



BIG MUSICAL
BIG COMEDY
BIG ~~HAIR!~~
LESSONS!



hairspray

• Education Kit •



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Based on the Field Guide for Teachers produced by StageNOTES, Camp Broadway LLC, New York, for the original Broadway production (2002). Adapted for the West End production by Stage Entertainment.

USING THE EDUCATION KIT

This Education Kit has drawn from both the StageNOTES original and the Stage Entertainment (UK) adaptation, to assist teachers who are introducing their students to the Australian production of Hairspray.

By using the Kit, students will see how Hairspray offers them the opportunity to develop their understanding of national identities and diversity (Civics & Citizenship), support their reading, writing, speaking and listening skills (English), explore issues related to personal identities (Health & Physical Education: Development of Identity) and develop their creative skills (The Arts: Drama).

Each subject area is supported by a series of activities inspired by and thematically linked to the musical Hairspray. The content is aimed to support teaching Secondary School students, Years 10 - 12, and can be adapted for Years 7 - 9. Each Activity includes an excerpt from the script of Hairspray; a discussion topic; a writing exercise; and a practical class activity.

We hope that teachers and students alike enjoy using this Education Kit, and that it will help maximise students' experience of Hairspray.



A SYNOPSIS OF HAIRSPRAY

Hairspray opens in June 1962, as plus-sized teenager Tracy Turnblad wakes up ready for another day ("Good Morning, Baltimore"). After school, she and her best friend, Penny Pingleton, watch The Corny Collins Show, starring "The Nicest Kids in Town". While Tracy and Penny sigh over handsome Link Larkin, Tracy's mother, Edna, slaves away at her ironing board. Penny's mother, Prudy Pingleton, expresses her disapproval of teenagers dancing to "coloured music". Edna points out that it "ain't coloured. The TV's black and white."

In the studio, show producer, Velma Von Tussle, instructs her teen-queen daughter and Link's girlfriend, Amber, to hog the camera, while berating Corny, the host, about including songs with "that Detroit sound". She reminds him that they have to steer the kids "in the white direction". On air, Corny announces auditions for an opening on the show, as well as the national broadcast of the forthcoming "Miss Teenage Hairspray 1962" contest.

Tracy wants to audition for the show. Edna is skeptical, fearing Tracy's size will lead to rejection, but her father, Wilbur (owner of the Har-de-Har Hut Joke Shop), tells Tracy to follow her dream.

While Edna tells Tracy to forget about going to the audition, Velma and Prudy argue with their daughters, Amber and Penny. The girls stubbornly resist their mothers, declaring "Mama, I'm a Big Girl Now".

Making their own decision, Tracy and Penny race into the WZZT studios just as the auditions are ending. Tracy sees Link and swoons "I Can Hear the Bells." Velma rejects Tracy, sneering at her weight and lamenting that times certainly have changed since she was crowned "Miss Baltimore Crabs".

At school, Tracy's hairdo lands her in detention, where she befriends Seaweed J. Stubbs, the son of Motormouth Maybelle (the host of once-a-month "Negro Day" on The Corny Collins Show.) At a school dance, Tracy catches Corny's eye while doing steps she learned from Seaweed.

The next day, an astonished Edna and Wilbur see Tracy on TV, the newest member of the Corny Collins Council. Link sings the latest hit, "It Takes Two", dedicating it to Tracy, now an overnight sensation. After her mother forgives her, Tracy takes Edna out on the town for a fashion makeover ("Welcome to the '60s").

During a rough scatter dodgeball game, Amber knocks out her rival, Tracy. To cheer her up, Seaweed invites Tracy, Link and Penny (who has an immediate crush on him) to his mother's record shop ("Run and Tell That"). Motormouth Maybelle welcomes them warmly; Tracy wonders why they can't all dance together on the show and plans to lead a protest during "Mother-Daughter Day." Link rejects the idea, fearing it will hurt his chance to be on national TV. He leaves a heartbroken Tracy to go back to Amber. Edna is dubious about joining the protest. She is self-conscious about her weight, but Motormouth persuades her to accept herself – after all, they're both "Big, Blonde & Beautiful". The demonstration turns into a riot; the police arrive and drag Tracy and all the women off to jail.

Act Two opens in the women's house of detention, "The Big Dollhouse". Everyone is released on bail, except Tracy, who is moved to solitary confinement. Wilbur comforts a downcast Edna ("Timeless to Me"). Meanwhile, Link realises his love for Tracy and breaks her out of jail (using a blowtorch improvised with a lighter and a can of hairspray), and Seaweed rescues Penny from her mother's clutches ("Without Love").

The four flee to Motormouth's record shop. She reminds them that the fight against injustice is neverending ("I Know Where I've Been"). The next day, Corny's prime-time show is in full swing and ready to announce the winner of "Miss Teenage Hairspray 1962" ("Hairspray"). Amber and Tracy are finalists for the title of "Miss Teenage Hairspray 1962". Amber performs a dance she dedicates to the absent Tracy ("Cooties"). Just as it looks like Amber has won the crown, Tracy bursts in from the audience to claim victory and perform a dance that's dedicated to everyone. They all dance together; black and white, fat and thin, young and old, as Tracy leads the company in declaring "You Can't Stop the Beat."



CHARACTERS

IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE

TRACY TURNBLAD	Teenager from Baltimore, wants to be a dancer on The Corny Collins Show
CORNY COLLINS	Host of The Corny Collins Show
AMBER VON TUSSLE	Female star of The Corny Collins Show
BRAD	Dancer on The Corny Collins Show
TAMMY	Dancer on The Corny Collins Show
FENDER	Dancer on The Corny Collins Show
BRENDA	Dancer on The Corny Collins Show
SKETCH	Dancer on The Corny Collins Show
SHELLEY	Dancer on The Corny Collins Show
IQ	Dancer on The Corny Collins Show
LOU ANN	Dancer on The Corny Collins Show
LINK LARKIN	Male star of The Corny Collins Show, object of Tracy's affection
PRUDY PINGLETON	Mother of Penny
EDNA TURNBLAD	Mother of Tracy
PENNY PINGLETON	Tracy's best friend
VELMA VON TUSSLE	Mother of Amber
HARRIMAN F. SPRITZER	President of Ultra Clutch Hairspray, sponsor of The Corny Collins Show
WILBUR TURNBLAD	Father of Tracy
SEAWEED J. STUBBS	Befriends Tracy in detention
DUANE	Friend of Seaweed
GILBERT	Friend of Seaweed
LORRAINE	Friend of Seaweed
THAD	Friend of Seaweed
THE DYNAMITES	Female singing trio in "Welcome to the '60s"
MR. PINKY	Owner of Mr. Pinky's Hefty Hideaway clothing store
LITTLE INEZ	Seaweed's little sister
MOTORMOUTH MAYBELLE	Seaweed's mother, host of "Negro Day" on The Corny Collins Show
GYM TEACHER, PRINCIPAL, MATRON, GUARD, DENIZENS OF BALTIMORE	

MUSICAL NUMBERS

ACT ONE

"GOOD MORNING, BALTIMORE"	Tracy & Company
"THE NICEST KIDS IN TOWN"	Corny Collins & Council Members
"MAMA, I'M A BIG GIRL NOW"	Edna & Tracy, Velma & Amber, Penny & Prudy
"I CAN HEAR THE BELLS"	Tracy
"(THE LEGEND OF) MISS BALTIMORE CRABS"	Velma & Council Members
"THE NICEST KIDS IN TOWN" (REPRISE)	Corny & Council Members
"IT TAKES TWO"	Link & Tracy
"WELCOME TO THE '60S"	Tracy, Edna, The Dynamites & Company
"RUN AND TELL THAT"	Seaweed, Little Inez & Company
"BIG, BLONDE & BEAUTIFUL"	Motormouth, Little Inez, Tracy, Edna, Wilbur

ACT TWO

"THE BIG DOLLHOUSE"	Women
"GOOD MORNING, BALTIMORE" (REPRISE)	Tracy
"TIMELESS TO ME"	Wilbur & Edna
"WITHOUT LOVE"	Link, Tracy, Seaweed, Penny
"I KNOW WHERE I'VE BEEN"	Motormouth & Company
"HAIRSPRAY"	Corny & Council Members
"COOTIES"	Amber & Council Members
"YOU CAN'T STOP THE BEAT"	Tracy, Link, Penny, Seaweed, Edna, Wilbur, Motormouth & Company



GOOD MORNING, BALTIMORE

THE SETTING FOR HAIRSPRAY: BALTIMORE, USA

“IN BALTIMORE, HAIR IS POLITICS” – JOHN WATERS

Hairspray is set in Baltimore, Maryland, John Waters' hometown. Baltimore's unique character comes from its many paradoxical qualities: it is an urban centre with a rural sensibility, a city on the border between the North and the South, a blue-collar town that is home to world-class institutions of science and culture. In Hairspray – and in all his films – John Waters captures the sometimes tacky, always exuberant, unself-conscious quality of Baltimore and its citizens.

Baltimore Town, named after Lord Baltimore, one of the founders of the Maryland Colony, was founded in 1729 at the large natural harbour at the mouth of the Patapsco River. Baltimore, the western most port on the eastern coast, as well as a midpoint between North and South, became a natural centre of trade.

