



Educator Resources

YOUNG AUDIENCES PROGRAM

CHAVEZ RAVINE

REVISITED. REMIXED. REVIVAL.

BY **CULTURE CLASH**

DIRECTED BY **LISA PETERSON**

Jan 27 – Mar 1, 2015
Kirk Douglas Theatre

Herbert Siguenza, 2003 production of *Chavez Ravine* at the Mark Taper Forum. PHOTO BY CRAIG SCHWARTZ.

Welcome

Project Faculty

Resident Teaching Artist
Debra Piver

Writer
Megan Mathews

Teaching Artists
Leslie Ishii
Marcos Nájera

Center Theatre Group is excited to have you and your students join us at *Chavez Ravine* created and performed by Culture Clash. A great play raises questions about the human condition and a great educational experience allows students an opportunity to reflect upon those questions and begin to discover their own answers. To that end the material in Center Theatre Group's Discovery Guide and Educator Resources raise questions: questions about land and home, questions about power and politics, questions about public good and who gets to decide what is good in the public interest. Our goal is to provide you with a variety of entry points into *Chavez Ravine* so that you can choose what best suits you and your students.

The Educator Resources and Discovery Guide are companion pieces, designed to help you prepare your students to see the play and to follow-up the performance with options for discussion, reflection and creativity.

We have organized the Educator Resources into the following sections:

Discovery Guide

The Discovery Guide provides students with background information about the play and the subject matter, as well as questions for individual reflection. Written to be student-driven, the Discovery Guide helps prepare your students for the performance.

About This Play

This section includes a scene-by-scene synopsis of the play to provide you with detailed information about the content and form of the play.

Comprehension

This section includes background information about the setting and subject matter of the play. We have selected the information that most directly connects to or informs what happens in the play.

This section furthers and deepens the background information provided in the Discovery Guide. This section can be shared before the play and/or discussed after the performance. It can also be used to provide research topics for your classroom.

Connections and Creativity

This section provides ways to explore connections between the ideas presented in the play, the students' lives, and the world we live in. In addition, it provides opportunities for your students to use theatre to explore and express. Theatre activities are included that examine both specific artistic aspects of the production, as well as delve deeper into the ideas and questions raised by the production. The questions, activities and information in this section can be used both before and after the performance.

We know the hard work and dedication that it takes to bring students to see theatre. These materials are designed to support you in making the most of that experience. We applaud your passion for sharing theatre with your students and thank you for sharing your students with all of us at Center Theatre Group. We look forward to seeing you at *Chavez Ravine*.



601 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

About the play

Chavez Ravine

Table Of Contents

Welcome.....	2
About the Play	3
Comprehension	12
Connections and Creativity	23
References	38
Credits	39

This section includes a scene-by-scene synopsis of the play to provide you with detailed information about the content and form of the play.

Scene-by-Scene

Prologue – Opening Day at Dodger Stadium, April 9, 1981

Radio Announcer Vin Skully sets the scene. It's a perfect California day – the skies are blue and the sun is warm. Something exciting is in the air, and the 50,000 fans in the stands can feel it. They may not realize it yet, but they are about to witness an historic Opening Day – a last minute substitution has been made to the starting line-up. Veteran pitcher Jerry Reuss has been injured, so 20-year-old Rookie Fernando Valenzuela is on the mound.

Strike 1! Strike 2! Dodger fans are on Fernando's side right away. He prepares for his third pitch, but something distracts him. A small house materializes near second base. With it, Maria and Henry Ruiz– ghosts from the 1940s – a brother and sister who grew up on the land that's now beneath Dodger Stadium.

They begin to tell Fernando their story – the story of homes, families, friends and neighbors who lived on the land for generations before the stadium was built. They describe the beautiful hills and valleys; the neighborhood characters they remember so well; the local customs and beliefs; the thriving family gardens and vibrant wild flowers.

“Sacred land, Fernando,” Maria says, “Don't ever let anyone tell you otherwise.”

Act I – A Poor Man's Shangri-La Is Still A Shangri-La

The courtyard of Santo Niño Church, 1944

It's Father Tommy's birthday and the whole community is gathered at 4:00am to celebrate. 16-year-old Maria (aka The Ravine Ringleader and organizer of this party) asks the priest if she can use the church courtyard for the Garment Union Fundraiser the following week. He agrees, but wonders why she never brings her colleagues to Sunday Mass. Her explanation is simple – they're mostly Jewish.

“Never mind, then,” says Father Thomas as he turns to greet Señora Sanchez.

