

**GREAT
LAKES
THEATER**

TEACHER PREPARATION GUIDE

Sleuth



By ANTHONY SHAFFER

Directed by CHARLES FEE

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Winter 2020

Dear Educator,

Thank you for your student matinee ticket order to Great Lakes Theater's production *Sleuth* by Anthony Shaffer which will be performed in the beautiful Hanna Theatre at Playhouse Square from February 14th through March 8th.

Andrew Wyke is a mystery writer fascinated by games. He invites a fellow game enthusiast, who just happens to be his wife's lover, Milo Tindle, to engage in a series of events that end up blurring the line between imagination and reality. This Tony-winning Best Play is an inventive take on the country-house thriller. Suspense abounds throughout this fiendishly cunning show that is sure to keep you guessing throughout. Is it all just a game or is more afoot?

This guide is designed – through essays, discussion questions and classroom activities – to give students both an introduction to, and a point of entry for, a personal exploration of *Sleuth*. We offer special thanks to retired teacher Madelon Horvath for her outstanding contributions to this guide.

Great Lakes Theater is proud to provide you with the finest in classic theater and the necessary educational resources to support your work in the classroom. We are thrilled that you will be coming to see us and we welcome your input on how best to support your classroom preparation for our work. Please let us know what you think!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kelly Schaffer Florian".

Kelly Schaffer Florian
Director of Educational Services
Kflorian@greatlakes theater.org

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Hansen".

David Hansen
Education Outreach Associate
dhansen@greatlakes theater.org



A NOTE TO STUDENTS: WHAT TO EXPECT AT THE THEATER

You may or may not have attended a live theater performance before. To increase your enjoyment, it might be helpful to look at the unique qualities of this art form — because it is so different from movies or video.

The live theatrical performance not only involves the actors on the stage; it is meant to involve you, the audience, in ways that film and television cannot. In truth, although you are sitting in an auditorium and the actors are on stage, there is very little separating the audience from the performers. How you react to the play *deeply affects* the actors. Something as seemingly trivial as whispering or unwrapping a candy bar can distract them and disrupt the mood and tone of their performance. Due to the important relationship between actors and audience members, there are certain, perhaps obvious, provisions of live theater we wish to call to your attention.

In the Hanna Theatre, it is important to know that the taking of pictures, either with or without a flash, is strictly prohibited. Also, it is essential that all electronic equipment, including cell phones, music players (even with headphones), alarm watches, etc., be completely powered off once you have entered the theatre. Even the glow from a watch or a silent cell phone (used for checking the time, text messaging, or posting social network updates, for example) can be very distracting to fellow audience members, even if you try to mask it under your hand or an article of clothing. Our goal is to provide every person in the audience with the best possible theatrical experience, so we appreciate your respectful cooperation during the performance.

Other differences live theater provides: in film or video, the camera and editing define what we will see. In the theater, however, each of us works as our own camera and editor, choosing our own personal points of focus. And in the Hanna Theatre, you should know that often we do not use microphones. As audience members you'll need to actively listen and "tune in" to the sound of the unamplified human voice.

As for our lighting and scenery, it might surprise you to know that these are not necessarily meant to be realistic. In this production, for example, there may be design elements that are abstract or metaphorical.

The theater's ability to focus on human experience — distilled through the dialogue and behavior of people on stage and enhanced by the scenery, costumes, lighting, music and dance — is a centuries-old tradition. Being part of the communal magic when performer and audience connect — whether at a baseball game, music concert or theater performance — cannot be duplicated.

The performance you will see at Great Lakes Theater will happen only once. It is unique and personal. Though this play will be performed more than a dozen times, the performance you see belongs only to you.

We hope you enjoy it, and we'd like you to share your response with us.

GLT: OUR HISTORY, OUR FUTURE



Tom Hanks and fellow company member Bert Goldstein.



The beautifully renovated Hanna Theatre.

Since 1962, Great Lakes Theater (GLT) has brought the world's greatest plays to life for all of Cleveland. In 1961, the Lakewood Board of Education president persuaded a Shakespeare troupe, led by Arthur Lithgow, to make Lakewood Civic Auditorium its home. The theater that opened its doors on July 11, 1962 as Great Lakes Shakespeare Festival presented six Shakespeare plays in rotating repertory. In exchange for free rent, the company provided student matinee productions. The repertory was expanded in 1965 to include non-Shakespearean classics as a result of an exchange of productions with Princeton's McCarter Theater. The Company outgrew its original home at Lakewood Civic Auditorium and, in 1982, made the move to the Ohio Theatre in Playhouse Square, launching the revitalization of downtown Cleveland's Theatre District.

In 2001 the company was searching for a new Producing Artistic Director, and the Board sought a candidate with well-established business skills as well as artistic leadership. Charles Fee was selected for his commitment to Shakespeare and his reputation for building Idaho Shakespeare Festival into a highly successful regional theater. GLT recommitted itself to its founding core values: Shakespeare, rotating repertory and an acting company of the highest caliber. During Fee's tenure, the company has been recognized for its artistic excellence, winning the *Northern Ohio Live Magazine Award* for excellence in Theater in 2005 after three years of being a finalist, as well as *The Free Times Reader's Choice Award* for Best Performing Arts Group in 2006, and for eliminating the inherited accumulated net deficit of over one million dollars.