In the war of 1812, Britain attacked Baltimore, which they considered a “den of pirates on the Chesapeake”. While witnessing the bombardment of Fort McHenry, Maryland lawyer Francis Scott Key scribbled his impressions on the back of an envelope. Key's account of “the bombs bursting in air” became “The Star-Spangled Banner,” the American national anthem.

Baltimore can claim some important “firsts”: the first railroad tracks in the United States were laid there in 1829, connecting the landlocked Midwest with the port of Baltimore; in 1844, the first telegraph line linked Baltimore and Washington, D.C.

In the early 1960s, the time when Hairspray takes place, more than half of the population of Baltimore was African-American. The city had voluntarily decided to desegregate the school system, rather than be forced to do so by court order. However, “white flight” (affluent white families moving to the suburbs) meant that the increasingly overcrowded schools had a much higher percentage of black students than white. Despite the efforts to integrate schools, Baltimore remained heavily segregated, as it had been from its earliest days. (North Avenue, the location of Motormouth Maybelle's record shop in the show, was originally the northern boundary of the city. The Black population was not allowed to cross this boundary after dark).

Baltimore, sometimes described as “an outpost of the North in a Southern state”, found itself in a strategic position in the civil rights movement of the 1960s. The proximity of the city to the nation's capital made it a popular place for civil rights activists to stage protests and rallies. The city's central position between the North and the South, the very location that made it an economic centre, put Baltimore in the midst of the social struggle that divided the entire country.



ABOUT JOHN WATERS

“TIMELESS TO ME”

Filmmaker John Waters, born in Baltimore on April 22, 1946, had offbeat interests from the beginning. As a child, he was drawn to the spooky and bizarre; he was fascinated by the characters of Captain Hook from Peter Pan and the Wicked Queen from Snow White.

He became interested in puppets; his talent for keeping birthday party puppet show audiences spellbound earned him up to \$25 per performance, a substantial amount for a child in the 1950s. By the age of twelve, he was intensely interested in show business, and subscribed to Variety, the trade journal of the entertainment industry.

His grandmother gave him a movie camera for his sixteenth birthday, and he began shooting short films in and around his parents' house. For his casts, he assembled an ensemble of friends who would appear in his films throughout his career. Waters' star was the drag performer Divine (real name Glenn Milstead), whose persona grew more outrageous with every role.

John Waters showed his early films whenever and wherever he could. One project, Roman Candles, was shown in the basement of Baltimore's Emmanuel Episcopal Church (admission 75¢). The movie used an experimental technique in which three projectors ran simultaneously.

His breakthrough film was Pink Flamingos, in which Waters regulars Divine and Mink Stole battled for the title of “Filthiest People Alive.” A wild comic-horror smash, Pink Flamingos became a midnight-movie smash, and earned John Waters the title “The Pope of Trash.”

Divine and John Waters reunited to make Polyester, for which Waters invented Odorama – scratch-and-sniff cards that audiences were given to smell at various points in the movie.

Waters became interested in making a movie about his childhood obsession with The Buddy Deane Show, an after-school dance show, in which local teens bopped to pop hits. Waters considered calling the film White Lipstick, but settled on Hairspray. Divine originally wanted to play both teen heroine Tracy Turnblad and her mother, Edna. However, Waters cast Divine as frumpy housewife Edna Turnblad (and station owner Arvin Hodgepile, one of the rare times Divine played a man on screen) and nineteen-year-old unknown Ricki Lake won the role of Tracy.



With its PG rating and subject matter, Hairspray drew a larger audience than Waters' earlier movies. It became one of the hits of 1988, catapulting Ricki Lake to fame, and earning Divine critical praise for his performance as Edna. Tragically, soon after the movie's release, Divine died in his sleep.

Hairspray's success drew a wide audience to Waters' subsequent films (which include Cry Baby, Serial Mom, and Cecil B. Demented). Waters even appeared in cartoon guise on The Simpsons. Waters has continued to set all his films in Baltimore, keeping true to his particular skewed vision and delighting audiences with his tales of eccentric characters who revel in the excesses of tastelessness and trash.



“WELCOME TO THE '60s”

Listen out for these cultural references from 1960s America which feature in *Hairspray*. See how many you can catch.

CONNIE FRANCIS: A top singer of the 1950s and early 1960s. She appeared in the classic Spring Break movie, *Where the Boys Are* (1960).

GIDGET: Pint-size surfer girl originally played by Sandra Dee in *Gidget* (1959). Sequels included *Gidget Goes Hawaiian* (1961) and *Gidget Goes to Rome* (1963).

JACKIE B. KENNEDY: First Lady Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy, wife of President John F. Kennedy, was known for her trendsetting style, particularly her bouffant hairdo and pillbox hats.

“HAIR HOPPER”: A Baltimore term for someone, male or female, who spent too much time on their outsized hairdos.

ROCK HUDSON, DORIS DAY: Starred together in romantic comedies such as *Pillow Talk* (1959) and *Lover Come Back* (1961). He was tall, good looking, and debonair, while she was known for her squeaky clean “good girl” image.

“WILT THE STILT”: At 7'1", Wilt “The Stilt” Chamberlain was one of the NBA’s legendary players, setting numerous records during his 14-year professional basketball career.

CANDID CAMERA AND ALLEN FUNT: Allen Funt was the host of *Candid Camera*, the first hidden-camera stunt show, which captured the reactions of ordinary people to pranks played by Funt and his cast. The show first aired in 1948 and has been revived on various TV networks for over 50 years.

PEYTON PLACE: Based on a popular novel, this 1957 melodrama delved into the sordid secrets of a New England town. It became the first American prime-time soap opera television series in 1964.

JACKIE GLEASON: Robust comedian best known for creating *The Honeymooners* television show in 1955. His trademark phrases included “And away we go,” “Hommina hommina hommina,” and “To the moon, Alice!”

“DON’T TELL ME KHRUSHCHEV HAS HIS SHOES OFF AGAIN”:

On November 17, 1956, millions of television viewers saw Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev pound the podium of the United Nations General Assembly with his shoe, shouting at the West, “We will bury you!”

METRECAL: First introduced in 1960, Metrecal (from “metered calories”) was a canned diet drink, like today’s Slim-Fast.

EDDIE FISHER, DEBBIE REYNOLDS, LIZ AND DICK: Singer Eddie Fisher and perky film comedienne Debbie Reynolds married in 1955 (they are the parents of writer/actress Carrie Fisher, perhaps best known as Princess Leia from the *Star Wars* movies). Fisher fell in love with Elizabeth “Liz” Taylor, and married her in 1959 on the same day he divorced Debbie Reynolds. Taylor went to Italy in 1962 to film the epic *Cleopatra*. Although Eddie Fisher was also in the film, Taylor fell for her co-star Richard “Dick” Burton. Their affair made headlines worldwide. They married in 1964, divorced in 1974, and remarried the following year.

FRANKIE AVALON AND HIS “FAVOURITE MOUSEKETEER”: Teen idol Frankie Avalon’s “favourite Mouseketeer” was Annette Funicello, who became a star on the 1950s TV series *The Mickey Mouse Club*. They met in 1958 and became a wildly popular couple, starring in 1960s movies such as *Beach Party* (1963) and *Bikini Beach* (1964).

THE GABOR SISTERS: Glamorous Hungarian sisters Zsa Zsa, Magda, and Eva Gabor became known in Hollywood for their seductive, sophisticated, yet slightly scatterbrained personalities.

MAMIE EISENHOWER: Wife of President Dwight “Ike” Eisenhower, she was First Lady from 1953 to 1961, known for her trademark bags and fondness for pink clothing.

GINA LOLLOBRIGIDA: Sultry Italian actress Gina Lollobrigida was known in the 1950s as “The Most Beautiful Woman in the World.”

“CASTRO’S INVADING”: In 1961 the United States launched an unsuccessful attempt to overthrow Cuban leader Fidel Castro by invading the Bay of Pigs. Tensions remained high between Cuba and the U.S., culminating in the Cuban Missile Crisis in October 1962.

GLENN MILLER: Popular bandleader and composer of the 1940s, known for hits such as “Moonlight Serenade.”

CHUBBY CHECKER: Originally named Ernest Evans, singer Chubby Checker created a dance sensation with his recording of “The Twist” in 1960.

THE HINDENBURG: The 800-foot blimp, Hindenburg, was the largest aircraft ever flown. Whilst landing at Lakehurst, New Jersey on May 6, 1937, the ship was destroyed in a tragic fire when the hydrogen that filled the blimp ignited. (Modern blimps are filled with nonflammable helium).

EVA MARIE SAINT: Beautiful blonde actress who starred in such films as Hitchcock’s *North by Northwest* (1959).

ACTIVITIES LINKED TO CIVICS & CITIZENSHIP

The following activities are linked with Civics & Citizenship. The key concept that they relate to is:

IDENTITIES AND DIVERSITY: LIVING TOGETHER

- Appreciating that identities are complex, can change over time and are informed by different understandings of what it means to be a citizen in Australia.
- Exploring the diverse national, regional, ethnic and religious cultures, groups and communities in Australia and the connections between them.
- Considering the interconnections between Australia and the wider world.
- Exploring community cohesion and the different forces that bring about change in communities over time.

