

# Theatre Arts, Imagination in Action

## Supporting School-Age Accreditation and Quality Programming

*Theatre Arts* may be integrated into many School-Age project activities and become a long-term project itself. Activities are designed to evolve as children and youth improve their skills in acting, puppetry, and stagecraft. The project strongly supports the quality standards for human relationships and activities.

## Opportunities for Youth Leadership and Development and Cross-age Teaching

*Theatre Arts* requires taking responsibility for planning as well as production. Youth learn to be both leaders and team players by working with younger children to help them appreciate the world of performance. They may develop leadership skills by organizing service-learning projects. Some may be attracted to careers in the theatre arts as producers, directors, actors, technicians, or costumers.

## Ideas! Ideas! Ideas!

The *Theatre Arts* project provides many opportunities for speakers and field trips. Brainstorm with children, youth and parents to find possible speakers and web sites. One place to start is [www.n4hccs.org/projectsonline](http://www.n4hccs.org/projectsonline).



## Providing Quality Middle School and Teen Programming



*Theatre Arts* appeals to teens looking for activities that can be done in groups or individually. They enjoy the opportunity to plan events and take responsibility for their success. It's exciting to build lasting friendships as well as skills that continue to be rewarding in adulthood.

## Summary

Everyone who participates in a *Theatre Arts* project will learn from it. The curriculum and additional resources provide plenty of information to develop both short-term and long-term activities. Share your experiences with family, friends, and the community - and don't forget to use your imagination and have fun!

## Essential Elements of 4-H Youth Development

Through 4-H, youth know they are cared about and feel a sense of BELONGING; they exercise INDEPENDENCE by using decision-making and action to influence people and events; they develop a sense of MASTERY by learning skills needed in making positive career and life choices; and they experience GENEROSITY by helping others through community service. These elements support the Army Youth Development Components of Belonging, Success, Service and Independence.



# THE Army 4-H EXPRESS GUIDE TO

## Theatre Arts, Imagination in Action



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## Project Goals

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## Four Fun Activities

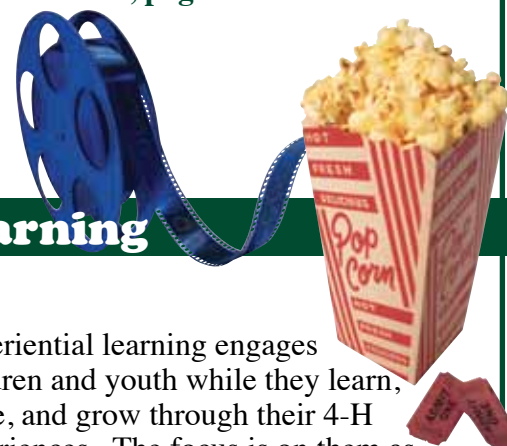


**1** Learning to communicate without words can be an amusing challenge. Working in pairs helps youth focus on this activity. Practice the activity with a partner; then do it in front of a group to build confidence, teamwork, and have a few laughs. See **Mirror, Mirror, Play the Role**, page 10.

**2** What we wear can make us feel different? Provide a collection of hats, accessories, and costumes for children/youth to choose from as they create funny characters. See if different costumes make them feel and act differently. Did they make each other laugh? See **Master of Disguise, Stagecraft**, page 6.

**3** Communicating as puppets helps youth express ideas differently than when they are themselves. Creating a puppet character and performing a three-scene play is an enjoyable way to experience puppetry. See **Bring Your Puppet to Life, Become a Puppeteer**, page 22.

**4** If youth think Cranium is fun, then they'll really like pantomime. Encourage youth to create something out of a big blob of air, then use it without making any sounds. See if others can guess what was made. Youth won't be speaking, but they will be acting. See **The Imaginary Blob Pantomime, Play the Role**, page 8.



## Experiential Learning



Experiential learning engages children and youth while they learn, share, and grow through their 4-H experiences. The focus is on them as learners with an adult as the coach. First comes the “doing” or exploring. Next, youth share what they did and discuss the experience with their peers. After they’ve identified the skills and knowledge gained, help then determine how to apply these to other situations in their lives.

## Project Activity Guides and Target Age Groups

There are three **Activity Guides** and a **Group Activity Helper’s Guide**. The project is designed for grades 4-12 but many of the activities can be adapted for use with children in grades 1-3.

**Play the Role- Theatre Arts Acting Activities** - creative dramatics and informal drama activities encourage individual expression. Rehearsal and performance are not the goals of this project; the emphasis is on having a creative experience that is fun.

**Become a Puppeteer- Theatre Arts Puppetry Activities** - lets youth express ideas and feelings they may not be able to share otherwise. Spontaneous or scripted, puppetry combines skills learned in the other two guides.

**Set the Stage- Theatre Arts Stagecraft Activities** - participants learn about creating the magic of the stage with makeup, costumes, lighting and sound. Theatre is a lot more than acting.

Because the Guides are designed to be used sequentially; youth can begin the series at any age based on their skills and experience.

**Group Activity Helpers Guide**- serves as a resource for *Theatre Arts*. It provides information about stages of youth and group development, and offers tips for ensuring that both youth and adults have fun.

## Related 4-H Projects

Youth and adults who enjoy *Theatre Arts* may consider related projects such as sewing, visual arts, public speaking, and woodworking.

## Life Skills

“Skills that help an individual to be successful in living a productive and satisfying life” are identified as Life Skills (Hendricks, 1996). Life Skills in this project include decision-making, communicating, leading self and others, planning, and organizing. Although each activity specifically targets only one life skill, youth have the opportunity to practice several.



## Integrating Technology

Sound and lighting are technical aspects of more complex theatre arts. Consider taping and editing activities, and then transfer them to CD or DVD. The Internet is a good resource for research and planning. Integrate technology through the use of digital and conventional photography to document the dramatic experience. Additional *Theatre Arts* resources such as fact sheets, games, tips, and links to more websites can be found at [www.n4hccs.org](http://www.n4hccs.org).

## Linking to the Army’s Four Service Areas and Baseline Programming



### Sports, Fitness and Health Options

Understanding body movements is important when performing pantomime or creative dramatics. Performance also requires the stamina and endurance resulting from fitness and good health. Start each *Theatre Arts* session with exercises or conditioning activities to build focus and concentration.

### Arts, Recreation and Leisure Activities

Makeup, mask-making, costuming, set design and building, and puppetry are essential *Theatre Arts* activities supported by this project.

### Life Skills, Citizenship, and Leadership Opportunities

*Theatre Arts, Imagination in Action* features group activities, where the fun comes from working together and developing skills to either lead or support the team. Directing, an essential form of leadership, is taught in this project.

### Academic Support, Mentoring, and Intervention Services

Conflict resolution and teamwork skills that help create a successful performance can also be applied in peer mediation, mentoring younger children, and tutoring. Youth can use role-playing to help others “act out” their conflicts.

## Community Service Service Learning Opportunities

Service should be a part of all 4-H projects as well as Army activities. Demonstration of theatre skills provides a great opportunity for youth to entertain at hospitals, care homes, child development centers, and community festivals.

## Character Connection



Being people of character is always important. Encourage youth to consider all of the roles involved in a successful performance and to be respectful of each one from lighting technician to actor.

Additional character resources can be found at [www.4-hmilitarypartnerships.org](http://www.4-hmilitarypartnerships.org)