NOURA
by Heather Raffo
directed by Joanna Settle

FIRST FOLIO
Curriculum Guide

SHAKESPEARE THEATRE COMPANY
The Shakespeare Theatre Company creates, preserves and promotes class theatre—ambitions, enduring plays with universal themes—for all audiences.

STC’s vision is to create theatre to ignite a dialogue that connects the universality of works to our shared human experience in the modern world.

This curriculum guide provides information and activities to help students form a personal connection to our play before attending our production.

We encourage you to photocopy these articles and activities and use them as supplemental material to viewing our production.

Enjoy the show!

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Noura challenges our notions of modern marriage and motherhood through a portrait of Iraqi immigrants living in New York. As Noura and her husband Tariq prepare to celebrate their first Christmas as American citizens, she looks forward to welcoming a special guest—Maryam, a young Iraqi refugee. But the girl’s arrival upends the family, forcing them to confront where they are, where they’ve been and who they have become.

In this world-premiere production, award-winning playwright and performer Heather Raffo (Nine Parts of Desire) draws on personal stories of Arab American women responding to A Doll’s House, Henrik Ibsen’s classic drama of one mother’s quest to balance her duty with her identity.

Who’s Who in Noura

Heather Raffo
Noura

Nabil Elouahabi
Tariq

Matthew David
Rafa’a

Dahlia Azama
Maryam

Gabriel Brumberg
Yazen / Alex
Playwright’s Note from Heather Raffo

Noura was provoked by many things.

Beginning in 2013, I lead a series of workshops with Arab American women in New York City. These women were attempting to bridge two distinct cultures: American culture that prides itself on rugged individualism and Middle Eastern culture that prides itself on the deeply interwoven social fabric of community. After working with them a while, we brought them A Doll’s House. Over the course of two years they did a combination of personal narrative work and re-imagining the many Nora Helmers in their lives.

Having asked young women over the course of three years to look at A Doll’s House, I had been sitting on my own feelings in relation to the play. I knew I needed to write about it. This conflict between individualism and community was playing out before my eyes, not just as an Arab American but also as modern wife and mother.

*****

My father was born in Mosul. I visited the house where he was born and the churches my grandfathers had carved from marble. Their neighborhood in Iraq predates Christianity and has existed as a connected community since the time of Christ. In the villages they still speak a dialect of Aramaic. Even through Iraq’s many wars, Iraqi Christians felt they had a home in their country, that they were part of an ancient melting pot of many ethnic and religious minorities. Even if they were living outside the country, Iraq was the home they might someday go back to. I’m not sure that is true today. When ISIS overtook Mosul in 2014, things changed. Iraq was simply no longer a place they would belong.

I had almost 100 family members in Iraq at the start of the 2003 war. I now have two cousins living there. My family is scattered across the world. Yet through the war, because of my family’s connection to the country, I felt I had an identity that would still be part of the fabric of the place. I feel now that much of that identity is being abandoned; many of my links are being severed. I am left to connect to Iraq on my own, through the many artists and students I have met and with whom I have collaborated. But not through my grandmother’s house, or through my grandfather’s churches. Not through a vast network of cousins or a community, because it no longer exists. And it may never come back.

I see Iraq as a bellwether for America. Iraq had a society with shifting tensions throughout its history, but communities managed to live side by side for centuries. They have gone from a society where Sunnis and Shia were often intermarried, where it was impolite to ask your neighbor what religion they were, to an Iraq that almost completely segregated by neighborhood. Our divides in America are similarly increasing at an alarming rate. Our communities are becoming more isolated rather than more inclusive, defending our identity with hostility rather than seeing how our differences can dialogue with each other. How do we pursue a very necessary sense of belonging, but not at the expense of turning tribal? How can we embrace our own individuality while upholding a multi-faceted community?
After spending time working with *A Doll’s House*, I was aggravated by Nora Helmer as a mother. She didn’t speak to me. The women I know don’t run around acting smaller than they are, sneaking chocolates and barely parenting their children. I was so tired watching this play be the beacon of feminist thought. Women are in a very different place. I wanted a play that grappled with modern marriage, modern motherhood.

*Noura* was a way to find the words for the daily frustrations of being a modern mother and wife. When I started writing, we weren’t talking about the things I was feeling. There was the sense that a female president was a sure thing, that women had achieved equality in workplaces. Now we are in a post-election, post-Harvey-Weinstein world, and conversations are moving from the secretive to the mainstream.

