



Musical Oklahoma! Rodgers & Hammerstein: Exploring Themes and Contexts

Student Name: _____

Class: _____

Due Date: _____

Introduction to Musical Oklahoma!

Welcome to this comprehensive homework sheet on Musical Oklahoma! by Rodgers and Hammerstein. This activity is designed to help you explore the themes and contexts of this iconic musical. Please complete the following questions and activities to deepen your understanding of Oklahoma!'s significance and relevance.

Key Concepts:

- Historical context of Oklahoma!
- Themes in Oklahoma!: love, community, and the American Dream
- Character analysis: Curly, Laurey, and Jud
- Musical elements: choreography, song, and innovation

Historical Context of Oklahoma!

Oklahoma! premiered in 1943, during the midst of World War II. The historical context of the time had a significant influence on the themes and production of the musical. Research and list three key social, political, and cultural factors of the 1940s that impacted the musical.

Task 1: Research and list three key social, political, and cultural factors of the 1940s that impacted the musical.

Questions:

1. What year did Oklahoma! premiere, and what significant event was happening in the world at that time?
2. How did the historical context of World War II influence the themes and production of Oklahoma!?

Themes in Oklahoma!

The three major themes in Oklahoma! are love, community, and the American Dream. Analyze how the theme of love is portrayed through the characters of Curly and Laurey. Use examples from the musical to support your argument.

Task 2: Analyze how the theme of love is portrayed through the characters of Curly and Laurey.

Questions:

1. Identify and describe the three major themes in Oklahoma!: love, community, and the American Dream.
2. Analyze how the theme of community is reflected in the interactions among the townspeople.

Character Analysis

Choose a main character from Oklahoma! (e.g., Curly, Laurey, Jud) and analyze their role in the musical. How do their actions and decisions reflect the themes? Describe the character development of Jud Fry throughout the musical.

Task 3: Choose a main character from Oklahoma! and analyze their role in the musical.

Questions:

1. Compare and contrast the characters of Curly and Jud. How do their differences reflect the themes of good vs. evil and the American Dream?
2. Describe the character development of Jud Fry throughout the musical. What motivates him, and how does his story relate to the themes?

Musical Elements

Discuss the significance of the song "Oh, What a Beautiful Mornin'" in Oklahoma!. How does it introduce the theme of the American Dream? Analyze the choreography in Oklahoma!. How does it contribute to the storytelling and thematic expression?

Task 4: Discuss the significance of the song "Oh, What a Beautiful Mornin'" in Oklahoma!.

Questions:

1. Research and list three innovative musical elements introduced by Rodgers and Hammerstein in Oklahoma!.
2. Analyze the choreography in Oklahoma!. How does it contribute to the storytelling and thematic expression?

Impact on Musical Theater

Describe the impact of Oklahoma! on the development of musical theater. How did it influence future musicals? Research and list three musicals that were influenced by Oklahoma!. Discuss how they reflect similar themes or elements.

Task 5: Describe the impact of Oklahoma! on the development of musical theater.

Questions:

1. Discuss the enduring legacy of Oklahoma! in contemporary musical theater.
2. Research and list three musicals that were influenced by Oklahoma!. Discuss how they reflect similar themes or elements.

Creative Project

Choose one of the following creative projects to demonstrate your understanding of Oklahoma!'s themes and contexts:

Task 6: Choose one of the following creative projects:

1. Write a short script for a modern adaptation of a scene from Oklahoma!.
2. Compose a song inspired by the themes of Oklahoma!.
3. Create a visual art piece (e.g., painting, drawing, collage) that represents the themes of Oklahoma!.

Reflection and Discussion

Reflect on what you have learned about Oklahoma!. How has your understanding of the musical's themes and contexts deepened? Discuss with a partner or in a small group: How do the themes of Oklahoma! relate to contemporary issues or societal values?

Task 7: Reflect on what you have learned about Oklahoma!.

Questions:

1. Write a short essay (approx. 250 words) on the significance of Oklahoma! in American cultural history.
2. Discuss with a partner or in a small group: How do the themes of Oklahoma! relate to contemporary issues or societal values?

Quiz

Complete the following quiz to test your knowledge of Oklahoma!:

Task 8: Complete the following quiz:

1. Who composed the music for Oklahoma!?
2. What is the name of the female lead character in Oklahoma!?
3. In what year did Oklahoma! premiere on Broadway?

Extension Activity

Research and write a short report (approx. 250 words) on one of the following topics:

Task 9: Research and write a short report on one of the following topics:

1. The collaboration between Rodgers and Hammerstein: How did their partnership contribute to the success of Oklahoma!?
2. The historical context of Oklahoma!: How did the social, political, and cultural climate of the 1940s influence the musical's themes and production?
3. The impact of Oklahoma! on contemporary musical theater: How have subsequent musicals been influenced by Oklahoma!'s innovative elements?

Conclusion

Congratulations on completing this comprehensive homework sheet on Musical Oklahoma! by Rodgers and Hammerstein. We hope that this activity has deepened your understanding and appreciation of this iconic musical. Remember to submit your work and participate in class discussions to further explore the themes and contexts of Oklahoma!.

Advanced Concepts

As we delve deeper into the world of Oklahoma!, it's essential to explore the advanced concepts that make this musical a masterpiece. One of the key elements is the use of symbolism, particularly in the character of Jud Fry. Analyze how Jud's character represents the darker aspects of human nature and how his storyline serves as a cautionary tale.

