ask them to share with the class a few examples from their section.

Second, ask students to create a character map of all the roles in their section of the graphic novel (see example below.) Only three actors can act all the roles once it goes to the stage. Who will play what role in each scene? Will they always play the same characters or will they switch up? How will they handle crowd scenes? Watch out for “collisions!” Students don’t want the same actor playing two different characters in the same scene, or do they? What problems arise?

Ask students to pick a part of their section that was difficult to structure with only three actors. Ask them either to share their maps with the class or to “perform” that section their three people.
In the production, Zorro’s destiny is to find the man who murdered his father. He has devoted his life to righting the wrong from his past. Ask the class if they know what destiny means. The dictionary definition is:

1. the future destined for a person or thing; fate; fortune; lot in life
2. the predetermined or inevitable course of events
3. (Philosophy) the ultimate power or agency that predetermines the course of events

Give everyone a piece of paper and a pencil.

This is a very quick writing exercise which encourages a stream of consciousness. The rules of the activity are:

- Pupils have exactly 2 minutes – no more or less. You start and finish the exercise.
- During these two minutes they have to write continuously. At no point are they allowed to stop writing. If they can’t think of anything to write they have to write ‘I am writing, I am writing, I am writing’ until something comes into their head.
- The theme they must write about is ‘my destiny’.

Make sure the class understand the rules of the exercise, and then start the 2 minutes.

Once the 2 minutes are over, ask them to form a circle and then for each person to read out what they have written. Some people may not want to do this as it is personal information but try and encourage as many as possible to contribute. This activity can produce very surprising results. It is important that it is very quick and immediate to allow them to feel liberated to write anything. This is not an English or Grammar test.

The text can now be used as a stimulus for other work. For example:

- Ask them to work in small groups to create images from their text.
- Ask them to work individually and pick out 1 or 2 lines they have written and then create a tableau (frozen picture.)
- Ask them to work in pairs to discuss and then create a scene which brings to life images from each of their text.
How do you find bravery?

Divide the class up into groups of 4 or 5. Ask them to choose a moment from the story when Zorro needed to be brave, but he was feeling afraid.

Explain that they are to create two ‘tableaux’ (still pictures) of that moment, one where Zorro is feeling afraid and one when he is feeling brave.

The groups will need to think about who else is in the picture and how they are feeling when Zorro is feeling afraid, and when he is feeling brave.

Explain that when they show the tableaux, you are going to come round and tap each character on the shoulder, and they are to say what they are thinking at that moment (as the character.) This is called a ‘thought track’.

Give them time to prepare and then ask each group to show their ‘afraid tableau’ to the class, and then ‘thought track’ it and discuss the following:

· Why is Zorro afraid?
· How is Zorro’s fear affecting the others in the tableau?
· What could help Zorro be brave?

Next, ask students to show the ‘brave tableau’, ‘thought track’ it and then discuss:

· Why does Zorro need to be brave?
· What is helping Zorro be brave? Do his mask and cape help?
· How is Zorro’s bravery affecting the others in the tableau?

A Final Note - Character lessons from Zorro

Over 20 years ago, a Kentucky teacher, Alma Burnette, found the character traits in Zorro that she was trying to introduce to her students. To reach her group of high-risk young people, Mrs. Burnette fought apathy, hopelessness, stigmas against learning, and the limited views generated by poverty. She found, in the 1989-94 Zorro series by New World, a fresh tool to show children a role model who loved knowledge, treated all people well, and stood up for himself and for others.

Mrs. Burnette wrote a curriculum guide in connection with the TV series that was so successful in changing the attitudes of even her most difficult students (including those who already had police records or who were suicidal) that the Family Channel asked her to write more. The network made available to teachers all over the country Mrs. Burnette’s guides and copies of the ten accompanying Zorro episodes.

In recognizing and acting on the powerful effect of Zorro’s character and story on young people, Alma Burnette received national and presidential recognition, and the Zorro series was recognized and recommended by the National Education Association.

Discover Who Makes HOT Possible

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