



Page to Stage

Plays from Classic Literature



Contents

Letter to the Teacher v



THEME: Who Am I?

Frankenstein

Lesson 2

Assessment 5

Stand and Deliver

Lesson 6

Assessment 9

Selkie

Lesson 10

Assessment 13



THEME: Family Matters

Great Expectations

Lesson 14

Assessment 17

Ordinary People

Lesson 18

Assessment 21

The Veldt

Lesson 22

Assessment 25



THEME: To Be a Hero

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight

Lesson 26

Assessment 29

The Red Badge of Courage

Lesson 30

Assessment 33

Black Elk Speaks

Lesson 34

Assessment 37



Dear Teacher,

Page to Stage is a new concept in the study of drama. All the plays in this book originated as other kinds of literature— short stories, novels, myths, fables, and so on. The plays are presented with information as to how they might best be understood and performed as theatre—with an eye toward the literature that inspired them. Works such as *Great Expectations*, *Frankenstein*, and *Animal Farm* are examined in terms of how the original work is given new life as a theatrical piece. We believe this approach will draw students in and help them understand and appreciate good literature as well as fine playwriting.

Two pages that give background for reading precede each play. One literary element is featured (including an excerpt from the original work that students compare to an excerpt from the play). One dramatic element is also featured, which students will consider as they read.

After each play, students are asked to analyze the play, demonstrate understanding of a literary skill, and work on a performance element.

These plays were chosen for their liveliness, high social and historical interest, varied subject matter and style, and interesting characterizations. We hope that you and your students enjoy them.

The Editors

Stand and Deliver

inspired by the life of Jaime Escalante

written by Ramón Menéndez and Tom Musca

adapted for the stage by Robert Bella

Plot Summary

Jaime Escalante is a new teacher at Garfield High School in East Los Angeles. It is a poor school in danger of losing its accreditation. Escalante was hired to teach computer classes, but is assigned, on his first day, to remedial math. He believes his students should take higher-level classes, and sets out to prove it. Battling his students' boredom, hopelessness, gang culture, and poverty—as well as his own health problems—Escalante leads his students through algebra, geometry, and calculus. After obtaining a commitment to attend extra classes, Escalante prepares his students for the AP calculus exam. All eighteen of his students pass, many with the highest score possible. This feat leads the Educational Testing Service to suspect cheating among his students. After battling the ETS, Escalante arranges to have his students retake the test—with only a day's notice. His students retake the test and, again, every student passes, some with perfect scores. The students' success initiates a trend in achievement that brings lasting success to Garfield High.

Creating Context: Conflict Resolution

Recognizing the need for a system by which conflicts can be resolved, many law schools and social work agencies have begun promoting mediation as a form of dispute resolution. Through mediation, parties who are locked in disagreement can bring their issues to an impartial third party, a mediator who helps them communicate to each other the grievances they have and the solutions they seek. Thus, the mediator is able to work toward a solution in which both parties are satisfied, rather than a result by which one party wins and the other loses.

Over the past decade, many high schools have begun using the principles of mediation to institute peer dispute resolution. Through peer dispute resolution, teens help other teens resolve discipline issues such as truancy and repeated tardiness, social issues such as bullying, and crimes such as theft. They do this by implementing the basic processes of conflict resolution, the culmination of which is a contract that all parties sign.

Biographical Background: Jaime Escalante Considered one of our nation's top educators, Jaime Escalante was born in La Paz, Bolivia, in 1930. He had a degree in mathematics, but was forced to take a number of menial jobs to earn a living when he arrived here. After earning a math degree at an American university, he took his first teaching job at the impoverished Garfield High. There, he inspired his students to achieve the nation's highest levels in math and calculus. Because of Escalante, many of these students went on to attend prestigious colleges with full scholarships.

As a Reader: Interpreting Conflict

Stand and Deliver offers conflict on many levels: between students, between Escalante and the administration, between Escalante and his students, and between the class and the Educational Testing Service. Each conflict follows in miniature the arc of the play. That is, action progresses and the conflict builds. There is a climax, and the action is altered by the resolution of the conflict.

As a Director: Working with Conflict

Explain to students that opposing forces have interests or needs in common. This draws them to each other, despite their opposing desires. Encourage students to recall a conflict in their lives and to outline the following:

- The opposing action or object desired by each party.
- What the action or object symbolized for each party.
- What each party wanted from the other on an emotional level.
- How the conflict was resolved.

Discussing and Interpreting

Play Analysis

1. Escalante could teach anyone of average intelligence who was committed to learning calculus. He would probably have trouble teaching a student who was not interested in learning.
2. Answers will vary but should take into account the reasons why the different parties want what they want, and how the conflict is resolved.
3. Answers will vary, but should show that thought was given to the question.
4. Answers will vary, but should refer to the interests and abilities the characters displayed in the school setting as well as other areas of their lives.
5. **Thematic Connection: Who Am I?** Encourage students to embody all of the characteristics of the character they choose, whether charming, troubling, or dignified.

Literary Skill: Analyze the Script

Invite students to illuminate Escalante's thoughts and intentions in any of the following ways:

- Write additional dialogue for Escalante. Make sure the dialogue is in keeping with Escalante's normal, jocular tone.
- Rewrite the scene as a journal entry, with Escalante annotating his own lines. His annotations might employ a different, more vulnerable tone than his actual speech, since they are intimate thoughts he might not share with anyone.
- Add asides, in which Escalante speaks to the audience as well as Chuco. These asides would display the way in which Escalante talks to other adults and the public at large, rather than his students. It might remain guarded and jocular, but would probably be slightly more formal.