I am a mother and a wife. I am in a superb marriage and have a career I love. However, over the last decade in particular, I have grown increasingly aware of the many-faceted ways women in my peer group are struggling to stay true to their potential.

Someone from the Ibsen Institute in Norway once told me, “We can’t do *A Doll’s House* here because women find it irrelevant.” I laughed. The idea that a story about a woman unable to articulate her full self in her marriage or in her society felt all too relevant to me as an American.

*The Guardian* is currently producing a series about why it’s harder to be a mother in America than any other developed country. According to their December 5, 2017 article, some of the reasons include no mandatory maternity leave—we’re the only developed country without it—sky-high childcare costs that force women to leave their jobs, and the worst maternal death rate in the developed world. On a broader level, our society still doesn’t support anything but an individualist approach to achievement. Parents must move as a group, and it costs them. I saw these problems and others playing out all around me in Brooklyn, amongst mothers on the playground, at school, in my workplace, everywhere, amongst white women, brown women, all women.

Noura is at the crossroads of wanting to do something entirely for herself. It might cost her everything. Does she—and do we—make a choice inspired by our calling, forging forth as the rugged individual? Or does we move as a unit, as a community? I think we need to do both. We need an entirely new lens and framework, a balance between men and women, individual and community. But without that, for the moment we have Noura, an architect, trying to construct a world where she can heal.

*Noura* as part of The Women’s Voices Theater Festival

The Women’s Voices Theater Festival was created to highlight the scope of new plays being written by women, and the range of professional theater being produced in the Washington, D.C. region. Professional theaters, including the Shakespeare Theatre Company, have joined together to present 28 plays written by women between January 15 and February 15, 2018.

You can learn more about the festival and find a list of shows & participating theatres online at http://www.womensvoicestheaterfestival.org/
A classically trained actress, Raffo came to fame for her full-length solo piece *Nine Parts of Desire* (2004), which harnessed her complex responses as an American of Iraqi descent to the first Gulf War and its devastation, inspired by her talks with family and hundreds of Iraqi women. Raffo wrote and performed the nine interlocking roles—from a child gazing at stars from a Bagdadi rooftop to an American cousin in New York (based on Raffo herself) and from a leftist intellectual émigré in London who supports the war to a famous feminist painter in Bagdad killed by it. The play received widespread acclaim in the United States and United Kingdom, including a Susan Smith Blackburn Prize Special Commendation, becoming the most widely toured play by an Arab or Arab American writer in the United States. Directed by Joanna Settle, who also directs *Noura*, *Nine Parts* was hailed for its artistic prowess, social relevance, “humanizing effect,” accessible feminism that disrupted stereotypes of Arab women and complex range of perspectives. Given the “othering” rhetoric of war, *Nine Parts* filled a civic and cultural need in circles from the State Department to *O, The Oprah Magazine*, hailed by the *New Yorker*'s John Lahr as an “example of how art can remake the world.”

Raffo’s next work shifted primary focus to American Marines and war trauma, with her haunting, innovative libretto for *Fallujah!* (2012), the first opera about the Iraq War and inspired by Iraq War Veteran Christian Ellis’ experiences of two of the bloodiest battles U.S. Marines saw, presented as vivid flashbacks. Like *Nine Parts of Desire* and *Noura, Fallujah*, composed by Tobin Stokes, crescendos into what Raffo calls “psychic civil wars,” featuring a climax full of grief figured by two mothers—one American, one Iraqi. Raffo’s writing reveals her complex, sustained engagement with contemporary crisis in the Middle East—and myriad lives, male and female, American and Iraqi, young and old—caught in Iraq’s destruction over 15 years. In *Noura* this timespan hosts three waves of character immigration in the backstory, with the latest, Maryam, a refugee fleeing the terror of *Daesh* (the Iraqi name for ISIS).

Raffo’s new play reveals cross-cultural roots in its very title: *Noura*. An Arabic and Aramaic female name meaning “light,” “Noura” hails the play’s deep roots in Iraqi and Arab communities in diaspora during an era of intense violence in the Middle East and as waves of Muslim and Christian people from the Middle East alike seek refuge. For many classical theatergoers *Noura* also evokes Ibsen’s iconic protagonist in *A Doll’s House*, which dramatically challenged the cultural representation and social rights of women (and wives) in late 19th-century Western Europe. Indeed, consciously and creatively, Raffo richly reframes key relationships, contexts and plot points from the world’s most-produced modern drama to excavate new tensions between tradition and modernity, family and identity, feminism and home. By layering classical and contemporary allusions in bold, nuanced ways, *Noura* manifests complex cultural hybridity for satisfying art. Yet too, Raffo dramatizes the psychic and social stakes faced by her new Americans—and our world today.