The company has also been a revolutionary producing model unlike any other in America to create cost efficiency and enhance our artistic product. We now exchange our repertory productions with Idaho Shakespeare Festival (ISF) in Boise, Idaho and Lake Tahoe Shakespeare Festival (LTSF) in Nevada. This deep collaboration between independent producing organizations is a first in American theater. With this visionary model now fully in place, GLT, ISF, and LTSF are able to deepen the artistic quality of the work on our stages, share our production costs, maximize our resources, and provide nearly year-round employment to our resident company of artists.

Now, GLT has entered into a new phase, making the historic Hanna Theatre in Playhouse Square its home. The renovation of the Hanna Theatre, as well as the creation of GLT's first endowment fund, is part of our *Re-Imagine A Classic* Campaign to ensure GLT's future. Our new home in the Hanna features a hydraulically operated thrust stage, a first for this region, and innovative and intimate seating where no seat is farther than eleven rows from the stage. We believe that this extraordinary theater experience will revolutionize the way Northern Ohio experiences classic theater.

Great Lakes Theater is one of only a handful of American theaters that have stayed the course as a classic theater. With a plucky history of bucking economic trends to strive for and nurture the highest artistic quality, it remains a distinctive and significant cultural resource in an extraordinary American city.

About the Author:

Anthony Shaffer



Anthony Joshua Shaffer was born May 15, 1926, in Liverpool, England. He was born to a Jewish family in Liverpool, the son of Reka (née Fredman) and Jack Shaffer, who was an estate agent with his wife's family. He was the twin brother of playwright Peter Shaffer (*Amadeus* and *Equus*).

In 1955 the family moved to London, where the two brothers attended St. Paul's School. They both then did three years of nonmilitary service in the coal mines of Kent and Yorkshire before going to Cambridge, where Anthony Shaffer studied law.

From 1951 to 1957 he practiced law in London and wrote three novels with his brother under the name Peter Anthony. He then worked in advertising before setting up his own television production company and eventually turning to writing full time.

He called his thriller *Sleuth* "the main event" and he could never escape it. That "who, what and how done it" tale provided the playwright with a secure place in the theatre and film history of the 1970s.

Dramatis Personae

Andrew Wyke	David Anthony Smith*
Milo Tindle	Jeffrey C. Hawkins*
Inspector Doppler	Lynn Robert Berg*
Detective Sergeant Tarrant	Nick Steen*†
Police Constable Higgs	Aled Davies*

† Fight Captain

*Members of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States

It was turned down by the then producer king of London's West End, Binky Beaumont, who told Shaffer it would not last a fortnight. It opened - for a fortnight - in January 1970 at the Theatre Royal, Brighton, and won a prolonged standing ovation. It then moved to the St Martin's theatre in London.

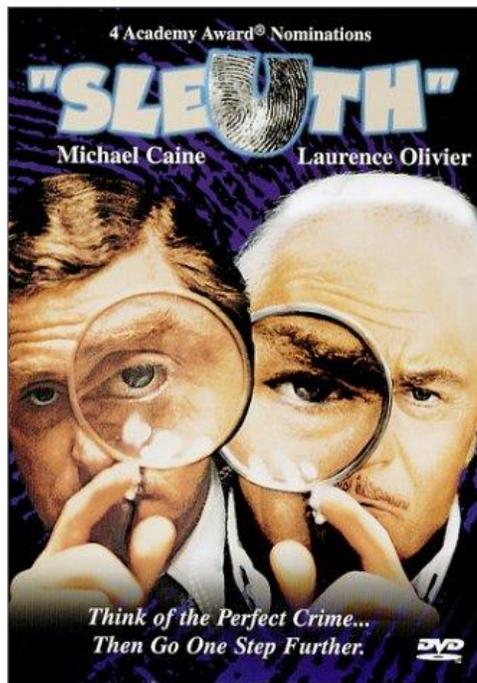
Once in the West End, *Sleuth* played for 2,359 performances, and, playing for more than 2,000 performances on Broadway, won a Tony Award as the best play of 1970. Two years later, it was turned into a movie, directed by Joseph Mankiewicz. Its stars were Michael Caine, as the younger man, Milo Tindle, and Laurence Olivier in the role of the scheming Andrew Wyke.

His plays also included *The Savage Parade*, about the trial of Nazi Adolf Eichmann (1963, revised in 1967) and *Murderer* (1975). His screenplays include *Forbush and the Penguins*, the Scottish-set *The Wicker Man* and three Agatha Christie screenplays: *Death on the Nile*, *Appointment With Death* and *Evil Under the Sun*, which is laced with a jazzy Cole Porter soundtrack. He also wrote for television. Shaffer worked on the film, *Murder on the Orient Express*, but went uncredited.

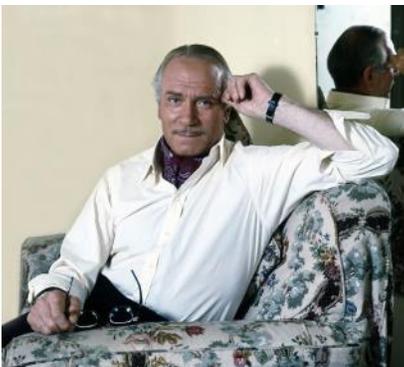
Shaffer's first two marriages ended in divorce. Mr. Shaffer split his time between a London studio and a farm near Cairns, Queensland, shared with his third wife, Australian actress Diane Cilento. They were married in 1985. Mr. Shaffer had two daughters with his second wife, Carolyn Soley. Shaffer died in London on November 6, 2001.