YEAR	US	AUSTRALIA
1946	Concerned about the prevalence of racial discrimination, President Harry S. Truman establishes the President's Committee on Civil Rights.	Aboriginal pastoral workers in the Pilbara, Western Australia, strike over pay, conditions and ill treatment. An estimated 600 Aboriginal stockmen refused to work until they had been guaranteed a minimum wage of thirty shillings a week. Some of the striking stockmen were arrested, chained by hands and necks and tried time and time again by local J.P.'s. The numerous arrests, food problems and evictions from tribal land did not break the people's spirit. The strike continued for a year. In the end the Aborigines won their demands.
1947	Jackie Robinson joins the Brooklyn Dodgers and becomes the first black Major League player.	
1948	President Truman orders the integration of the US military.	The Commonwealth Citizenship and Nationality Act for the first time gives the category of "Australian Citizenship" to all Australians, including Aborigines. However, at state level Aborigines still suffer legal discrimination.
1949		Australian Citizenship Act 1949 (Cth), gives Aboriginal people the vote in Commonwealth elections if they are enrolled for State elections or have served in the Armed Forces.
1954	In <i>Brown v. Topeka, Kansas, Board of Education</i> , the US Supreme Court declares that "separate educational facilities are inherently unequal", and orders that students be admitted to public schools without regard to race.	
1955	In Montgomery, Alabama, Rosa Parks refuses to give up her seat to a white man in defiance of local laws. Bus boycott led by Martin Luther King Jr. successfully overturns the ordinance.	
1957	President Dwight D. Eisenhower sends federal troops to enforce the rights of nine black students to enrol at Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas.	
1958		Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines - later changed to Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders (FCAATSI) - begins ten year campaign by both black and white people to end discrimination in the constitution

YEAR	US	AUSTRALIA
1960	Sit-ins at segregated public restaurants and lunch counters are held throughout the South.	An average of 120,000 migrants arrive per year. A large-scale intake of refugees results in greater diversity in the Australian population.
1961	Freedom Riders challenge "white only" rules at drinking fountains, lunch counters, and rest rooms in bus and train stations in the South.	
1962	James Meredith, a black student, enrolls at the University of Mississippi under protection of federal troops.	The Commonwealth Electoral Act is amended to give the vote to all Aboriginal people.
1963	250,000 people attend the March on Washington, where Martin Luther King, Jr. delivers his "I have a Dream" speech.	
1965	Riots erupt in Watts, a ghetto neighbourhood in Los Angeles, California.	
1966		Vincent Lingiari leads a walk-off from the cattle station Wave Hill in the Northern Territory, protesting inadequate wages and poor conditions. The protesters set up camp at nearby Wattie Creek and demand the return of some of their traditional lands, beginning a seven-year fight by the Gurindji to obtain title to their land. The protest eventually leads to the Commonwealth Land Rights Act (Northern Territory), 1976. Australian Labor Party drops White Australia policy from its party platform. Australia signs the International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination
1967	Thurgood Marshall becomes the first black Supreme Court justice. Riots occur in Detroit and other large cities. The first black mayors of major US cities are elected in Cleveland, Ohio, and Gary, Indiana.	After 10 years of campaigning for equality by Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, 90.77% of Australians vote YES that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be counted in the national census of the population and that the Commonwealth Government should have the power to legislate for Aboriginal people.
1968	Martin Luther King, Jr. is assassinated. Riots erupt across the US.	
1969		After decades of campaigning, Australian women workers win equal pay rates with men doing comparable work under an Arbitration Commission decision for incremental increases, with pay parity eventually achieved in 1972.

CIVICS & CITIZENSHIP: DISCUSSION

OBJECTIVE:

To encourage students to interpret and critically analyse the Living Together timeline, identifying the different values, ideas and viewpoints that it contains, and to share this analysis through group and class discussion.

FROM THE SCRIPT

ACT 1, SCENE 8

Edna and Tracy Turnblad both share a spirit for equality, fairness and friendship that is free of racial prejudice. In this scene, the younger generation boldly leads the older generation into a protest for integration, in order to make society fair and just.

TRACY: Okay. So this is how we're gonna do it; tomorrow, everyone bring your mothers . . .

PENNY: ... and sisters!.

TRACY: ... and meet around the corner from the studio and make signs!

PENNY: Yes! And put words on them!

TRACY: Ms. Motormouth, you and little Inez will walk in first. Mama and me will be right behind you.

EDNA: Excuse me?

TRACY: They'll never be able to shove them back through the door with us blocking it.



EXERCISE

The struggle to achieve equity in race relations became a central issue for society in both the US and Australia in the 60s. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people fought for equality all throughout the 60s, only achieving the right to vote and being counted in the national census throughout that decade.

As a class, read the Living Together timeline. Working in pairs, choose one of the topics listed and debate it from opposing viewpoints. Note: the viewpoint that you end up debating may not necessarily be your own.

As a class, read the Living Together timeline. Can you identify any events that you are familiar with? Are there any events excluded from the timeline that you would like to share with the class? Are there any events in the timeline that you are surprised by? If so, why?

Choosing an event in the timeline that has caught your imagination, divide into small groups to discuss the different perspectives surrounding the event. Each group then shares a summary of their discussion with the class.

As a class, have a closing discussion about how you think the events in the timeline have shaped life in Australia, the US and the rest of the world today.

For homework, interview people aged 60+ and over who may remember the events listed in the timeline. Ask the interviewees what their memories are of two or three events. Bring your findings back to the class for discussion.



CIVICS & CITIZENSHIP: WRITING EXERCISE

OBJECTIVE:

To encourage students to question and reflect on different ideas, beliefs and values mirrored through the cultural spectrum of television, by creating and writing their own short scene, in groups, for an imagined reality television programme.

FROM THE SCRIPT

ACT 1, SCENE 1

In this scene, the girls are watching a teenage dance programme on television. Tracy and Penny are particularly struck by images of cool, young people, how they dress and how they appear, illustrating the ways in which these icons are encouraged to appeal to the young TV audience.

EDNA: Turn that racket down. I'm trying to iron in here.

CORNY: SO, IF EVERY NIGHT YOU'RE SHAKING, AS YOU LIE IN BED
AND THE BASS AND DRUMS, ARE POUNDING IN YOUR HEAD
WHO CARES ABOUT SLEEP, WHEN YOU CAN SNOOZE IN SCHOOL
THEY'LL NEVER GET TO COLLEGE, BUT THEY SURE LOOK COOL
DON'T NEED A CAP AND A GOWN, 'CAUSE THEY'RE THE
NICEST KIDS IN TOWN, THEY'RE THE NICEST, NICEST
THEY'RE THE NICEST, NICEST, THEY'RE THE SUGAR AND SPICE-EST,
NICEST KIDS IN TOWN

CORNY: And that was our new dance of the week – the “Stricken Chicken.” We'll be right back.
(Lights shift in the TV studio.)

VELMA: And we're off! All right, people, how many times do I have to tell you – we do NOT touch ourselves
– anywhere – while on camera. Tammy, lose the padding. You, too, Fender.
(the kids sheepishly turn away to remove their padding)
And Link, stop hogging the camera; you're not Elvis yet. Amber...hog the camera.

AMBER: Yes, mother.

VELMA: And YOU, Mr. Collins! None of that Detroit sound today. You have something against Connie Francis?

CORNY: The kids are just over the moon for rhythm and blues, Velma. They can't get enough.

VELMA: They're kids, Corny. That's why we have to steer them in the white direction...I mean...
you know what I mean.

EXERCISE

In the closing lines of this extract from *Hairspray*, the writers, Mark O'Donnell and Thomas Meehan, make it clear that the Corny Collins Show is subject to the discriminatory rules of segregation operating in the US at the time: only white students are permitted to take part in the TV show; black students can only take part in the once-a-month 'Negro Day' edition of the programme. Velma expresses her desire for the segregation to extend to the dance music played during the show too, and so steer the contestants in 'the white direction'.

Divide into groups of approximately six. Each group should imagine an equivalent of the Corny Collins Show as it would be on television today, which draws on young, previously unknown people as its focus. Incorporate roles for each student to take on. These may include playing a producer like Velma, an announcer like Corny Collins, the dancing couples or their equivalent in a reality television programme. Each group then writes a short

scene which includes each character's objective for the scene. For example, what sort of cultural identity does the producer want to reflect in the show? How do they direct or manipulate the content of the programme to achieve their objective? What would the target audience for this show be? How diverse would this audience be? What are the participants thinking during the show? Do they agree with the producer's objective for the show?

Once the scenes have been written and presented in class, discuss the similarities and differences between them. Explore the various objectives that each producer may have had for their show. In each scene, compare and contrast the way the image of the programme host is projected in comparison to the image of the contestants.

the **C**orny
Collins
show



CIVICS & CITIZENSHIP: PRACTICAL WORK

OBJECTIVE:

To explore factors that have brought about change to the education system over time, through compiling, conducting and analysing surveys with different generational groups.

FROM THE SCRIPT

ACT 1, SCENE 1

Conflicting ideas concerning conformity and work ethic affected families in the 1950s and 1960s just as they do today. The teenagers in *Hairspray* begin to think that hard work and staying in school is not necessarily their only option, and certainly not the most glamorous answer to life. In this excerpt, we see Tracy's growing interest in leaving school and auditioning for *The Corny Collins Show*, and what it might mean for her family.

TRACY: Mother, you are so fifties. Even our first lady, Jackie B. Kennedy, rats her hair.

EDNA: Yeah? Well, you ain't no first lady, are ya? She's a hair hopper – that's what got her put in detention again.