Because she is both writer and performer, Raffo’s process alternates between researching, writing, revising and rehearsing—although these roles inevitably overlap. To ground the play-world and social stakes for *Noura* she researched subjects ranging from family dispersals to church-run orphanages in Iraq, Mouslawi food culture to American dreams. Meanwhile, her double role makes residencies and readings with diverse audiences and artists especially important to her own listening to her play and its live stakes in the theatre. As *Noura*’s script has grown toward this world premiere, Raffo is “most struck by how it has been championed by different communities” experiencing the work-in-progress. When read at the Arab American National Museum in Dearborn, Michigan, “Middle Eastern Christians and Muslims both felt the play was about them […]. At a reading in Kansas City, both white Midwestern women and Latina immigrants felt the play captured their experiences,” responding with laughter, silent nods and gasps. The ability to cultivate cross-cultural recognition is part of Raffo’s legacy.

For each original work Raffo embeds herself in the communities about whom she writes, pursuing extensive research with others, from war refugees to scholars, translators to Marines—not to make documentary theatre, but rather to learn and live in the real-world stakes of the poetic worlds she creates. Attuned to the ethics of representation as well as artistic values, Raffo develops and tests the works with diverse artists and audiences, including ones opposed to her characters’ views, “to get the soul of the piece.” In *Noura*, “the soul” animates classic and contemporary challenges for women—families and the world—in unexpectedly powerful ways.
A CONTEMPORARY HISTORY OF MOSUL

By Susannah Clark, Artistic Fellow

1918
After World War I ends, British forces occupy Mosul. The city and its surrounding areas become part of the Occupied Enemy Territory Administration and later Mandatory Iraq.

1926
The League of Nations declares Iraq’s possession of Mosul. From the 1920s onward, oil is discovered in the area and Mosul’s fortunes revive.

1932
The Kingdom of Iraq becomes a sovereign nation but continues to war with Britain until 1947.

1967
The University of Mosul opens.

1979
Saddam Hussein assumes control of Iraq as the leader of the Ba’ath Party.

1980
The Iran-Iraq War (First Persian Gulf War) begins, ending in a stalemate in 1988 after the deaths of at least half a million people.
1991
Rebellion breaks out in the Kurdish-populated northern Iraq. These uprisings are organized by two rival Kurdish militias seeking to gain democracy in Iraq and autonomy for Kurdistan. Kurdish nationalist, Islamist and communist rebels are joined by tens of thousands of defecting militiamen and army deserters and they take control of every city in the north. Mosul is included in a no-fly zone imposed and patrolled by the United States and Britain between 1991 and 2003.

2003
The United States invades Iraq. After bombing of the city and surrounding areas, Mosul falls on April 11. There is widespread looting in the city before an agreement is reached to cede overall control to U.S. forces. Many units of the U.S. Army occupy the city over the course of several years. Mosul is the site of a series of bombings and suicide attacks, forcing many residents to flee or risk being killed.

2008
12,000 Christians flee the city following a wave of murders and threats against their community. Christian families are given the choice of death or converting to Islam. A house belonging to Syriac Catholic nuns is attacked, leaving two dead and more injured. Christian refugees like Noura and her family go to the Nineveh Plains, Christian villages in Iraqi Kurdistan and countries all over the world.

2014
The Islamic State takes control of Mosul on June 10. Most Mouslawi Christians flee. Christians remaining in Iraq see the destruction of churches and heritage sites and live under threat of death or forced conversion.

2017
After two years of occupation and a nine-month campaign by Irish, Kurdish, American and French forces, the liberation of Mosul is declared on July 9.
World of the Play
The Mosulawi Way: Noura’s Christmas Table

Making Connections:
What is the biggest holiday in your family?
What are your family’s food traditions for the holiday?
Which are your favorite dishes?
Are there any dishes that your parents or grandparents love that you won’t eat?

Klecha – traditional holiday cookie filled with date and spices

Samoon – common Iraqi bread shaped like a diamond and traditionally baked in a stone oven

Pacha – dish of boiled sheep’s feet or head, varies regionally; Yazen gives his mother a hard time about making “lamb face”.