Case Study: Jud Fry's Character Analysis

Jud Fry's character is a complex and multifaceted one, representing the struggles of the working class and the dangers of unchecked emotions. Examine how his character arc serves as a commentary on the societal issues of the time, such as poverty, loneliness, and the American Dream.

Example: The Dream Ballet Sequence

The dream ballet sequence in Oklahoma! is a prime example of how the musical uses advanced concepts to convey themes and emotions. This iconic scene showcases the use of dance, music, and symbolism to represent the inner turmoil and desires of the characters. Discuss how this sequence contributes to the overall narrative and character development.

Musical Elements: A Deeper Dive

The music in Oklahoma! is a character in its own right, driving the plot and revealing the characters' emotions. Examine the use of leitmotifs, harmony, and rhythm in the musical, and how these elements contribute to the overall mood and atmosphere. Analyze the iconic songs, such as "Oh, What a Beautiful Mornin'" and "People Will Say We're in Love," and discuss their significance in the context of the story.

Task: Musical Analysis

Choose a song from Oklahoma! and analyze its musical elements, such as melody, harmony, and rhythm. Discuss how these elements contribute to the song's meaning and emotional impact, and how they relate to the overall themes of the musical.

Practice Questions

1. What is the significance of the song "Surrey with the Fringe on Top" in Oklahoma!?
2. How does the music in Oklahoma! reflect the characters' emotions and relationships?
3. Discuss the use of harmony and rhythm in the musical, and how these elements contribute to the overall mood and atmosphere.

Historical Context: A Broader Perspective

To fully appreciate the significance of Oklahoma!, it's essential to consider the broader historical context in which it was created. Examine the social, cultural, and economic factors that influenced the musical, such as the Great Depression, World War II, and the rise of suburbanization. Discuss how these factors shaped the themes, characters, and music of Oklahoma!, and how the musical reflects the anxieties and aspirations of the American people during this time period.

Case Study: The Impact of World War II on Oklahoma!

World War II had a profound impact on the creation and reception of Oklahoma!. Examine how the war influenced the musical's themes, characters, and music, and how the show served as a morale-booster for American troops and civilians. Discuss the significance of Oklahoma! as a cultural artifact of the wartime era, and how it reflects the values and ideals of American society during this time period.

Example: The Role of Women in Oklahoma!

The female characters in Oklahoma! play a crucial role in the musical, representing the changing roles and expectations of women during the 1940s. Analyze the characters of Laurey, Ado Annie, and Aunt Eller, and discuss how they reflect the social and cultural norms of the time. Examine how the musical portrays the limitations and opportunities faced by women during this era, and how the characters' experiences relate to the broader themes of the show.

Cultural Significance: A Lasting Legacy

Oklahoma! has had a lasting impact on American culture, influencing generations of musical theater enthusiasts and creators. Examine the musical's cultural significance, including its impact on the development of the American musical, its influence on subsequent musicals and films, and its enduring popularity. Discuss how Oklahoma! reflects and challenges American values and ideals, and how it continues to resonate with audiences today.

Task: Cultural Analysis

Choose a contemporary musical or film that was influenced by Oklahoma!, and analyze its cultural significance. Discuss how the work reflects or challenges American values and ideals, and how it relates to the broader themes and cultural context of Oklahoma!.

Practice Questions

1. What is the significance of Oklahoma! in the development of the American musical?
2. How has Oklahoma! influenced subsequent musicals and films?
3. Discuss the enduring popularity of Oklahoma!, and how it continues to resonate with audiences today.

Conclusion: A Final Reflection

In conclusion, Oklahoma! is a rich and complex musical that offers a unique window into the American experience. Through its themes, characters, music, and cultural context, Oklahoma! reflects and challenges American values and ideals, providing a lasting legacy that continues to inspire and influence new generations of artists and audiences. Reflect on your journey through this comprehensive homework sheet, and discuss how your understanding and appreciation of Oklahoma! have deepened.

Reflection

Take a moment to reflect on your learning experience. What were some of the key takeaways from this homework sheet? How has your understanding of Oklahoma! evolved, and what new insights have you gained? Discuss how you can apply these insights to your future studies and creative pursuits.

Final Project: A Creative Expression

For your final project, choose a creative expression that showcases your understanding and appreciation of Oklahoma!. This could be a short script, a song, a visual art piece, or any other form of creative expression that resonates with you. Discuss how your project reflects the themes, characters, and cultural context of Oklahoma!, and how it demonstrates your mastery of the subject matter.

Project Guidelines

Your final project should be a creative expression that showcases your understanding and appreciation of Oklahoma!. Be sure to include a brief introduction that explains the context and significance of your project, as well as a conclusion that reflects on your learning experience and the insights you have gained.

Appendix: Additional Resources

For further study and exploration, consult the following additional resources:

Resources

- Books: "The Complete Book of the American Musical Theater" by David Ewen, "The Oxford Handbook of the American Musical" by Raymond Knapp
- Articles: "The Impact of Oklahoma! on the American Musical" by John Bush Jones, "The Cultural Significance of Oklahoma!" by Stacy Wolf
- Online Resources: The Rodgers and Hammerstein Organization, The Library of Congress



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