(taking Wilbur aside)

Wilbur, talk to her. Girls like Tracy... People like us... You know what I'm saying. They don't put people like us on TV – except to be laughed at.

WILBUR: (to Tracy) This TV thing... You really want it?

TRACY: It's my dream, Daddy.

WILBUR: Then you go for it. This is America, babe. You gotta think big to be big.

EDNA: Being big enough is not the problem, Wilbur.

WILBUR: When I was your age my parents begged me to run away with the circus, but I said, "No. That's what you want. I have dreams of my own." I dreamt of opening a chain of joke shops worldwide. So, okay, I've still only got one, but some day, if I can figure out how to keep the air from leaking out of my sofa-sized Whoopee Cushion, I'm going to make a noise heard 'round the world!

(Edna screams with delight!)

You follow your dream, baby. I'm grabbin' an Orange Crush and heading back down to the Har-Dee-Har Hut. I've got my dream... And I wuv it!

EDNA: (laughing again) You're not helping, Wilbur!

(Wilbur exits and Tracy follows.)

TRACY: Thanks, Daddy.

EDNA: Tracy, come back up here. I've got hampers of laundry and my diet pill is wearing off!

TRACY: But, Mama I want to be famous.

EDNA: You want to be famous? Learn how to get blood out of car upholstery. Now there's a skill you could take to the bank. You think I wanted to spend my life washing and ironing other people's unmentionables? No, I wanted to design them. I thought I would be the biggest thing in brassieres. Well, you deal with what life gives you. Now start folding.

TRACY: Ugh.

EXERCISE

- As a class, discuss the role school plays in your future plans and expectations. Does school play a large part, or is it insignificant? Do your ambitions determine the choices you make in school?

Working as a team, develop a survey to explore the attitude of people in your parents' generation concerning school. Possible survey topics could include:

- What courses they took
- How seriously they took their lessons
- How their culture and family ethnicity effected their education
- What their families thought of education
- How their education path may or may not have changed as they grew older
- The consequences of their education on their lives

Once the survey questions have been determined, each student should conduct the survey at home with friends or family members.

- In the following lesson, discuss the answers you have obtained in groups of three or four, and reach a consensus about the meaning of education for the interviewees. Finally, reconvene as a class to compare the role of education for students both now and then.



ACTIVITIES LINKED TO ENGLISH

The following activities support the teaching of English.
The skills and processes that the activities relate to are:

SPEAKING AND LISTENING

- Use a range of dramatic approaches to explore complex ideas, texts and issues in scripted and improvised work.
- Select different dramatic techniques and justify choices used to convey action, character, atmosphere and tension.
- Evaluate drama performances that you have watched and/or taken part in.

READING (THE AUTHOR'S CRAFT)

- Analyse and evaluate a writer's use of language in a chosen text, commenting precisely on how the text is crafted to shape meaning and produce particular effects for the audience and/or reader.

WRITING

- Write imaginatively, creatively and thoughtfully, producing texts that interest, engage and challenge the reader.
- Adapt your written style and language to the composition of a dramatic script.

BACKGROUND NOTES: "IT TAKES TWO"

Book writer Mark O'Donnell talks about adapting *Hairspray* from a screenplay into a musical.

StageNOTES: How did you begin working on the script?

MARK O'DONNELL: I started by writing a synopsis of the show-to-be in the manner of the plot descriptions on a cast album. I put in parentheses where I thought a song would go. We kept some of the classic lines – "We'll claw our way to the top!" – but there's not too much dialogue from the screenplay.

We used John Waters' story as a framework to start with, so we knew where it began and ended. And then we had to get characters saying interesting things – memorable, funny things.

I like incongruities. I was always crazy about Oscar Wilde. You know, "A gentleman never hurts another's feelings unintentionally." And although no one would call *Hairspray* Oscar Wilde, I did try to write dialogue that seems to have incongruities: "What are you doing in this huge crowd of minorities?" That kind of thing.

SN: What sorts of changes did you need to make for the stage version?

MO: In the movie, Tracy gets on the show right away, she gets Link right away. She is a force of nature, and she is not to be defied. But on stage, what do you do for the next hour and a half? We felt she needed to overcome obstacles, so we deferred the love and the success.

We simplified the plot, and we dropped or combined characters. For instance, the character of Velma exists in the movie, but she has no power. She's just a pushy stage mom. I thought it would be much more effective to give the villain power.

We also fleshed out other characters. Link and Seaweed are fun to look at in the movie, but can you tell me anything about them as people? They simply exist. We tried to create interrelationships, so Seaweed was key to Tracy's success, which explained their friendship.

We tried a version that had no Little Inez and no Penny. Tracy was alone, she had no friends at all. I think it was an economical move – we thought, “We can’t have fourteen principal characters!” But it looked terribly cold when we saw it, so we went back to what we had before.

A cut we made both for economy and for emotional value is that all the characters besides Tracy are fatherless. Whatever you think of Tracy, she’s the only one with a father. That’s what gives her some grounding, and makes her a more optimistic person I think.

Trim, trim, trim was the name of the game always. If the show is to have a magical spell, it has to be relentless.

SN: Did John Waters make any suggestions?

MO: He did, especially about language. I had used the word “klutz.” He said, “They wouldn’t say klutz.” So we changed it to clod – the line ended up being cut anyway. Originally, when Tracy said, “I wish every day were Negro Day,” Corny’s answer was, “I read you like the tabloids, kid.” And John Waters said there were no tabloids in Baltimore. So we changed it to “I read you like tomorrow’s headlines.” Which is probably better, since Tracy’s a visionary. At one point we had Tracy popping a lot of diet pills to explain why she’s so peppy, and John Waters thought that was a little too “bad girl.” On the other hand, we had some sentimental moments with Edna talking about mother love and he said, “Well, it’s getting a little Hallmark.” So he kept us from being too treacly on the one hand, and untrue to the character on the other.

SN: How did you collaborate with the composer-lyricist team, Marc Shaiman and Scott Wittman?

MO: I had ideas for situations that could become songs. In one instance, I suggested that the three teenage girls be in parallel places, complaining to their mothers – it’s the old “Get me outta here!” song (“Mama, I’m a Big Girl Now”). And I suggested in the second act that when Tracy breaks out of jail, and Penny breaks out of her home, that they have parallel love duets that become a quartet (“Without Love”). I didn’t know exactly what the song would be – that’s where Marc and Scott came in.

Collaboration can be maddening, but it’s never a blank slate – there’s always input. We were lucky that we were a pretty friendly team. We could enjoy each others’ suggestions without resenting them.

SN: How did you become interested in writing? Do you have any advice for aspiring writers?

MO: Most of the playwrights I know were puppeteers as kids, they put on puppet shows. They did skits in high school, played around with the tape recorder. Nowadays, chances are you’re playing around with the video camera. You know you’re a writer if you have a compulsion to record it, to write it down.

I have a twin brother, who was David Letterman’s head writer for many years. As kids we would act out little skits in school, until the teachers finally said, “You wanna do something for the Christmas show?” So I guess I had an automatic vaudeville partner.

Writing is a combination of imagination and observation. Whether you’re writing a story or drawing a cartoon or writing a play, it’s all storytelling. I always refer to cartoons as the world’s shortest plays: They have characters, they have sets, they have dialogue, but it’s usually only one line.

If you want to be a writer, you should find the world interesting. There are no writers who don’t look. You must observe. Everything has to be fascinating. I keep a journal where I write down weird stuff I overhear, or strange situations that might be interesting to explore – just snippets of funny dialogue. The world is an endless font of material.



ENGLISH: DISCUSSION

OBJECTIVE:

To explore different dramatic techniques to convey action, character, atmosphere and tension when creating a dramatic text.

FROM THE SCRIPT

ACT 1, SCENE 3

Tracy is auditioning to be part of the Council. All of the conflicts she will be facing are presented here dramatically.

AMBER: DO YOU DANCE LIKE YOU DRESS?

LINK: GIRLS, THERE'S NO NEED TO BE CRUEL!

VELMA: Would you swim in an integrated pool?

(The music stops dead and the COUNCIL gasps in shock)

TRACY: I'm sure I would. I'm all for integration. It's the New Frontier?

VELMA: Not in Baltimore it isn't.

TRACY: Um, where's Corny? I'd love to dance for him.

VELMA: I'm the producer and may I be frank?

(Music back in, ominously building, building)

VELMA: FIRST IMPRESSIONS CAN BE TOUGH AND WHEN I SAW YOU, I KNEW IT, IF YOUR SIZE WEREN'T ENOUGH THE LAST ANSWER JUST BLEW IT! AND SO, MY DEAR, SO SHORT AND STOUT, YOU'LL NEVER BE "IN"

VELMA AND THE COUNCIL MEMBERS: SO WE'RE KICKING YOU OUT!

VELMA: WITH YOUR FORM AND YOUR FACE WELL, ISN'T YOUR FAULT YOU'RE JUST CAUGHT IN A CASE OF "MISS..."

VELMA AND THE COUNCIL MEMBERS: BALTIMORE...

VELMA: ...CRABS!" You're free to go.

COUNCIL MEMBERS: OOH'S



EXERCISE

In the background information for English, "It Takes Two", Mark O'Donnell states that he was very careful to shape the film into a piece that would hold its own dramatically on the stage. The first thing he did was heighten the initial obstacles and conflicts in the film in order to create a drama that was sustainable for the duration of the show.