The eccentric Señora Sanchez, leaning heavily on her cane, begins her litany of personal complaints – arthritis, flatulence – asks if the mariachis from Boyle Heights will be playing today (Nope – today's musicians are the Rodarte Brothers from City Terrace), then compliments the priest on the service he conducted for a neighbor's funeral. He is surprised to hear that the deceased's body is still at the house, “Lying on the table, dead as you please, right next to the potato salad,” Señora Sanchez informs him, “Señora Casos is not ready to leave the Ravine yet.” Señora Sanchez calls the Rodarte Brothers pot-smokers and exits.

While Father Tommy watches her go, Henry sneaks up behind him. They embrace warmly. Father Tommy is delighted to have Henry, the war hero, returned safely home. Henry is

About the Play | Comprehension | Connections & Creativity

relieved to be back, but a little disheartened, and carries with him the painful memories of combat. He observes that the neighborhood hasn't changed since he was gone – the same one-lane dirt road, water is still delivered by the ice man who carries it in frozen blocks up 144 steps every day.

Henry and Father Tommy take a moment to remember Henry's brother Arturo who died in the war. They begin to talk about where Henry and his family will settle down as Henry's mother approaches. Henry's not sure whether or not he will stay in the neighborhood, in the house built by his father. It's clear the war has affected Henry in ways he can't yet articulate.

Chicano Dead Poet Society

Just then, the Rodarte Brothers break into a dance song. As everyone in the courtyard dances, poet Manazar Gamboa enters and introduces himself to the audience – for the duration of the play, he will be the audience's "dead poet-ghost presence-narrator device." He explains that only the audience can see and hear him.

Old photographs from the neighborhood appear all around him – photos from when he was young, growing up in Chavez Ravine. He points out the women in the photos wearing army hats decorated with small stars commemorating their family members who were serving in WWII, like Henry. He describes his neighbors – Italians, Slavs, Russians, and Germans, but mostly "era pura Mexicanada." He describes the smells of home cooked tamales and menudo; the sounds of guitar music; the occasional fight in the church parking lot; and the parties and dances.

Manazar also describes some of the locals – like Nicky Apodaca, a real ham and an endearing (although not very good) comedian, and the Pachucos (aka Zoot Suiters). He goes on to list a bunch of these local characters by their nicknames. He remembers many adventures: skinny dipping and fishing in the L.A. River; walking with his friends all over the city; stealing coins from fountains to pay for the trolley ride to the Coliseum; smoking pot and drinking in Elysian Park.

"Up here, this was our community, our home," he tells the audience, "and that is something you can never erase from your cabeza."

High in the hills of Elysian Park

Frank Wilkinson from the Los Angeles Housing Authority gives Austrian architect Richard Neutra a tour of the ravine. Wilkinson believes that the hills, sunshine and fresh air make the area a perfect location for an affordable housing development, and the current residents the ideal beneficiaries of new, modern apartments.

This is Wilkinson's dream project, "Real homes in the Hills of Chavez Ravine, by golly, and the City Fathers are gonna pay for it!" He goes on to explain that the law of Eminent Domain and the recently passed Federal Housing Act of 1949 make it possible to "realize my dream, a dream for all Angelenos, a city without slums. Real homes for the people!" The new

About the Play | Comprehension | Connections & Creativity

neighborhood will be called Elysian Park Heights. Wilkinson and Neutra rush downtown to pitch their idea.

Downtown Office of the Los Angeles Housing Authority

Back at the office, Wilkinson consults with his boss, Howard Holtzendorff. Wilkinson is startled when in the middle of his enthusiastic pitch, Holtzendorff tells him he'll have to sign a loyalty oath – the federal government's making everyone in the department sign them. Millions of dollars are at stake. Reluctantly, Wilkinson signs the oath. After he does so, Holtzendorff turns his attention to the letter the Housing Authority will send to the residents of Chavez Ravine. He reads it aloud.

"July 24, 1950

To the families of Chavez Ravine areas;

This letter is to inform you that a public housing development will be built on this location for families of low income. The attached map shows the property that is going to be used. The house you are living in is included.

You will be visited by representatives of the Housing Authority who will inspect your house in order to estimate its value. It will be several months before your property is purchased. Later, you will have first chance to move back into the new Elysian Park Heights development."

At the same time, Maria receives and reads the letter to her mother and Henry.

"...Su casa en que vive esta incluida.

Usted sera visitado por un representate de la Autoridad de vivienda para inspeccionar su casa y estimar su valor. Su casa y propiedad sera comprado por la ciudad. Usted tendra primer oportunidad de mudarse al nuevo proyecto Elysian Park Heights development."

Snow in the Ravine

Christmas Eve. Miraculously, it snowed!

Henry and Maria are in their mother's kitchen. Henry wants to talk about the letter from the L.A. Housing Authority. He's done more research, and he and his wife have decided to take the city's offer. Mother and Maria are dismayed – they can't believe he's willing to sell the house his father built and leave the neighborhood. Henry doesn't understand them – besides the fact that the neighbors are also all leaving, their dad walked out on them; he obviously didn't care about them so why should they care about the house he built? Mother slaps him and calls him a disgrace. He can leave, but Maria and their mother are staying. They argue.

