

WICKED

ACTIVE LEARNING

Secondary Drama KS3



Created by Alison Warren on behalf of Open Drama UK.

Introduction:

Before your visit to see **Wicked**, London's award-winning stage musical, introduce your learners to the show, its themes, and the characters within.

If you haven't taught a practical Drama session before, don't worry! These instructions are straightforward and easy to follow and should mean everyone involved has a lot of fun along the way. These activities and lessons are best carried out in a Drama studio or school hall.

We encourage schools to use this pack in conjunction with the **Wicked Active Learning Production Images** and **Script Extracts** packs.

Learning Outcomes

1. Students will experiment practically with themes and characters from **Wicked**
2. Students will create a physical theatre response to the locations within **Wicked**
3. Students will learn a range of vocal techniques and apply them to text from **Wicked**

Lesson 1 – What is this feeling?

Warm up – Oz Game, a Wicked group version of Rock, Paper, Scissors

Ask the group to divide themselves into two groups and stand facing each other down the centre of the room.

Start by teaching them 3 moves and lines. You then need to teach them 3 moves and lines.

GOOD WITCH (GLINDA) – standing upright with hands flung up in the air, and when they do this, they say, “That’s because I’m so nice!”.

WICKED WITCH (ELPHABA) – hunched over, hands like claws one hand in front of the other, casting a spell. When they do this, they say “It’s my talent”.

HANDSOME PRINCE (FIYERO) – spin round on the spot and end with a little bow, saying “Dancing through life”.



Explain each group is going to go into a huddle, where they will choose which one of the 3 poses and lines the whole group is going to do together. Then they come to the centre of the room and TOGETHER say “Up (reaching to the ceiling) Down (Touching the ground) 1, 2, 3” and then they will do their character action.

It works like this: FIYERO beats ELPHABA. ELPHABA beats GLINDA. GLINDA beats FIYERO. When one side wins, they score a point. Play best of three or for however long works for you in the space. Doing the same thing is a draw and no one score points.

When you've played the game:

- Discuss with the group the idea of a good witch and a bad witch to introduce the themes of the show and what it means to be Wicked.
- What examples from film, stage and literature can your class give in relation to good and bad witches?
- What personality traits do they think each should have?

Stereotypes and Wickedness

1. Create a still image in pairs

Ask your class to get into pairs and ask them to create a still image of a good witch and a bad witch. See what they have come up with and ask for more exaggeration, especially with faces.

Now ask them to change into their partner's image. So, the good witch becomes bad, and so on.

Discuss what might make this happen.

2. Create a still image using the script extracts

Ask the pairs to join with another group to make a 4. (If you've got odd numbers, split them up to make groups of 5).

Give each group a line from one of the songs from the show (listed below) and give them 3 minutes to create an image that represents that line. Everyone must be involved in the image.

The interpretations will vary and will have some dependence on whether they know the show or not. Explore the results and discuss the decisions.

- It just shows that when you're wicked, you're left only on your own.
- There's a strange exhilaration in such total detestation.
- What's the most swankified place in town?
- When someone needs a makeover, I simply have to take over.
- I think everyone deserves a chance to fly.
- Like some terrible green blizzard, throughout the land she flies.
- No good deed goes unpunished.
- No one mourns the wicked.

Extension task

Ask the group to bring their images to life for 30 seconds. They should include movement, speech, sound effects, maybe even singing?

Discuss how they think their stories might develop.

If you're working with a GCSE group...

These might form the starting point for some devised work around the themes of **Wicked**.

The anti-bullying pack on **Wicked Active Learning** has some good resources here.

Lesson 2 – ‘Oh I’ve always wanted to see the Emerald City’ – Physical theatre

Warm up activity – Make me a...

Ask the group to find a space on their own and to start walking around independently.

When you call a number out, the learners need to get into groups of that size, as quickly as possible. They can demonstrate they’ve completed this task by sitting on the floor with their group. If there are people who don’t fit because of odd numbers, it doesn’t matter. This is not a knockout activity.

When you want to give them the next set of instructions, ask them to get into a group of 1. See how long it takes them!

Then explain you’re going to give them two things to do. First, you give them a number and as before, this corresponds to the number of people who will be in their group. The second instruction to listen out for is an object. In their group the class will create their version of the aforementioned object out of the people in their group. Encourage your class to think as 3D as possible. Encourage 3D thinking as much as possible.