Bring into class a human-interest story from a newspaper that captures your imagination. Working individually, circle and identify the conflict and the characters in your particular newspaper excerpt.

In groups of three or four, read your stories aloud to each other. Discuss the characters and the conflict contained in each story, which you identified in the first part of the exercise. Now discuss how each story could be dramatised to convey the inherent action, character, atmosphere and tension. Discuss ways in which each of you might approach writing the dramatic scene, focusing on possible characters, storylines and their final outcomes.

Note: The actual writing of this piece can happen in the English Writing Exercise, where the students will have the opportunity to combine the facts in the articles with their own dramatic license in order to embellish and heighten the drama.



ENGLISH: PRACTICAL WORK

OBJECTIVE:

To adapt the style and language of your chosen newspaper article to the composition of a dramatic script.

FROM THE SCRIPT

ACT 1, SCENE 4

Tracy's been put in detention again for wearing a "monumental hairdo." When she gets there, she meets Seaweed, whose mother is the host of The Corny Collins Show's monthly "Negro Day" broadcast. An immediate camaraderie is established.

PRINCIPAL: Tracy Turnblad, once again your monumental hair-don't has seriously obstructed everyone's view of the blackboard. As Principal of Patterson Park High I condemn you to three more days of detention!

(Lights up on TRACY in detention. Around her are SEAWEED, LORRAINE, GILBERT, THAD, DUANE and another student asleep at his desk. LORRAINE is at the blackboard writing repeatedly, "I will not talk in speech class"),

TRACY: Detention! Is there no pity for a teen just trying to fit in?

SEAWEED: Maybe you oughtn't try so hard?

TRACY: Excuse me, but why are you always so happy? You get detention just about every time I do, and I've never seen you complain.

SEAWEED: Oh but I do. This is my way of complaining.

(SEAWEED turns on a small transistor radio. MUSIC starts and he does a soulful little dance.)

It's how I use my blues.

DUANE: Use them blues, brother. Use 'em to lose 'em.

TRACY: Hey, that move's swift.

SEAWEED: The man can dine on a diet of detention so long as he don't starve me of my tunes.

(another step)

Here's a little something-something signified to say, "Hello, my name's Seaweed J. Stubbs, and what's yours."

TRACY: That's unbelievable. Can I do that?

SEAWEED: I don't know. Can you?

(TRACY & SEAWEED dance together)

TRACY: Hello. My name is Tracy Turnblad.

GILBERT: Not bad for a white girl.

SEAWEED: Ain't no black and white in here. Detention is a rainbow experience.

(SEAWEED does another step)

EXERCISE

Carry out research into the characters, settings and subject matter of your story. This might involve observing people in everyday life, such as on buses or in shops, whose physical and vocal traits might help you to build up realistic characters for your own scene. It might involve researching background information to the events of your story on the internet. Remember, the more research, observations, and factual material gathered, the more potential your writing will have of being authentic.

Once your research is complete, start writing a dramatised scene from your story, making sure that your characters are fully fleshed out and that you create moments of varying pace and tension to capture the attention of your audience.



ENGLISH: PRACTICAL WORK

OBJECTIVES:

- To justify the choices you made to convey action, character, atmosphere and tension in your scripted scene, when discussing the dramatised stories in groups.
- To evaluate the performances of a selection of these scenes that you have watched and/or taken part in.

FROM THE SCRIPT

ACT 1, SCENE 6

Tracy Turnblad is a dynamic young woman and not about to stand for anyone putting her down. With integrity and optimism, she forges ahead in spite of the criticism she receives of her mission to integrate Baltimore and on her weight.

CORNY: Yeah! And that was our dance of the week – “Peyton Place After Midnight,” – introduced to you by our brand new Council member, Miss Tracy Turnblad.

EDNA: Oh, my word! Tracy! Live in our own living room!

WILBUR: I think I’ve seen her here before.

PENNY: And she’s going to be a regular.

EDNA: Imagine, my little girl, regular at last.

PENNY: Hi, Tracy. It’s me, Penny!

EDNA: She can’t hear you.

(The phone rings and SHE answers it.)

Hello?... Yes. This is...her childhood home. No, I’m not her father.

(Back to the show...)

So let’s wave a wistful bye-bye to Brenda – see you next year.

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

(waving to BRENDA as SHE exits)

Awww...

CORNY: ...and inaugurate the newest member of our Council, Tracy Turnblad! Cozy up to old Corny and tell us about yourself, Trrrrace.

TRACY: Well, I go to Patterson Park High, I watch your show, and I do absolutely nothing else.

(ALL applaud and cheer)

But someday I hope to be the first woman president of the world or a Rockette. You’ve got to think big to be big!

CORNY: And if you were president, what would your first official act be?

TRACY: I’d make every day Negro Day!

VELMA &

SPRITZER: Aaaaaiieeeee!!!!

(SPRITZER runs off in horror, VELMA follows.)

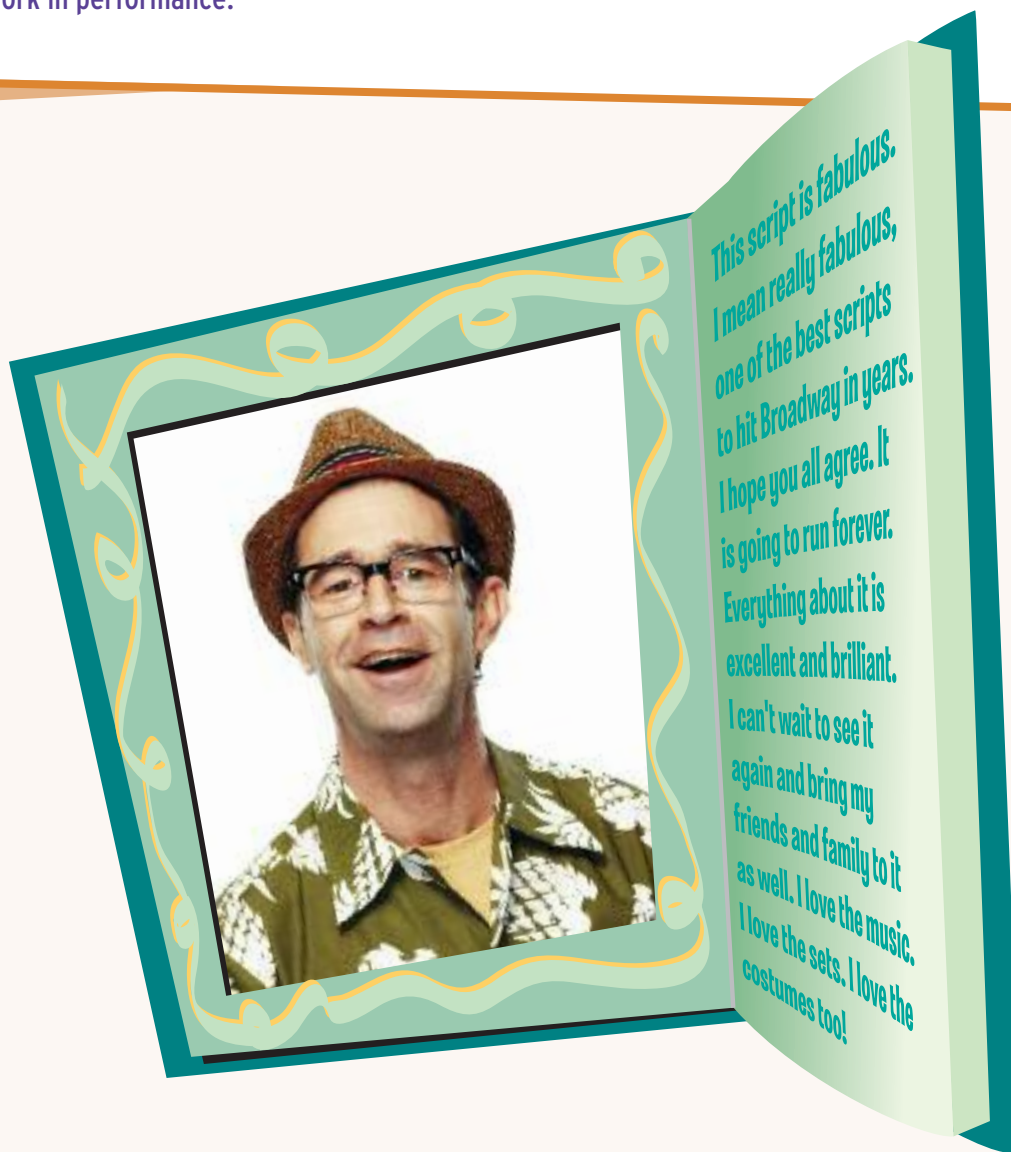
EXERCISE

Reconvene in the groups you were in at the beginning the task. Read through your dramatised scenes, with members of the group taking on the parts of the characters, to be cast by the writer. After each read-through, ask the writer questions which allow them to explain the choices they made to convey action, character, atmosphere and tension in their scene. As a group, discuss if these ideas came across during the read-through.

Decide which scene has the most potential to be staged. Come to a group decision on this, justifying your contributions to the debate with evidence from the script you have chosen to support.

Rehearse the chosen scene, allocating one of the group to oversee the project as director.

Each group should present their 'work in progress' to the rest of the class. Discuss the elements of each scene which work in performance.