Anthony Quayle as Andrew Wyke and Donal Donnelly as Milo Tindle in the Broadway production of *Sleuth*, 1971-1973.

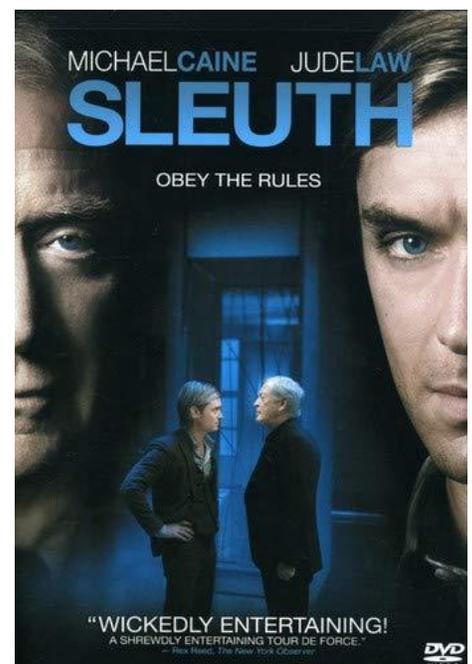


The 1972 movie poster for *Sleuth*, directed by Joseph L. Mankiewicz and starring Laurence Olivier and Michael Caine. The screenplay by playwright Anthony Shaffer was based on his 1970 Tony Award-winning play. Both Olivier and Caine were nominated for Academy Awards for their performances.



Laurence Olivier in his dressing room on the set of *Sleuth* (1972).

The 2007 film, with a screenplay by Harold Pinter, was directed by Kenneth Branagh, and starred Michael Caine and Jude Law as Milo Tindle, originally played by Caine in the 1972 version.



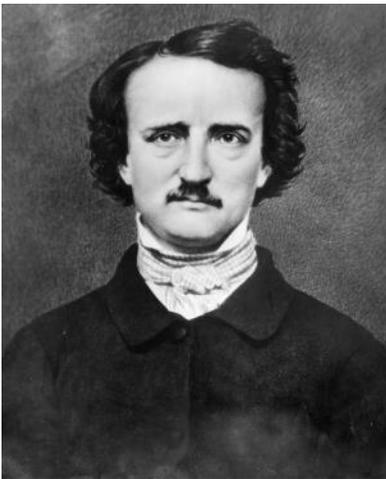
PUTTING IT IN CONTEXT

THE MURDER MYSTERY

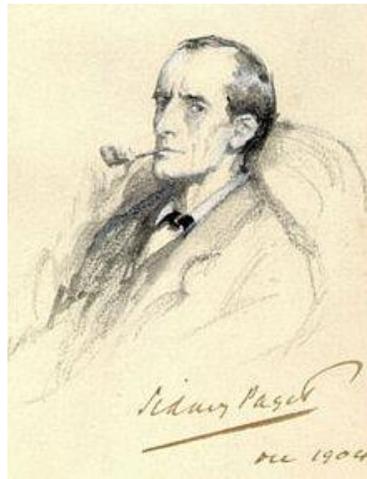
Crime fiction dates back as far as “Arabian Nights” though the modern model of a detective novel is credited to Edgar Allan Poe, with his recurring Detective Dupin. Serving as a model for the most famous fictional detective, Sherlock Holmes and somewhat later, Agatha Christie’s Hercule Poirot. In these narratives, the story begins with a crime having been committed, and an adventure follows through which the sleuth finds clues which (seemingly) only they can trace back to the perpetrator.

Mystery novels can be quite comforting, in spite of the often violent acts suggested by their plots, because the process of discovery leads to a sense that good will triumph over evil, that there is always a solution, and by story’s end all is right and normalcy has been achieved.

This dedication to the status quo, and Andrew Wkye’s dependency upon it — for his social position, and his career — which most offends Milo Tindle. He calls it the “normal recreation of the snobbish, outdated, life-hating, ignoble mind.”



Edgar Allan Poe



Sherlock Holmes in a 1904 illustration by Sidney Paget.



David Suchet as Hercule Poirot.

Auguste Dupin in *The Purloined Letter* by E. A. Poe.





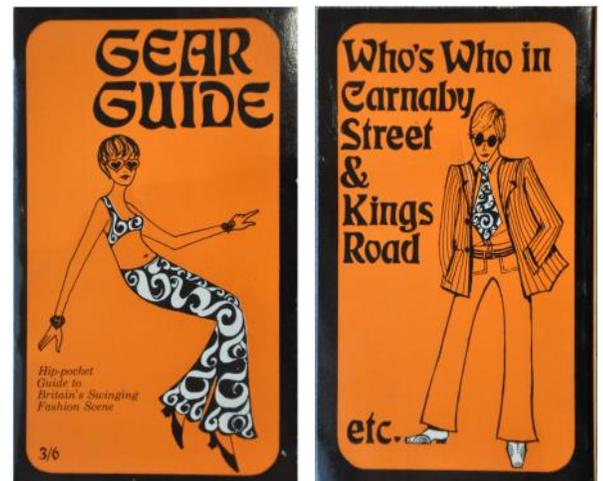
Carnaby Street, London, c. 1966.