Start simple e.g. Group of 4, triangle; but then get creative. Machines like washing machines and toilets allow for the opportunity to add sound and movement.

Finally ask them to create a wizard’s castle – group of 8-10

Explain what they have been doing is PHYSICAL THEATRE, which is theatre where the story or scene is conveyed using physical skills such as body language, facial expressions, and movement. People can often use their bodies to create objects, settings, and furniture.

Using only their bodies, as a group create the following (including structure, objects, furniture)...

1. The entrance gates of the Emerald City
2. A building as tall as a Quoxwood tree
3. The Grand Museum of the Emerald City – should include exhibits and tourists
4. The Wizard’s throne room.

Learners should be encouraged to add some movement and sound of objects and furniture, but no dialogue.

Ask the group to practice performing them as one continuous piece. Then they should place it in the frame of a travelogue. This should make the city sound really exciting, the kind of place that Glinda and Elphaba have always wanted to go.

(There are lots of examples of these on YouTube if you think the group won't know what a travelogue is).

Each group should share their travelogues and discuss if they would want to visit the Emerald City.

Extension task

If you have a really strong group, or a smaller group you could explore doing the performance as a promenade performance instead of the travelogue. One group will lead the other (or a chosen few) through the Emerald City on a walking tour whilst the group creates the highlights of the city. You may wish to use the lyrics from *One Short Day* to inspire this 'There are wonders like I've never seen, it's all grand and it's all green'.

In a **promenade performance**, the audience move to follow the performers around the space. Performances are often site-specific in interesting and unusual locations, even outdoors, rather than in purpose-built theatre spaces.

Lesson 3 – One Short Day – Choral speaking

Warm up – HA!

To get everyone warmed up and their voices raised. The group stands in a circle with the leader, with arms hung loosely by their sides. Leader, without warning, will step forward on one foot with arms outstretched and shout “HA!”.

Explain that the idea is for the rest of the group to do the same thing at the same time. Try it a few times, it takes practice and concentration, but it is possible!

1. Exploring Unison

Explain to the group that they are going to explore the lyrics of the song *One Short Day* by using choral speaking.

There is a variety of ways for a group to recite/deliver literature including poems, speech, and prose. Some techniques include whole group delivery at the same time, and some include individuals and small groups.

Start by delivering the lyrics of the opening of *One Short Day*. Everyone should deliver the lines at the same time.

*One short day
In the Emerald City
One short day
Full of so much to do
Ev'ry way
That you look in the city
There's something exquisite
You'll want to visit
Before the day's through*

This is called **UNISON** and calls for the whole group to read the material together. Additional sound effects might be incorporated.

2. Refrain, Cannon and Antiphon

Now to try some other techniques with the next section of the song lyrics. Divide the group into smaller groups of 6 or 7 to explore these.

*Who's the mage
Whose major itinerary
Is making all Oz merrier?
Who's the sage
Who's sagely sailed in to save our posteriors?
Whose enthuse for hot air ballooning
Has all of Oz honeymooning?
Woo - oo -oo
Wizn't he wonderful?
(Our wonderful Wizard!)*

REFRAIN is one of the most common forms of choral speaking. One person reads the main portion of the text, while the rest of the class joins in the most important bit for emphasis.

CANNON is a type of choral reading where individuals read specific lines in appropriate places throughout the group activity.

ANTIPHON calls for the group to be divided into two or more, with each group being responsible for a certain part of the selection.

Extension task

Find a way to present your complete version of *One Short Day* using physical theatre (from the last session) and choral speaking skills. There will be actions to go with the words. Very often it is easier to make decisions about one first and then the other and bring them together.

The groups can only use the words in the lyrics and must use at least two different types of choral speaking during their performance. Everyone should be involved.

Reflect as a class:

- What worked well? What could be even better next time?
- What type of choral speaking did they use?
- Was it effective? How?
- How did they use physical skills to convey a sense of the excitement of being in the Emerald City?
- Was it effective? How?

Resources

One Short Day Lyrics

Excerpt 1

*One short day
In the Emerald City
One short day
Full of so much to do
Ev'ry way
That you look in the city
There's something exquisite
You'll want to visit
Before the day's through*

Excerpt 2

*Who's the mage
Whose major itinerary
Is making all Oz merrier?
Who's the sage
Who's sagely sailed in to save our posteriors?
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Has all of Oz honeymooning?
Woo - oo -oo
Wizn't he wonderful?
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