ACTIVITIES LINKED TO HEALTH & PHYSICAL EDUCATION (DEVELOPMENT OF IDENTITY)

The following activities support the teaching of Health & Physical Education (Development of Identity). The key concept that the lesson plans relate to is:

DEVELOPMENT IDENTITY:

- Understanding that identity is affected by a range of factors
- Recognising that the way in which personal qualities, attitudes, skills and achievements are evaluated affects confidence and self-esteem
- Understanding that self-esteem can change with personal circumstances such as those associated with family and friendships, achievement and employment



BACKGROUND NOTES: PLAYING TRACY TURNBLAD

Marissa Jaret Winokur, the original Tracy Turnblad on Broadway, talks about confidence, body image, and self-acceptance.

“Hefty. Plus-sized. Dimple-kneed. Those are all from articles about Hairspray. They never want to use the word “fat” so they find every other word there is. It’s like nobody can talk about it, or even say it out loud. Why is that?”

There are studies around that say girls who are five years old already have a bad self image. They feel bad when they look in the mirror, and they’re five years old. That is really crazy!

Look at this – I still have my report card from kindergarten. It says “Marissa needs to learn to control and lower her voice.” Well, I guess I didn’t really pay attention to that. I know they probably meant well – “girls should be quiet and polite” – but through your whole life there are people who want to tell you what you should do and who you should be. I don’t think you should always listen to them.

I’ve been lucky, I guess. I always had a lot of self-confidence – that’s what got me into performing. And most of the time nobody gave me too much trouble about my size. I’m short – just five feet tall – and I’m not a skinny little stick. But I had a lot of friends, I was a cheerleader, I was in shows at school. I just ignored anyone who said I shouldn’t do those things, I guess.

Of course I would love to lose 10 pounds. I would never lie and say I don’t think about it, but I don’t think about it every day. I love my body. I don’t like wearing clothes that hide or cover it. I love wearing costumes that show it off.

Whenever I would go out and audition for parts, I always decided I wouldn’t take the “poor fat girl” roles. That’s not who I am. When I heard they were doing a musical of Hairspray I thought, yeah, that’s for me.

I know that some people see my weight first, but I don’t think of Tracy as a role model for all the heavy girls out there – she’s more than that. She’s an individual. She doesn’t fit the mould. This show says that you can be whoever you really are, and not only that, you can win.

John Waters always likes to say that what he loves most about Hairspray is that when they do it in high schools, there will finally be a part for “the fat girl and the drag queen.” It’s cool to be part of something like this, a show that really says something.

Playing Tracy – well, it’s one of the hardest things I’ve ever done in my life just because of all the energy it takes, but it’s also a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. I’m doing my best to enjoy it – and trying not to lose too much weight.”



DEVELOPMENT OF IDENTITY: DISCUSSION

OBJECTIVE:

To gain an awareness of how personal identity is affected by images in the media, and how the media's evaluation of personal qualities and attitudes, skills and achievements affects self-esteem.

FROM THE SCRIPT

ACT 1, SCENE 6

Prior to this scene, several elements have already conspired to begin a cultural revolution, which is reflected in Tracy's success both romantically and on TV. In this scene, the antagonists - Spritzer, the President of Ultra Clutch Hairspray, (sponsor of The Corny Collins Show), and Velma, the show's producer - try to resist these changes.

SPRITZER: Mrs. Von Tussle, Negro Day everyday? That chubby Communist girl and kissing on the mouth with possibly parted lips... I assure you, controversy is not what Ultra Clutch wishes to promote.

CORNY: Negroes and chubby girls buy hairspray, too, Mr. Spritzer.

SPRITZER: Mrs. Von Tussle, how do you plan to handle this?

VELMA: I plan to start by firing him!

CORNY: You can't fire Corny Collins from The Corny Collins Show.

VELMA: Why not? They do it all the time on Lassie!

CORNY: Mr. Spritzer, to keep your audience, you got to keep up with the times.

VELMA: This show's fine the way it is...

YOU CAN'T SAY I'M A BIGOT
BUT IT JUST ISN'T TRUE
LOOK, I LOVE SAMMY DAVIS
AND HE'S BLACK AND A JEW!
BUT THEY BETTER GET SET
FOR A FULL OUT ASSAULT
THEY SHOULD NEVER HAVE BOILED
MISS BALTIMORE CRABS

(End of song. End of Scene Six.)

DEVELOPMENT OF IDENTITY: DISCUSSION

EXERCISE

Look at examples of advertisements from magazines. As a class, discuss what the images mean to you.

Now focus on the issue of advertisers targeting audiences for the purpose of selling products. Why do advertisers target specific audiences? What are the benefits, challenges and consequences of targeting audiences in this way? How do you feel that advertisements targeted towards you affect your sense of identity?

Refer to the script at the opening of this section, where Mr. Spritzer, the sponsor of The Corny Collins Show, makes the statement "That chubby Communist girl and kissing on the mouth with possibly parted lips... I assure you, controversy is not what Ultra Clutch wishes to promote." In response, Corny Collins says, "Negroes and chubby girls buy hairspray, too, Mr. Spritzer." Discuss these two lines of dialogue as a class. What do the lines mean to you?

Continue the discussion by compiling a list of targeted audiences that you can identify from magazines, TV, public transport, and films today.

Brainstorm ideas for your own advertisements that focus on a particular target audience. Now divide into groups and choose one of the ideas from the brainstorming exercise to work on. Discuss the nature of the target audience for your advertisement and how you could design your advertisement to promote a positive and honest sense of identity for the chosen audience.



DEVELOPMENT OF IDENTITY: WRITING

OBJECTIVE:

To examine ways in which self-esteem can change with personal circumstances such as those associated with family and friendships, achievement and employment.

FROM THE SCRIPT

ACT 1, SCENE 7

Tracy, a new teen idol, has her phone ringing off the hook. Her mother, Edna, is also celebrated as the popular mother of her popular daughter. Both Tracy and Edna quickly adapt to their newly forming "glam" images and roles in the popular culture.

ALL: YOUR MAMA'S WELCOMING THE SIXTIES, OH OH OH OH OH OH OH OH OH
YOUR MAMA'S WELCOMING THE SIXTIES, OH OH OH OH OH OH OH OH OH
GO MAMA, GO, GO, GO!

(FANS besiege TRACY for photos and autographs.)

DYNAMITES: WELCOME TO THE RHYTHM OF A BRAND NEW DAY

TRACY: TAKE YOUR OLD-FASHIONED FEARS

DYNAMITES: AND JUST THROW THEM AWAY

MR. PINKY'S STAFF: YOU SHOULD ADD SOME COLOR AND A FRESH NEW "DO"

DYNAMITES: 'CAUSE IT'S TIME FOR A STAR WHO LOOKS JUST LIKE YOU!

JUDINE: DONCHA LET NOBODY TRY TO STEAL YOUR FUN

'CAUSE A LITTLE TOUCH OF LIPSTICK NEVER HURT NO ONE

KAMILAH: THE FUTURE'S GOT A MILLION ROADS FOR YOU TO CHOOSE
BUT YOU'LL WALK A LITTLE TALLER IN SOME HIGH-HEEL SHOES

SHAYNA: AND ONCE YOU FIND THE STYLE THAT MAKES YOU FEEL LIKE YOU'RE
SOMETHING FRESH AND NEW

DYNAMITES: STEP ON OUT
HEAR US SHOUT

TRACY & DYNAMITES: MAMA, THAT'S YOUR CUE!!!
YEAH, YEAH, YEAH

(EDNA emerges from the shop looking resplendent.)

EXERCISE

Begin with a class discussion. How do you think you would react to stardom? Has Tracy made significant changes to her personality in order to fit into a new group? To what extent do you think she would find being in a group where people function differently from her a positive or negative experience?

Brainstorm the effects of social acceptance on self-esteem and personality. Explore its influence on how we dress, speak, walk, eat, and generally conduct our lives. Talk through possible scenarios that focus on issues of social acceptance and personal confidence. Discuss the relationship between the two concepts. We have all been in situations where a cultural environment has conflicted with our personalities. We have also probably all experienced situations where the cultural environment supports and accepts our personalities. Note: "Cultural environment" can refer to cultural trends, such as hip-hop, as well as to ethnic culture. In a short written exercise, recall - in bullet points - examples of your experiences of these two contrasting situations.

When you have completed this list, choose one of the situations you have recalled to develop into a two page essay. This essay should have the following structure:

- Paragraph one. Describe and define the cultural situation that you have chosen to represent, concluding the paragraph with a statement about how comfortable you felt in that situation.

- Paragraph two. Describe your experience in that specific cultural situation in the first person, so that the reader can see who you are and how you affected and were affected by the situation.

- Paragraph three. Describe an incident that is indicative of how well you did or did not function in that social situation.

To summarise, you will be writing an essay about a comfortable or uncomfortable social situation which you can recall and find interesting to write about.



DEVELOPMENT OF IDENTITY: PRACTICAL WORK

OBJECTIVE:

To explore how personal qualities and attitudes; skills and achievements are evaluated and how these affect confidence building and self-esteem.

FROM THE SCRIPT

ACT 1, SCENE 8

The Turnblads, Motormouth Maybelle's family, and all the people who have been marginalised become idols of teen culture. With confidence, strength of character, and enthusiasm, they accept and relish their new positions. However, the group that has been overshadowed by Tracy and Seaweed's success takes a spiteful revenge as expressed in this scene.