THE SWINGING SIXTIES

During the mid-to-late 1960s, urban centers in England went through a startling cultural shift known as the “Swinging Sixties.” As a result of the post-World War II baby “boom” and the end of national service (i.e. the draft) young adults had much more time (and money) on their hands which they used to assert themselves more freely through fashion, music, and other forms of popular expression.

Centers of youth culture in London included Carnaby Street and King’s Road, where this new generation sported clothing with bright colors and patterns, women wore miniskirts, men heeled boots, they danced to music from bands like The Who, The Kinks, and of course, the Beatles. Everyone grew their hair long and gave voice to all manner of anti-establishment opinions.

Milo Tindle, a young Englishman of diverse parentage, stylish and attractive, is a production of this “swinging” movement, and presents a threat to the older, established Andrew Wyke in more ways than one.



Published in 1967, Gear Guide was the essential hip-pocket companion to Britain’s swinging fashion scene.

COSTUME INSPIRATION & DESIGN

BY ESTHER HABERLEN





SCENIC INSPIRATION & DESIGN

BY GAGE WILLIAMS



Photo of the scenic model.



Paint elevation.

IF YOU HAVE ONE DAY TO PREPARE

1. Give students a very brief biography of Anthony Shaffer's life and work (see page 6). You may wish to show the 9 ½ minute video of Shaffer (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EaTstqQ7NmY> - contains spoilers) talking about working with Olivier and Michael Caine in the 1972 movie version of the play.
2. Share the basic info below (BACKGROUND ON THE PLAY) with the students.
3. This play had amazingly long runs both in London and on Broadway. It's known for its unique approach to the murder mystery genre, its use of humor, and its spoofing of Agatha Christie's work. A small cast, the play relies on excellent actors. This will be something for the students to think about as they watch.
4. Introduce the early scene of the play in which Andrew Wyke says to Milo Tindle, "I understand you want to marry my wife." Have a couple of volunteers read through it and ask them what they think about how this sets up the events of the play. See suggestions for questions with the scene below.
5. This play is about a deadly game of cat and mouse. In order to set students' expectations for the experience, it might be fun to play a game that requires them to be sly and crafty with such games as "Two truths and a lie" or "Murderer."

GAMES

TWO TRUTHS AND A LIE

In a circle, have student tell 2 truths and a lie about themselves and have others guess. Then discuss why the guessing worked as it did. What did the students do to get others to believe the "lie"?

MURDERER

Have students sit on the floor in a circle with their eyes closed. Tap one student on the head. This student is the "murderer." Once the murderer is picked, the students open their eyes and try to discover who the murderer is without being "killed." The murderer kills victims by winking at them. When winked at, a victim silently counts to three (so that he doesn't give away who "killed" him), makes a disgusting noise, and dies. If a student in the circle thinks she knows who the murderer is, she closes her eyes and raises her hand. As soon as three students think they know who the murderer is, ask them to identify the murderer. If they are wrong, they are out. If they are right the murderer then gets to choose the next murderer by going through the process above.

You could vary the game by choosing more than one murderer.

These games encourage good observation and control. Following the game(s) students can discuss why some things worked better than others and how to be crafty and fool others. This will set them up for the "game-playing" in *Sleuth*.

BACKGROUND ON THE PLAY

IN 1970 Anthony debuted *Sleuth* to a receptive London audience. *Sleuth* ran an astounding 2,359 performances in London and 1,222 performances on Broadway. The play also received a number of awards and high praise including a Tony for Best Play, and was hailed as among the best in its genre. In 1973, Anthony adapted the play into a successful film starring Sir Laurence Olivier and Sir Michael Caine.

EARLY SCENE OF SLEUTH

Andrew: We need to be friendly. Now do sit down and let me get you another drink. I'm one up on you already. . . . I understand you want to marry my wife. You'll forgive me raising the matter, but as Marguerite is away for a few days, she's up in the North you know visiting some relatives. . .

Milo: Is she?

Andrew: Yes, so I thought it an appropriate time for a little chat.

Milo: Yes

Andrew: Well is it true?

Milo: Well . . . well, yes, with your permission of course.

Andrew: Oh yes of course (he hands Milo a drink) Zere, put zat behind your necktie.

Milo: Cheers.

Andrew: Prosit. Yes I'm glad to see you're not like so many young men these days seem to think they can do anything they like without asking anyone's permission.

Discuss this scene. What does this tell you about the two men? Who has the upper hand? Why? Why not?

How is the scene ironic? Comic? Scary? Intriguing? Why does Andrew use the German accent? Does this exchange make you want to see what happens next?

One of the problems for any playwright (or writer, for that matter) is to get the audience interested. Does Shaffer do that in this scene?