Dolma – stuffed grape leaves and other vegetables

Kibbeh – fried or baked dish of bulgur wheat, lamb/beef, minced onions and spices

Klecha
Creating *Noura*

Heather Raffo's inspiration for writing *Noura* came from teaching creative writing to young women of Middle Eastern heritage, predominantly immigrants and first-generation Americans at Queens College (NY) from 2013 to 2016. Struck with how frequently they raised themes of shame, secrets, fear, sacrifice, sexism, self-yearning and dramatic departures from home (both family and culture), Raffo assigned them to read and write creative variations on scenes from *A Doll’s House* by Henrik Ibsen. Some women wrote fiction, some personal stories, but using Ibsen’s play as the structure for stewarding themes profoundly resonant to these young feminists was electric: the results were culturally specific and empowering.

This led Raffo to envision her own new work. Raffo explains that she was “provoked” more than inspired by *A Doll’s House*, given her own experience as a contemporary American woman—feminist, wife, mother to two young children and working playwright-performer.

Writing over a century after Ibsen, Raffo presents many allusions to Ibsen’s work, but *Noura* is an original play about modern women and families in America today. Raffo strives for relevance to contemporary women trying to balance complex duties to self and family, community and world. Writing from a modern feminist and Iraqi-American perspective, she has created a new generation of characters to better speak to and from modern women’s lives and feminism today. Noura and her family are Christian refugees from war ravaged, Mosul, Iraq. Noura is an architect-turned-math tutor, a mother, a wife, a citizen. “But there is an intense loss of self,” still, Raffo explains in conversation, from being pulled in so many directions. She also carries a secret that connects to gender shaming. Her husband, Tariq, is a caring father and spouse with feminist instincts. Their 11 year old son Yazen has spent most of his life in America. Rafa’a is a Muslim, Iraqi, refugee and their closest friend. And Maryam is a very recent Iraqi refugee.

**Reimagining Activity**

Reflect on books and/or plays you've read or seen that provoked you.

Focus on one and identify what it was that provoked you and what your emotional response was. What do you want to change about the story? Perhaps the events in the story angered or frustrated you. Perhaps you hated a character in the story. Perhaps you didn't like how the story was told. Maybe you disagree with a theme or message in the story. Maybe you think an important perspective was missing. Would the story change or be more impactful if it was modernized?

Imagine a new story or play in response to the one you chose. You can approach this in a variety of ways.

1) Pitch the idea to your class

2) Create a character list

3) Write the opening paragraph of a story

4) Write the first scene of a play

5) Write an alternate ending to the existing work.

6) Change the time period and/or location for the existing work and write/explain how the characters and/or events would change.

7) Write a new story/play using the same structure as the existing work. For example: Use the structure of Romeo & Juliet "boy gets dumped by girl," "boy meets new girl," "boy & girl get married, etc.

8) Rewrite the story/play with a new structure. For example, if the existing work was told through one character's perspective, retell the story from a different character's perspective. Or if the existing story is a book, rewrite it as a play.
Our education team asked Heather Raffo to tell us about her process creating *Noura* and to share the writing prompts she used with her creative writing students. Here's what Heather shared:

"I think when it came to our exploring *A Doll’s House* unpacking a secret was the key to locking in both plot point and character trajectory. As Middle Eastern women we discussed shame a lot. I'm not sure Americans have much connection to this word, or at least not in the same way. (We are so public about everything - we go on talk shows, reality tv, fb - all with intimate details.) But I would definitely focus in on a secret. Anyone could write a whole play on a person carrying a secret - that they want to let out, but can't etc. Or that they are trying desperately not to let out etc."

The first question/prompt was: **Write a letter to someone to reveal a secret that we’ve been dying to tell and can’t. No one has to read this letter or know about it, and no one has to share unless they want to.**