Invite students to read each other's scripts and to perform or read the alternative scenes for the class.

Performance Element: Direct the Scene

You might want to reflect with students on the fact that a director's role is much like that of a mediator. That is, he or she must understand the action from the point of view of each character, then synthesize a point of view from which to direct the play as a whole. If the director fails to fully understand any one character, he or she consigns that character to a narrow, one-sided representation.

- Assign each student in the class to take on the role of Escalante, Chuco, or Angel. Ask each student to describe his or her character's attitude, motivation, and body language in the most positive, sympathetic terms possible. Then invite students to describe the other two characters through the eyes of their particular character.
- Some directors like to work from the inside out, working with motivations and letting the actors move at will. Others work from the outside in, prescribing movements but allowing the actors to discover their own emotional truth. Ask students to choose a method and develop an annotated text for the scene, showing either blocking or emotional beats for actors to find.

For Deeper Understanding

THE ACTOR SAID:



"Discipline to do the things you love and you don't feel like doing will make you the best you can be."

Edward James Olmos

(Jaime Escalante in the film *Stand and Deliver*)

Research and Drama

Ask students to research and report on the fashions, slang, current movies, and popular topics during the period covered in the play. Students can present their findings in a formal research paper, a fashion show, a monologue in slang, a movie review, or a discussion of a popular topic of the time. Remind students that their presentations are to be closely based upon facts they unearthed through research.

Character Development

The set for this play is extremely simple, and all the students share the setting. Help students list ways in which they can help audience members distinguish one character from another. The list should include clothing, hair, language, movement, posture, ways in which characters use stage furniture (such as chairs), and props (such as hats, pencils, books, and paper).

Costume Design

To help students develop appropriate costumes, ask them to bring in magazines or family photos of people from the 1980s. Encourage interested students to wear their hair in the style of the period.

Publicity

Stand and Deliver is an entertaining and inspiring play, but it is also complex. The play's conflicts and achievements are difficult to convey in a simple, compelling way. Challenge students to develop a poster that inspires interest in the play while remaining true to the actual plot and theme.

Media Recommendations

Article by Jaime Escalante

"Math Is the Great Equalizer," in *Engineering Education*, v. 78, no. 8, p. 744-76, May 1988. (Reviews the methods Escalante used as well as the film that details his success. Includes a biography of Escalante.)

DVD/Video Recording

Stand and Deliver, directed by Ramón Menéndez, produced by Tom Musca. Burbank, CA: Warner Home Video, 1998. One videodisc of the 1988 feature film. (1 hour, 43 minutes)

Internet Links

There are many web sites that offer help in resolving conflict. The following are two of many that should prove helpful:
http://weinholds.org/conflict_resolution4.htm
<http://www.conflict-resolution.org/>

Assessment for Stand and Deliver

Reading the Play

This play contains a great number of distinct characters. Read each line. Identify which character said it, and then write the correct letter on the blank line.

- | | | | |
|--------------------|-----------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| a. Jaime Escalante | b. Ana Delgado | c. Javier Perales | d. Claudia Camejo |
| e. Pancho Garcia | f. Angel Guerra | g. Chuco | h. Rafaela Fuentes |
| i. Lupe Escobar | j. Tito Guitano | | |

- _____ 1. Won't be long 'fore I'm cruising around in the fiercest piece of machinery in East Los.
- _____ 2. You like to talk, that's okay ... Let's talk *numbers*.
- _____ 3. Dear Mama. My teacher say to write always the English so to get good.
- _____ 4. Dear Lord ... give me the taste buds for the fruits and veggies that are gonna make me skinny in the eyes of this world.
- _____ 5. I've never gotten anything lower than a B+ in my entire life.
- _____ 6. Pancho. He doesn't even know how good he's got it with Lupe. She's perfect for him.
- _____ 7. Where are you going? Come back!...Angel?...*Angel!!!*
- _____ 8. We're still blood, homes.
- _____ 9. I have an appointment at USC. It's related to my scholarship.
- _____ 10. Me and my band were swimming with dolphins, whispering imaginary numbers, lookin' for the fourth dimension...

Writing on the Theme: Who Am I?

Most college applications include an essay portion in which students must describe their goals. Choose one character from the play and write his or her essay. Use information gleaned from the play to discuss your character's life circumstances and possible career direction.

Performing

Choose one of the following activities to perform:

- Cast and direct a scene in which Angel and Chuco patch up their differences. Remember to include both the conflict and its resolution.
- Write a scene that takes place in the teachers' lounge after Escalante learns that all his students passed the AP exam in calculus.
- Write and perform a monologue by Armando, the janitor, about his quest to earn a GED.

Reproducibles

The following ten pages contain reproducible charts and drawings to aid your students in all elements of play production. Feel free to reproduce these in any quantity you may need for your class.

Who's Who in Play Production	71
Character Map	72
The Proscenium Stage	73
The Thrust Stage	74
The Arena Stage	75
Costume Design Worksheet	76
Costume Plot Worksheet	77
Makeup Worksheet	78
Light or Sound Cue Sheet	79
Set or Prop Planning Worksheet	80

Who's Who in Play Production