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.5

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.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Andrew contradicts himself several times during the course of the play, intentionally and otherwise. What do you believe is his true reason for staging this game? Are they the reasons he provides, or something different?
2. Define prejudice. How is Andrew prejudiced? He protests his own lack of bigotry, even going so far as to put an ironic spin on certain racially-charged turns of phrase (e.g., “Some of my best friends are half-Jews.”) How does prejudice or racism play into their relationship? What prejudices does Milo keep?
3. Put yourself into Milo’s shoes. What words would you use to describe the experience Andrew puts him through? How do you believe this experience has changed Milo?
4. In a play full of twists, surprises, and reveals, which would you say is the most significant, or meaningful? What do you believe this most significant reveal tells us about the playwright’s point of view?
5. Milo is not a fan of murder mysteries, he describes the people who write and prefer to read them to be “snobbish” and “life-hating.” Why does he hold this strong sense of contempt for mysteries and detective stories? What do these opinions reveal about him?
6. Andrew and Milo are not altogether different. How are their personalities similar? Under what circumstances might they have come to an understanding? What prevents them from mutual appreciation? How do their personalities differ?
7. LARP Is a popular term, it means “Live Action Role Play,” in which participants assume or improvise characters and interact with each other in real time in an agreed upon fictional setting. How does this differ from the games that Andrew and Milo play with each other? What rules should be established in role playing games? When and how are each of these rules broken through the course of the play *Sleuth*?
8. What does this play have to say about women in society? How is each female character (who we never get to meet) represented? How is this relevant to the characters of Andrew and Milo?
9. Why does the play end the way it does? Does it end at the right time, or should it have gone on longer? Describe how the ending could have turned out differently, to the satisfaction of all parties.

VOCABULARY

1. Disparaging - meant to belittle the value or importance of someone or something
2. Pendulous - hanging down loosely, swinging freely
3. Ratiocination - the formation of judgments by a process of logic
4. Fouette - a ballet move in which there is a quick whipping movement of the leg
5. Denouement - the final part of a story in which the strands of the plot are drawn together and everything is explained or resolved
6. Squalid - extremely dirty and unpleasant from neglect or poverty
7. Gentry - people of good social position, just below the nobility
8. Virulently - bitterly hostile, full of malice
9. Agnostic - a person who claims neither faith nor disbelief in God and holds that such a fact is unknowable
10. Hebdomadal - weekly
11. Rhapsodizing - speaking or writing about someone or something with great enthusiasm and delight
12. Bridling - showing one's resentment or anger
13. Trollop - a woman perceived as sexually disreputable or promiscuous
14. Mewing - a high pitched noise
15. Castrated - having the testes or ovaries removed or deprived of power, vitality or vigor
16. Unguents - oily substances similar to an ointment, often used to treat wounds, burns, rashes, abrasions and other topical injuries
17. Vapid - offering nothing that is stimulating, lively or challenging
18. Ecclesiastical - of or relating to the Christian church or its clergy
19. Cowled - hooded or covered
20. Scruples - feelings of doubt or hesitation based on the morality of a course of action
21. Larceny - theft of personal property
22. Vinous - resembling or associated with wine
23. Alacrity - brisk and cheerful readiness
24. Prestidigitation - magic tricks performed as entertainment
25. Artifice - clever or artful skill; a trick or artful stratagem

IF YOU HAVE MORE TIME WITH THE PLAY

SPOILER ALERT— FOR AFTER ATTENDING THE PLAY!

Ideas to consider about this play – discussion or essay topics for the class.

1. Divide students into two sides – pro and con. Assign the debate topic: *Resolved – Andrew Wyke is justified in confronting and baiting Milo Tindle since Tindle has had an affair with Andrew’s wife. All’s fair in love and war.* Andrew actually states that he was “upholding the sanctity of marriage.” Do you believe this argument? Why or why not?
2. Some groups have “initiation ceremonies” for new members. Some of these “ceremonies” include hazing or humiliation of the new recruit. Andrew puts it this way, “I took a leaf out of the book of certain 18th century secret societies. They knew to a nicety how to determine whether someone was worthy to be included amongst their number and also how to humiliate him in the process. I refer of course to the initiation ceremony.” Consider groups you know of that do this. Is this type of system ever OK? Do certain rules and formulas for restraint make it viable?
3. In the end, Andrew kills Milo just as the police arrive to find him with the “smoking gun.” What is your opinion of this ending? Justify your ideas with evidence from the play.
4. This play is highly awarded, receiving a Tony for Best Play, Edgar Awards from the Mystery Writers of America, and Best Screenplay from the Oscars. Now that you’ve seen it, would you agree that it deserves these accolades?
5. Were you surprised by the ending of *Sleuth*? Why/why not?

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.5 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.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1.A Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1.B Work with peers to promote civil, democratic discussions and decision-making, set clear goals and deadlines, and establish individual roles as needed.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1.D Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives; synthesize comments, claims, and evidence made on all sides of an issue; resolve contradictions when possible; and determine what additional information or research is required to deepen the investigation or complete the task.

WRITING/PRESENTATION PROMPTS

SPOILER ALERT— FOR AFTER ATTENDING THE PLAY!

1. Andrew Wyke provokes Milo with suggestions about his lack of ability to keep Marguerite in the style she's accustomed to. What evidence shows that he's probably right about this. How does this heighten the plot?
2. Wyke gets Milo to wear a clown suit while performing the robbery. How does this amplify the characters of the two men? Give other examples of this in the play. Which of the men is more sympathetic? Explain.
3. "Give a clown your finger and he'll take your hand." Wyke says this to Milo. What does he mean? Does Milo understand? What is ironic about the situation?
4. Wyke constantly uses language as humor as well as intellectual intimidation. Examples are:

Milo: How much sacking do you want?

Andrew: A decent bit, I think, a few chairs on their backs, some china ornaments put to the sword. You know – convincing but not Carthaginian.