Here are more of Heather Raffo's creative writing prompts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Prompt</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who do you love the most? Why?</td>
<td>Describe a time of great disbelief.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With whom do you feel most yourself?</td>
<td>Describe a time that required great faith.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can people change?</td>
<td>Describe a moment of grace.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do you describe home?</td>
<td>Describe something you fled or left.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you want to forget?</td>
<td>Tell a story about a time you felt judged.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you seeking security or adventure?</td>
<td>If you could only carry one thing with you from your home, what would it be?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are you chasing at this moment?</td>
<td>Describe a time you crossed a border.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When do you dance most freely?</td>
<td>Describe your victory dance!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are you hiding?</td>
<td>What kind of light would you be if you were one?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who do you tell your secrets to? What secrets are you keeping?</td>
<td>What would you do if you had limited time to live (3-5 years)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk about someone you need to forgive and why.</td>
<td>What would you do if you have unlimited resources?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where do you go to hide?</td>
<td>Describe 5 major events in your life!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you want to be forgiven for?</td>
<td>Where’s home? /Describe home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are you most proud of?</td>
<td>Who makes you happiest? Why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What was your scariest moment?</td>
<td>What’s one dream that you want to accomplish but you can’t? Why not?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe your most joyful moment.</td>
<td>List adjectives/Words Describing yourself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the most selfish thing you have ever done?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the most selfless thing you have ever done?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who do you feel responsible to?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This is a fun and energetic introduction to writing dialogue where students contribute to one another’s scenes. Whether you’re a novice or experienced playwright, this activity inspires fun and creativity. It also helps reinforce play formatting!

**Supplies:**
- White board, smart board or chart paper (for modeling)
- Ruled, loose-leaf paper
- Pen/pencil

**Facilitation:**
1) At the start of the activity, all participants should have a single sheet of loose-leaf paper and pen/pencil. Ask that every participant writes their name at the top.

2) Inform all participants that everyone, together, will write a short scene. Every scene will begin the same way.

3) Ask the group for suggestions for a setting. Once a setting is selected, challenge the group to offer more details. For example, if the setting is a “park,” ask the group if it’s during the day or night. Is it a grassy hill that one would picnic on or is it a kid-friendly setting with a playground? Is it covered in snow, fallen leaves or sun-soaked? Once the group settles on a descriptive setting, write that on the white board (in the format used below) and ask that all participants copy it down on their individual sheets of paper in the same fashion.

   **Act I, Scene I**

   It is a hot summer’s day in the park. Families are enjoying the playground in the distance while a small group of out-of-shape adults struggle to throw and catch a Frisbee on the freshly mown lawn.

4) Ask the group for the name of the first character in the scene. Challenge the group to describe the character – distinguishing look or fashion? Activity? Props? Once the group has settled on a character, introduce them on the white board (in the format used below) and ask that all participants copy it down on their individualized sheets of paper in the same fashion.

   Alone, in the shade of a giant tree, sits ANGELA, a bespectacled 16 year-old. She struggles to poke her Capri-Sun with a straw but somehow manages to puncture it incorrectly, allowing its colored contents to spray onto her well-worn shirt. Undeterred, Angela affixes her mouth to the drink pouch and sucks down the rest of the refreshment.

5) Now ask the group for the name of a second character to enter the scene. Tell them that this character will interact with the first one. Again, challenge the group to describe this character. Once the group settles on a second character, introduce them (in the format used below). Every participant should copy the same character introduction on their paper.

   From a hollow in the tree emerges DUFUS, a hairy, horned troll with only a pair of boxer shorts covering his lower region.
6) Now ask the group which character should speak first and what they have to say to the other character. Once the group settles on the first line of dialogue, write it on the white board (in the format used below). Every participant should copy the same line of dialogue on their paper.

   ANGELA
   (Caught off guard by the scantily clad troll.)
   OH! Oh my! Oh my –

7) Now ask the group how the second character should respond. Once the group settles on the first line of dialogue, write it on the white board (in the format used below). Every participant should copy the same line of dialogue on their paper.

   DUFUS
   Let me guess, you’ve never seen a troll before. Get over it, sister. Not here for you. I’m here for them.
   (He points at the struggling Frisbee players.)

8) Here comes the really fun part. Tell participants that once they are ready and have copied down all the descriptions and dialogue to raise their hands. Tell participants that they will now receive another participant’s scene and will add to it a line of dialogue before raising their hand again and receiving another person’s scene to add a line of dialogue (and on and on, it goes).

9) After the allotted activity time has elapsed (or the facilitator can limit the number of lines that get added), all papers are returned to the original participant whose name is at the top.

10) Share: the participant can partner up with another participant to read aloud their scene to the rest of the group.

11) Reflect: What were some of your favorite scenes? What was challenging/fun about this activity? How did dialogue reveal character? Story?
This activity challenges participants to dive deeper into a single character’s perspective and voice based on a single image. In preparation, the facilitator should collect photographs of people to use as inspiration. Ideally, the images would be thought-provoking, but not so famous an image that it already has pre-formulated conclusions or judgements attached to it (for example, Malcolm Browne’s 1963 photograph, *The Burning Monk*, would not work well for this activity as it carries with it many emotions and politics associated with the Vietnam War). There should be enough photographs so that each participant can have one (though ideally, there should be extra to allow for ample choices).