AMBER: Well, well, well, Tracy Tugboat, you finally found a title you could win:
Miss Special Ed!

LINK: Knock it off, Amber

TRACY: Amber Von Tussle, you have acne of the soul.

GYM TEACHER: Students...Commence!

(And with a shrill whistle the game begins. AMBER gets the ball and throws it at TRACY.)

AMBER: Hey, thunder thighs, dodge this!

TRACY: You throw like a girl!

SEAWEED: Hey, no fair throwing at the head.

GYM TEACHER: That's right, go for his nuts!

(The ball barely misses his head)

LINK: Everybody take it easy. This isn't World War Three.

(AMBER gets the ball away from LINK and takes dead aim at TRACY'S head.)

AMBER: Says you! Eat dodge ball, Trampy Ton-olard!

(She viciously snaps the ball right into TRACY's head. TRACY crumples to the ground, knocked out. A whistle blows.)

GYM TEACHER: Game over.

(School bell rings)

Class dismissed! All right girls, who wants to take a shower? Extra credit!

(The GIRLS and GYM TEACHER exit)

EXERCISE

Begin the lesson with a discussion. What do you think a fair society would look like? Do you think it is possible for groups to treat each other with fairness? Do you feel as if you are part of a group that is mostly privileged, not privileged, or very much in a neutral position? How do you identify yourself within this group?

It is difficult to imagine what it feels like to be in either a high or low-status group, unless you have experienced it first hand. The following is a class exercise that can provide this experience.

Over the next two days, as a class, choose a privileged group based on gender. For example, on the first day, females will make-up the high-status group. They will be called upon first when the class raise their hands to volunteer answers. They will receive praise for their answers and in general they will be the subject of attention. The other students will mostly be ignored except for points of criticism. The class can come up with tasks for the male students to perform for the others, such as sharpening pencils upon request, carrying books to class, opening doors, etc. On the second day, change the status of these gender groups and repeat this exercise.

Finally, as a class, discuss the impact this exercise had on you and the group that you were part of. Develop this into a discussion about the ways in which status distinctions can be eradicated and groups can be equalised.

An alternative role-playing exercise could involve students acting out stories based on newspaper headlines that suggest status relationships. In these improvisations, students can be stopped and asked to reflect on their roles of privilege or lack of privilege. Students can then switch roles and replay these improvisations.



ACTIVITIES LINKED TO THE ARTS (DRAMA)

The following activities support the teaching of Drama. They can also be adapted to the 'speaking and listening' components of English.

BACKGROUND NOTES: "YOU CAN'T STOP THE BEAT"

A conversation with Marc Shaiman and Scott Wittman, composer and co-lyricist of Hairspray.

StageNOTES: How do you work together when you write?

MARC SHAIMAN: I beg Scott to come into the room with the piano. We think of the idea for a song, and I'll just sit at the piano and sort of ... "Play, monkey, play!" (laughs)

SCOTT WITTMAN: Everything's done at the piano. We don't sit in separate rooms and write. We sit at the piano and figure out what the scene calls for and what the character wants.

MS: I start playing music – it comes pretty simply for me – and then we start carving away from the top. And as the lyrics start forming I amend the melody or chords.

SN: What kind of research did you do for Hairspray?

MS: Both as procrastination and as a very valuable tool, we'll go off and buy every possible reference book on the subject.

SW: Lots of research books. I also bought seventeen magazines of the period on eBay.

MS: We found a great book called Black Talk, a fantastic book about the last century of black slang. We actually have a lot of books on slang, but none that were so particular to the black community.

SW: "The blacker the berry, the sweeter the juice" was in there.

MS: When we saw it there on paper, we thought, "Hm, that's a great phrase."

SW: "Run and Tell That" came out of there as well. We make lists of the words that pop out at us, until we find the title or the hook.

SN: Were you inspired by particular '60s songs?

MS: For every song in the score, I could tell you two songs that were the inspiration for the musical groove. "You Can't Stop the Beat" is inspired by "River Deep, Mountain High." There's also a connection with "The Beat Goes On," which meant "life goes on." It sort of means the same thing here, but it's both figuratively and literally about "the beat." "Good Morning, Baltimore" certainly has the sound of "Be My Baby." "Heat Wave" has the basic groove for "Welcome to the Sixties." "Without Love" was inspired by "Your Love Keeps Lifting Me Higher" and "You're All I Need to Get By." I cheated a little there and went a little further into the '60s than the time period of Hairspray. My idea –and my excuse (laughs) – was that the kids are thinking ahead. The first time we wrote the song "Without Love," Seaweed started it, and we had the book writers give him lines into the song that said, "Somewhere out there there's a new world, new rhythms, new sounds."

SN: What song was the most difficult for you to write?

MS: Velma's song kept changing and changing.

SW: After Tracy sang "I Can Hear the Bells," the audience was so enamored of her they didn't want anyone on stage calling her fat or ugly.

MS: But in the story we had to immediately have her rejected because of the way she looks, and her principles.

- SW:** We wrote a song called “No One On My TV Show Will Ever Look Like That,” and the audience wasn’t having it.
- MS:** The audience hated Tracy being so poked fun of, even though it was by the villain and you obviously hate her for saying those things. Then we tried another song with the same melody, called “I Prefer the Status Quo,” which was a more veiled way for Velma to reject Tracy – to speak in a bigoted way without being found out. But finally we realised that we needed to write something funny.
- SW:** “Miss Baltimore Crabs” gave her a showier, “Disney villainess” – style number.
- MS:** Even with that song, we had to cut it down to the bare minimum. We just needed to make the point that Tracy’s not getting on the show, and that the villain is lost in her illusions.
- SN:** Were you interested in theatre when you were in high school?
- SW:** I grew up in Nanuet, New York. I was in every musical and in every play – I think we did three a year. But even if I didn’t get a part in the show, I would be on the stage crew – anything to be involved. This is terrible, but I cut school every Wednesday and I’d go into the city and buy standing room tickets to shows. I just saw as much as I could. All through high school in the summer I would apprentice in summer stock, for no money. I think at one point they wanted me to pay them (laughs). One week you’d be doing props, one week you’d be on the stage crew, one week you’d be a dresser. I learned a lot from watching those actors – how to put a show on in a week. I did anything I could to be around theatre.
- MS:** I left high school with a G.E.D. I moved to New York less than a year later, and just had a fairy-tale entrance into the business. I met the people I dreamed about meeting, and I started working right away. It’s always tough when people ask how to do what I’ve been lucky enough to do. There’s no way to re-create what happened with me. All I can say is, you have to be out there doing it. Have courage and self confidence – you can’t do much if you don’t have that. But, there’s not a day that goes by that I don’t wish that I had a college education in music, and had a chance to further my musical knowledge. I’ve had to learn things by the skin of my teeth, and I can’t imagine anything more glorious than being spoon fed the rules of orchestration, and the history of it all. I wish I’d had that.
- SN:** Can you compare writing music for movies to writing a Broadway musical?
- MS:** Writing music for movies is very thrilling – you get a hundred-piece orchestra playing your music. Movies are just so huge. When you work on something, and you know that everyone in the country or the world knows about it, it’s almost surreal. But nothing can compare to human beings singing songs that you’ve written, and singing them so well. It’s amazing to see everything fall together the way it did on Hairspray – the set costumes, direction, choreography. And then for it to be such a hit, to make an audience so joyous every night – that’s truly unspeakably satisfying, there are just no words to describe that satisfaction.



THE ARTS (DRAMA): DISCUSSION AND IMPROVISATION

OBJECTIVE:

To discover how comedy can be used to explore complex ideas and issues in improvised work.

FROM THE SCRIPT

ACT 1, SCENE 8

In this scene, Tracy and Penny meet Seaweed and his mother, Motormouth Maybelle on their turf in an "Afro-Fantastic" scene. Tracy has bounced back from the assault by Amber in the gym and she is in the company of her allies. Link has joined them in friendship, but he still isn't bold enough to protest against the prejudice that his new friends face everyday. Tracy learns a life lesson about the generous nature of love and the need to believe that good can overcome bad choices.

EDNA: Oooooooooohhhh!!!! Tracy, that was you!

(Calling out the door)

Wilbur! It was the kids I saw.

TRACY: Mama, what are you doing here?

EDNA: I had a sudden craving for chicken and waffles, so we drove up to Ruby's Take-Out across the street. Hello everyone. I'm Tracy's mom.

VELMA: (Taking in EDNA)
Oh! So, you're what spawned that!

EDNA: Excuse me?

VELMA: I guess you two are living proof that the watermelon doesn't fall very far from the vine.

EDNA: Tracy, be a dear and hold mommy's waffles.

(EDNA takes a threatening step toward VELMA as WILBUR enters.)

LINK: I like these people. But whether or not they're on TV won't get me a recording contract.

(Realises that sounds too shallow)

That comes out all wrong. I've been singing and dancing and smiling on that show for three years waiting for it to lead to my break... I'm not gonna throw it away. C'mon, I'm leaving and you gotta too.

(He starts toward the door.)

TRACY: No! I want to do this, and so should you. It's what's right. Stay, Link. Please stay.

LINK: Sorry...See ya, little darlin'. (He exits.)

TRACY: Oh Mama...how could I think Link Larkin would ever care about someone like me?