Andrew: Oh, it's coming along nicely, but it still doesn't look right. Come on, let's see what accident does to artifice.

-and-

Doppler: Are you trying to tell me because of your indifference to your wife, you had no motive for killing Mr. Tindle?

Andrew: I'm simply saying that in common with most men I want to have my cookie and ignore it.

What does this use of language tell you about Andrew Wyke? Justify your ideas with clear evidence and analysis to support your thinking.

5. Compare this play with a classic mystery story such as *Murders in the Rue Morgue* by Edgar Allen Poe or *Ten Little Indians* by Agatha Christie. These classic stories begin with disarray, confusion and murder which are followed through by the detective until justice is served and chaos relieved. Good wins and evil is punished. How is this play different from this formula? Do you find it to be more or less satisfying when the line between good and evil is blurred?

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.2 Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.5

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.

POST-SHOW ACTIVITIES

SPOILER ALERT— FOR AFTER ATTENDING THE PLAY!

IMPROVISATION EXERCISE

There is much information given in the play *Sleuth* that we hear about but never see on stage. In order to study their characters, actors sometimes do “improv” work with these kinds of scenes.

Below are some suggestions for two-person scenes, not in the play, that students might enjoy improvising.

1. The conversation between Marguerite and Andrew when he learns she’s had an affair with Milo.
2. A conversation between Marguerite and Andrew showing the state of their marriage relationship.
3. A conversation between Milo and Marguerite making plans for Marguerite’s escape from Andrew.
4. The conversation between Milo and Sgt. Tarrant when he explained about what happened leading up to — and including — Andrew’s shooting him with the blank bullet.
5. The police arriving to find Andrew holding the gun over Milo’s body at the end.

STUDENT PLAY REVIEW

We would love to know what your students thought of our production of *Sleuth*. Please encourage them to write and send us copies of their play reviews (see pages 18-19 for more instruction and a sample review).

Before students write their reviews, talk about the role of a critic, perhaps giving an example from a local newspaper. Remind students that the point of a review is not merely to describe the play and tell the story, but to offer opinions on the production. You may wish to offer the following as a guideline for student play reviews.

Some play and film reviews offer a rating in the form of a number of stars (*), with one star representing a weak rating and five stars representing a perfect one. Assign your review of *Sleuth* the number of stars you think it merits.

Write a headline for your review that sums up your thoughts and feelings about the production. In your opening statement, state your expectations before you attended the performance and whether or not they were met.

Follow with comments on some or all of the following play elements:

style, story and themes of the play	conflicts in the play	direction
acting	scenic design	costume design
make-up design (if applicable)	lighting and sound	

In your closing statement, include any final thoughts on the production and whether you would recommend it.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1.D Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views and understanding and make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented.

HOW TO WRITE A REVIEW

MORE HOW AND LESS WHAT

A theater review is not a book review, you do not need to summarize what happens. Provide the necessary background so the reader knows the name of the play and the basics of what kind of play it is, and then move into your commentary. You do not need to explain WHAT the play is, instead write about HOW successfully it was presented.

THE ACTOR NOT THE CHARACTER

You can disapprove of the decisions a character makes, but how well did the ACTOR perform the role? Was their behavior appropriate to the part as written? Feel free to share your opinions, comparing or contrasting their work with other actors with whom you are familiar.

WHAT IS DIRECTION?

Maybe you have heard of a “director” in theater or film, but do you know what they do? It is not a director’s job to tell the actors how to say every line, but they are the person responsible for creating the general mood and concept for the production. What was your impression of the production as a whole? Was it too funny for a serious play? Or not amusing enough for a comic play? Use words to reflect back to the director how successful the production is as a whole.

DON’T FORGET THE DESIGN

The set you see and the sounds you hear are also unique to this one production of this play. Describe what you see and hear, but also be sure to make clear how successful these designs are in telling the story of the play.

IN CONCLUSION ...

While it is not necessary to give a “thumbs up” or “thumbs down” your concluding sentence should summarize your impression of the production as a whole.

THEATER REVIEWS IN THE NEW MEDIA

Reviews in news websites may be 1000 words, they may be as brief as 300 words. Can you write a one-page review? Can you write a 100 word review, to post on Facebook? Do you think you could create a 140-character review that sums up the production for posting on Twitter?

A sample review written by a student follows this page.

A SAMPLE REVIEW WRITTEN BY A STUDENT

"Gambit": More Poetry Than History — Mark Wood

If Aristotle was correct when he said that poetry “is a higher thing than history,” then “Royal Gambit,” which opened Friday night at Pentacle Theater, is, I suppose, on the right track.

For those who were expecting a representational treatment of the life of England’s Henry VIII, “Royal Gambit” was a shock, if not a disappointment. Those who sought poetry got it, although of a very dogmatic and simplistic sort.

This unusual, highly presentational play by Hermann Gressieker, directed by Ed Classen, is an indictment of modern man as a ruthless opportunist. The Tudor king is a representative of a rationalizing, shifty society which has become “superior to the highest” while “wallowing in the depths.”

As Henry uses the banners of “reason” and “humanism” to obtain then dispose of his six wives, so modern man uses them for his own pleasure and glorification, uses them to wage war in the name of peace, to hate in the name of love.

Such is the grim theme pleasingly presented by a company of seven actors, who performed their roles energetically, if unevenly. The presentational acting style employed here is difficult to perfect. It should be theatrical, yet believable; aimed at the head, yet acceptable to the heart.