**Supplies:**
- A variety of photographs/portraits
- Ruled, loose-leaf paper
- Pen/pencil

**Facilitation:**
1) The facilitator prepares by either scattering photographs across the floor or hanging them up on the walls.

2) The facilitator asks participants to walk silently among the photographs as the photographs all have something to say and quiet is required to hear their voices.

3) The facilitator asks each participant to select a photograph whose subject is saying something directly to them and it is both specific and urgent.

4) All participants should go back to their desk/work station and listen to what the subject in their photograph has to say. The facilitator should encourage each participant to listen intently as the subject’s voice is distinct. Is it emotional? Is it in English? Is it in an accent? Is the subject using proper grammar or employing slang and sentence fragments?

5) Once the facilitator feels that all participants have had adequate time to “hear out” their subjects, each participant should transcribe onto paper everything they “hear.” Participants should resist the urge to write in any voice other than the subject’s voice. Instead, they should behave similarly to court stenographers, writing down exactly what the subject has to say.

6) Share: participants can partner up to share their monologues with one another. The facilitator can then take volunteers who wish to share theirs aloud to the entire group. As monologues are shared, the facilitator or another participant can display the photograph so the group can see the image that inspired the monologue.

7) Reflect: Which monologues really engaged you? Was it surprising to see the image that inspired each monologue? What do monologues reveal about character? What was challenging about capturing someone else’s voice?
Theatre Etiquette

The phrase “theatre etiquette” refers to the special rules of behavior that are called for when attending a theatre performance.

Above all, it is important to remember that the actors on stage can see and hear you at the same time you can see and hear them. Be respectful of the actors and your fellow audience members by being attentive and observing the general guidelines below:

Before you go:

- Please help us create the appropriate soundscape by turning off your cell phone and other electronic devices (iPods, games, etc.). It can be very distracting to others, not to mention embarrassing to you, when your cell phone goes off during a performance. The lights from cell phones and other electronic devices are also a big distraction, so please, no text messaging.

- We ask that you spit out your gum before entering the theatre and leave all food and drinks in the lobby or the coat check.

- We don’t want you to miss out on any of the action of the play, so please visit the restroom before the performance begins.

During the performance:

- We want you to have honest reactions to what is happening onstage. You may laugh, applaud and enjoy the performance. However, please don’t talk during the performance; it is extremely distracting to other audience members and the actors. Save discussions with friends for intermission and after the performance.

Thoughts about the importance of being an audience member from Shakespeare Theatre Company Artistic Director Michael Kahn

“When you go to the theatre, you are engaging with other living, breathing human beings, having an immediate human response. In the theatre you sense that all of this may never happen again in this particular way.

As a member of the audience, you are actually part of how that’s developing—you have a hand in it … You are part of a community where you are asked to be compassionate, perhaps to laugh with or grieve as well as to understand people, lives and cultures different from your own.”
Resource List

Shakespeare Dictionaries

Books on Teaching Shakespeare

Books on William Shakespeare’s Life and Writing

Websites
- Shakespeare Theatre Company—[http://www.shakespearetheatre.org/education](http://www.shakespearetheatre.org/education)
  On SHAKESPEARE: Articles and information about Shakespeare’s life and world.
  Teacher Curriculum Guides: Plot synopsis, character maps, lesson plans and discussion questions.
- In Search of Shakespeare: Shakespeare in the Classroom—[http://www.pbs.org/shakespeare/educators/](http://www.pbs.org/shakespeare/educators/)
  The companion website to Michael Wood’s four-part PBS series *In Search of Shakespeare*, this site includes extensive research about Shakespeare’s life and works, as well as interactive features.
- Folger Shakespeare Library—[http://www.folger.edu](http://www.folger.edu)
  Includes excellent resources for further reading about Shakespeare, as well as fun games and information designed specifically for students and teachers.
  A read-along Shakespeare Podcast where Akiva Fox breaks down the language Shakespeare.

Standards of Learning
Participation in our student matinee program and the lessons and activities found in this curriculum guide support grade 8-12 Common Core standards in English Language Arts and The National Core Arts Standards for responding and connecting to Theatre Art. Primary content areas addressed include but are not limited to:

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<th>Common Core English Language Arts Standards</th>
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<td>Anchor Standard 7: Perceive and analyze artistic work</td>
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