EDNA: ...It's just Eddie Fisher all over again...boys are not the brightest things. Give him time. I'm sure he'll figure out he's crazy about you.

EXERCISE

In *Hairspray*, many of the characters use humour as a way of coping with problems. For example, Edna makes jokes to take away the sting of Amber and Velma's insults in the record shop scene. When we go through painful moments, finding the funny side of the situation often helps us get through it.

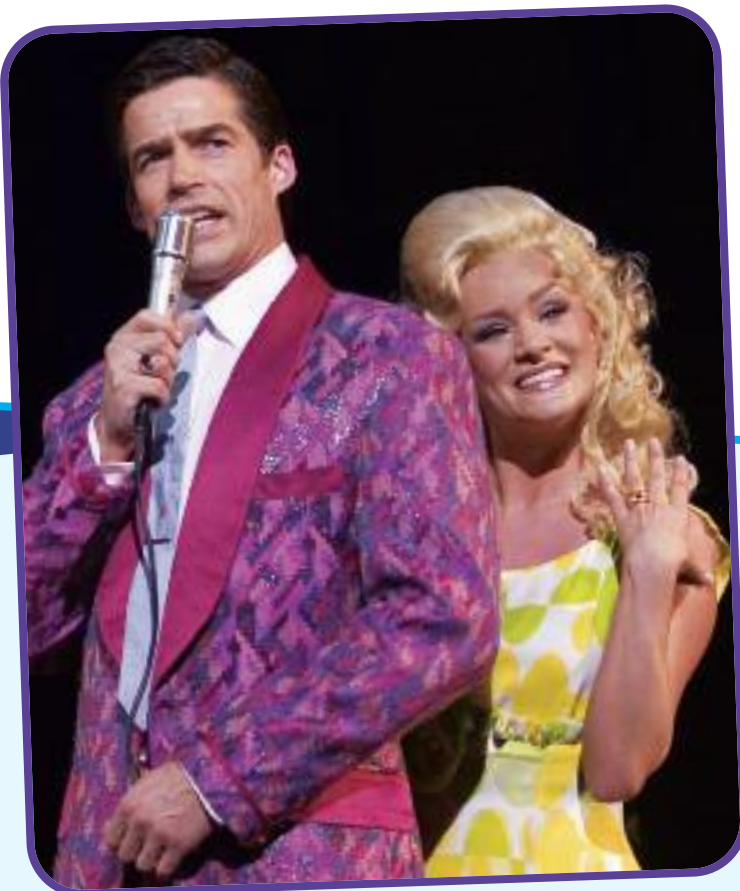
As a class, brainstorm elements that make a situation funny. Often the funniest personal stories come from the awful things that happen to us. The comedy becomes apparent to us when the tragedy of the moment has passed.

In the above scene, observe the use of different kinds of comedic lines:

- Insult: "The watermelon doesn't fall very far from the vine."
- Understatement: "Tracy, be a dear and hold mommy's waffles."

What is the effect of each of these lines? Velma's mean-spiritedness is made evident through her insults. Edna, by contrast, shows the most restraint, and gets the biggest laughs in performance. She says the least, but at the same time reveals to us that she is smarter than the others. When we see Edna respond to a vicious attack with a witty remark, we as an audience side with her, enjoying her victory over her petty opponents. Motormouth, Edna, Tracy and Seaweed all respond to racism and insults with wit.

As a class, discuss how you handle similar situations: is it possible to respond to all situations with kindness and humour?



In pairs, each think of a situation that you have been in that has comic potential and that involved you and one other person. Discuss these with each other. Did you find the situation funny initially or only in retrospect? Now work on staging each situation as a short, prepared improvisation.

Present a selection of the prepared improvisations to the rest of the class. Discuss where the comedy lies in each scene when performed.

THE ARTS (DRAMA): SCRIPT WRITING AND PERFORMANCE

OBJECTIVE:

To use contrasting characters as a starting point for creating a scripted scene and to explore the potential of the scene in performance.

FROM THE SCRIPT

ACT 2, SCENE 1

There has been a raucous demonstration to integrate The Corny Collins Show. The efforts to open images of black and white teens dancing together get proponents and opponents alike thrown in jail together, and a new character, the matron of the prison, is introduced to heighten the intensity of an already thickening plot.

(The FEMALE CAST, with the exception of PRUDY, are in jail! A MATRON stands watch over them.)

WOMEN: I GOTTA GET OUT,
I GOTTA GET OUT,
I GOTTA GET OUT,
HOW'D I GET IN THIS SLAMMER
THIS COOLER,
THIS BIG DOLLHOUSE!

MATRON: Alright, ladies, welcome to the big dollhouse! For those of you new to the penal system I'm letting you know now that I don't stand for boozing, doping, cussing, gambling, fighting, or any other sort of unladylike behaviour. Think of me as a mother... who eats her young.

VELMA: LOCKED UP WITH ALL THESE
LOWLIFE WOMEN

EDNA: AND HORIZONTAL STRIPES
AIN'T EXACTLY SLIMMIN'

AMBER: IS THERE ANYBODY HERE WHO CAN DRY
CLEAN MY BLOUSE?

MATRON: IT'S THE MAID'S DAY OFF

ALL: IN THE BIG DOLLHOUSE

LITTLE INEZ: LADY JUSTICE WHERE HAVE YOU GONE?

EDNA: OOH, WILBUR, CHECK, I THINK I LEFT
THE IRON ON!

VELMA: DID YOU SEE CORNY LAUGHING?
I COULD MURDER THAT LOUSE!

ALL: HONEY, THAT'LL GETCHA LIFE
IN THE BIG DOLLHOUSE
BIG HOUSE!

EXERCISE

Working independently, choose three people who you know, or have met, who have contrasting personalities. Taking no longer than fifteen minutes, write down a list of characteristics each of these people possess. Using these lists as your guide, write a scripted scene in which your chosen characters have been thrown into jail and are forced to interact with each other.

In groups of three, read each of your scenes aloud, allocating parts to the group to act out/interpret as they see fit. In each case, discuss how the characters have been portrayed. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the scenes? Choose the scene that you all believe has the most dramatic potential, and set about rehearsing the scene for performance. Note: the writer of the chosen scene may want to rewrite parts of their scene, sharpening characters and dramatic interactions, as suggested by the other members of the group during the earlier discussion.

Finally, present the scenes to the class. Discuss the elements of each scene which successfully portrays each character.



THE ARTS (DRAMA): CREATIVE SKILLS

OBJECTIVE:

To combine acting, movement, singing and ensemble work to create a musical scene.

FROM THE SCRIPT

ACT 2, SCENE 3

Link has come to Tracy to tell her that he loves her. Penny and Seaweed also declare their true love.

PENNY &

SEAWEED: 'CAUSE WITHOUT LOVE

BACKUP: ...WITHOUT LOVE

SEAWEED: LIFE IS LIKE A BEAT THAT YOU CAN'T FOLLOW

BACKUP: OOH-OOH

PENNY &

SEAWEED: WITHOUT LOVE

BACKUP: WITHOUT LOVE

PENNY: LIFE IS DORIS DAY AT THE APOLLO

BACKUP: OOH-OOH

PENNY &

SEAWEED: DARLING, I'LL BE YOURS, FOREVER I'LL BE YOURS FOREVER
'CAUSE I NEVER WANNA BE, WITHOUT LOVE

BACKUP: WITHOUT LOVE

SEAWEED: I'M YOURS FOREVER, NEVER SET ME FREE
NO, NO, NO!

BACKUP: DOOT DOOT DOO DOOT, DOOT DOOT DOO DOOT
NO, NO, NO!

(The light comes on in the jail again. From now on we can see both couples at once.)

LINK: IF YOU'RE LOCKED UP IN THIS, PRISON, TRACE
I DON'T KNOW WHAT I'LL DO
OOH-OOH

BACKUP: OOH-OOH

TRACY: LINK, I'VE GOT TO BREAK OUT, SO THAT I CAN GET MY HANDS ON YOU

BACKUP: OOH-OOH
CAN GET MY HANDS ON YOU

SEAWEED: GIRL, IF I CAN'T TOUCH YOU NOW, I'M GONNA LOSE CONTROL

BACKUP: OOH
LOSE CONTROL

PENNY: SEAWEED, YOU'RE MY BLACK WHITE KNIGHT, I'VE FOUND MY BLUE-EYED SOUL

BACKUP: BLACK WHITE KNIGHT

EXERCISE

This excerpt features four vigorous and appealing parts for principal actors, and a wonderful opportunity for a backup chorus of singers to create a rousing production number.

Divide the class into two groups. Each group should choose a creative team, consisting of a director, a musical director and a choreographer, whose task will be to co-ordinate the different performing arts elements, i.e. acting, singing and choreography, to stage the scene. The creative team have license to adapt the lyrics to a song which the whole group is familiar with. The creative team is also responsible for casting the scene. While staging the songs, take care to concentrate on the storytelling aspect whilst simultaneously keeping the emotions of the original piece in mind.

After the scenes have been rehearsed, present them to the class. Discuss how you prepared your scenes for performance, analysing the rehearsal processes undertaken by both the creative team and the performers.



Resources

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CREDITS

Education Kit adapted for the UK National Curriculum by Sophie Watkiss, on behalf of Stage Entertainment, from the original guide created by StageNOTES, Camp Broadway LLC, New York,

Downloadable from www.hairspraythemusical.com.au



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