Louise Larsen was a standout as Catherine of Aragon, Largely because she utilized this presentational approach and was not afraid of open theatricality. Her flamboyant stage presence, which needed to be toned down in her recent role in “Last of the Red Hot Lovers,” found full vent here.

Henry's fourth wife, Anne of Cleves, was portrayed by Gale Rieder, who quickly became an audience favorite. Her thick accent was letter-perfect and her direct humor was a welcome contrast to the bitter satire of the rest of the play.

The other four actresses—Kathy Stratton, Marcia Engblom, Polly Bond and Patricia Sloan—each had their exceptional moments. However, they generally seemed tied to more conventional, representational acting styles.

Ron Fox was superb in the role of Henry. Tuxedoed, leering with the look of a demonic marionette, the vacant stare of a deranged orator, Fox dominated the stage fully, commanding both in voice and stage presence.

The technical elements of the play were more than adequate. Musical accompaniment was appropriately sparse and simple.

At one point the play, King Henry roared, “In my realm I decide what constitutes tragedy!” Ironically, Gressieker strips modern man not only of his possibilities as a tragic figure worthy of any sympathies at all. In the final moments of the play, Catherine of Aragon announces the death of modern man and the birth of a new era. It is a scene of great hope, but it is not as profound as her earlier pronouncement to her husband that “the ways of the world are not so cut and dried!”

For my own part, I wish that “Royal Gambit’s” statement were not so cut and dried. By making man out to be such a simple monster the play defeats its own purposes and turns poetry into scathing dogma, which is probably even less interesting than, say, history.

<http://faculty.chemeketa.edu/jrupert3/eng105/Annrev.html>

COMPREHENSION QUIZ

1. Why does Andrew Wyke invite Milo Tindle to his home?
 - a. for a friendly drink
 - b. to get to know his new neighbor
 - c. go play a game of chess
 - d. to ask him about Milo's affair with Andrew's wife
2. What evidence of Andrew's interest in games is indicated by the set?
 - a. A football jersey hangs on the wall
 - b. games of all kinds are set around the room
 - c. a dart board hangs by the window
 - d. the room is decorated like a child's playroom
3. What is Andrew's source of income?
 - a. he is famous author of detective novels
 - b. he has old money from his family
 - c. he is a wealthy banker
 - d. he is a famous stage performer
4. What does Milo do for a living?
 - a. he is an insurance salesman
 - b. he works in a factory
 - c. he runs a small travel agency
 - d. he has old money in his family
5. Who is Marguerite?
 - a. the ex-wife of Andrew
 - b. Milo's lover
 - c. Andrew's wife
 - d. both b & c are correct
6. Who is Tēa?
 - a. Andrew's mistress
 - b. Milo's former mistress
 - c. Andrew's housekeeper
 - d. Andrew's wife
7. How is Milo dressed when he "burglarizes" Andrew's home?
 - a. a typical burglar's dark clothing
 - b. as Grock, a clown
 - c. as a police detective
 - d. in the clothes he wore to visit Andrew
8. Why does Milo choose to use the name Doppler for the detective he impersonates at the beginning of Act II?
 - a. it is a play on the word "plodder"
 - b. it's connected to the German word meaning "double"
 - c. no particular reason
 - d. both a and b are correct
9. What does Milo say he's done to Tēa?
 - a. killed her
 - b. has been her long-time lover
 - c. kidnapped her
 - d. hired her away from Andrew
10. According to Milo what does Tēa say about her relationship with Andrew?
 - a. that she had tried to get him to divorce Marguerite
 - b. she hated him
 - c. that they hadn't been lovers in over a year
 - d. she had wanted to end it

Short answer:

11. Do you believe that Andrew loves his wife? Why / why not?

12. Who wins this game: Andrew or Milo? Explain your reasoning.

ANSWER KEY

1. D 2. B 3. A 4. C 5. D 6. A 7. B 8. D 9. A 10. C

11. Opinion – possible evidence:

he has invited Milo over to play an elaborate game instead of trying to win her back honestly

he says “I want to have my cookie and ignore it”

he has a mistress

he is openly contemptuous of her

12. Opinion – possible evidence:

Milo is dead at the end

Andrew is caught “red-handed” by the police

Both men have been humiliated and diminished by the end of the play – Andrew has been shown to be impotent and unloved, Milo to be vulnerable due to his lesser income and has been having an affair with another man’s wife. Neither man comes off very well.

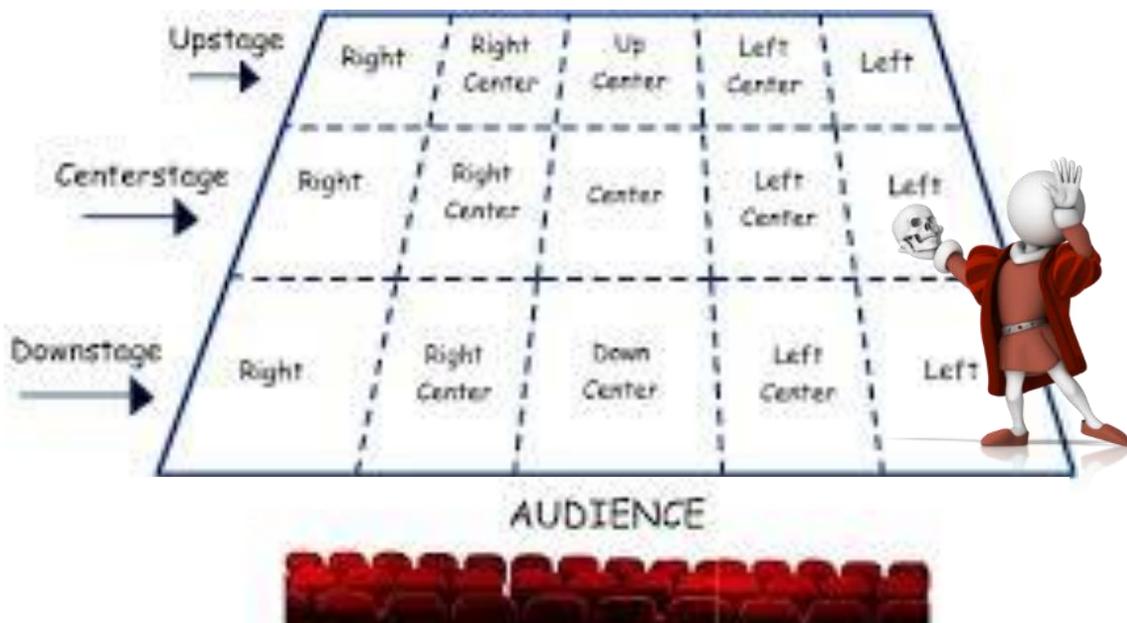
A BRIEF GLOSSARY OF THEATER TERMS

Apron	The part of the stage in front of the curtain
Auditorium or House	Where the audience sits
Beam Spread	The area a single light covers
Blackout	Turning off all the lights in the theatre at once
Board	The control center for lights, sound, or both
Book (The)	A copy of the script containing all notes and blocking
Box Office	Where the audience buys tickets
Box Set	A set in a proscenium with three walls
Call	The time certain members of the production need to be at the theatre
Cheat	When an actor takes a realistic action and modifies it for the audience to see
Cloth	Scenery painted on fabric
Cue	A line or action that immediately leads to another action by the actor (for them to speak) designer or stage manager (to change the lights or sound)
Curtain Call	The bows at the end of the show
Dimmer	Equipment that controls the brightness of a light
Director	The creative head of a production. They create a vision for the show and work with actors, designers, and crew to bring that vision to life
Flat	A frame covered with canvas, cardboard, or some other light material which is then painted as part of the set
Floodlight	A light that has a wide unfocused beam covering most of the stage
Fly	A system used to raise set backgrounds, set pieces, or potentially actors
Follow-spot	A spotlight that can follow an actor as they move across around the stage
Footlights	Floodlights on the floor at the front of the stage.
Gel	A piece of plastic placed over the light to change its color
Greenroom	A room where the company can relax, eat, or potentially watch the show if a TV and a camera has been rigged
Notes	The director's notes on the performance or rehearsal
Pit	An area between the stage and the audience where an orchestra can sit (typically below audience level)
Producer	The person responsible for all logistical and financial aspects of a production (as opposed to the creative head, the director).
Properties or Props	Items used by actors in a show (such as swords, plates, watches, etc.)
Proscenium	A type of stage defined by a proscenium arch. Proscenium theatres typically

distinctly separate the audience and stage by a window (defined by the proscenium arch). The stage typically will not go far past the proscenium arch (the Ohio Theatre, for example).

Raked Stage	A stage that is angled (upstage is the top of the hill and downstage the bottom) so that the audience can see the action more clearly
Set	The scenery used in a scene or throughout the play
Set Dressing	Parts of the set that don't serve a practical function but make the set look realistic.
Spotlight	A type of light that is focused so that it can light a very specific area
Strike	Taking apart and removing a set from the theatre
Thrust	A stage that goes beyond the proscenium arch so that the audience is sitting on three sides of the set - in front, and on either side (the Hanna Theatre, for example).
Tracks	The rails on which curtains (tabs) run.
Trap	A hole in the stage covered by a door where actors or set pieces can exit or enter
Understudy	An actor who learns all of the lines and blocking of another actor (typically one of the actors in a lead role) who can perform in case the main actor cannot go on
Upstage	The rear of the stage
Wings	The sides of the stage typically blocked off by curtains where actors and crew can stand and wait for their cues

STAGE DIRECTIONS





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Charles Fee, Producing Artistic Director

The mission of Great Lakes Theater, through its main stage productions and its education programs, is to bring the pleasure, power and relevance of classic theater to the widest possible audience.

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Classic theater holds the capacity to illuminate truth and enduring values, celebrate and challenge human nature and actions, revel in eloquent language, preserve the traditions of diverse cultures and generate communal spirit. On its mainstage and through its education program, the company seeks to create visceral, immediate experiences for participants, asserting theater's historic role as a vehicle for advancing the common good, and helping people make the most joyful and meaningful connections between classic plays and their own lives. This Cleveland theater company wishes to share such vibrant experiences with people across all age groups, creeds, racial and ethnic groups and socio-economic backgrounds.

The company's commitment to classic theater is magnified in the educational programs (for both adults and students) that surround its productions. Great Lakes Theater has a strong presence in area schools, offering an annual series of student matinees and, for almost 40 years, an acclaimed school residency program led by teams of specially trained actor-teachers.

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