Mother acknowledges that Henry has his own family and has to do what he thinks is best for them. But he'd better think carefully, because if he does decide to sell the house, Mother tells him, "You will never, ever set foot in this casa again."

About the Play | Comprehension | Connections & Creativity

As Henry leaves, Maria follows him out onto the porch to speak privately. She reminds him that Mother just wants to keep the family together, that she still feels the pain she felt when their father left. The idea of her son and grandchildren being far away brings all that back. Henry doesn't think that's fair. He doesn't want his children growing up in a slum. And because of the GI Bill and the Housing Authority's offer, he doesn't have to. He fought hard in the war and has earned the right to give his family more than he had.

"There's nothing here, man," he says to Maria.

"We have everything here," Maria says as Henry goes to his car and drives away.

Manazar enters and describes the day he left La Bishop in his father's pick-up, without getting a chance to say good-bye to his friends. "I was just sitting in the back, looking at the houses," he tells us, "trying to memorize the streets, the trees, the gullies, the little arroyos gone like a Hollywood sound stage. So I tried to burn it into my cabeza, so that I would never forget."

Movers & Shakers and Smoke-Filled Back Rooms

In the underbelly of Los Angeles, Mover & Shaker meet to figure out how to deal with the proposed public housing project in Chavez Ravine. They own land there and don't want to be forced to sell it at the city's offering price. And for subsidized housing? "It's Un-American," they say.

The American thing to do with the land? Protect it for private real estate interests! Preserve free enterprise for all Americans! All white, male Americans, that is. Not for "the Japs, the Chinks, the Hebes, the Spics, the fags and the Niggers... the Micks, the Guineas and the Krauts," they say. They've got to figure out how to stop the Housing Authority before it breaks ground. But how?

A voice from the shadows answers, "Light is the one thing Communist vermin cannot stand, and publicity is the most effective way a free society can control them."

The Watchman emerges and invites them to join him and other powerful businessmen calling themselves the Committee of 25. They've got an ingenious plan – let the Los Angeles Housing Authority move forward evicting the residents of Chavez Ravine. At the same time, convince everybody else – the people, local government – that the Authority has been infiltrated by Communists and Socialists. Get the House Un-American Activities Committee involved and force Mayor Bowron to testify. He'll be labeled a Communist sympathizer. Come re-election, Bowron loses and someone sympathetic to big business takes his place. The public housing movement in Los Angeles is guaranteed to collapse.

Mover & Shaker like the plan, but just how does The Watchman propose to pull it all off?

The Watchman replies, "Let's just say the pen is mightier than the sword." Mover & Shaker are still mystified, even after The Watchman alludes to "The Times." (Historic note: "The Watchman" was an anonymous opinion column in The Los Angeles Times, written by conservative political correspondent Kyle Palmer, often referred to as a king maker. In fact, he

About the Play | Comprehension | Connections & Creativity

is credited with discovering, grooming and promoting Richard Nixon.)

Yuri the Shepherder

Back in the ravine, Maria visits her Russian neighbor Yuri, bringing him homemade tamales. As he digs in to the delicious meal, he reminisces about the time he spent working for Leon Trotsky in Mexico City, where he met Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera.

Yuri notices that Maria looks unhappy – she’s upset that the city is forcing people out of their homes, and that so many of her neighbors are taking the city’s cash offer. Yuri shares his experience as a Union organizer, building coalitions – there’s strength in numbers. Maria’s inspired to form a Homeowner Coalition. To help her, Yuri gives her a copy of Karl Marx’s *Das Kapital*.

Santo Niño Church Hall

Residents of Chavez Ravine are gathered, chanting, “No nos moveran, we won’t move!” and singing “This Land Is Your Land.” Maria welcomes them to the first meeting of the Palo Verde Home Owners Protective Society Fundraiser. She then introduces Frank Wilkinson. The residents let him know that they are not happy about being pushed out of their homes and off their land. Wilkinson explains that the new building will be safe and clean, and the apartments will have three to five bedrooms, flushing toilets, communal washing machines, and no utility bills. The development will have lots of light, air and space, gardens, parks and cul-de-sacs. He also assures them that the Housing Authority will help them find affordable temporary housing during construction, and that they will all be given first choice of the homes when the project is complete.

Wilkinson goes on to explain that even if they don’t want to move, they have to. The city intends to enforce the law of Eminent Domain. When someone in the crowd accuses him of getting rich off their land, Wilkinson makes an impassioned plea, “Now I don’t make a gosh darn penny from any of this. I think you’ve gone a little too far frankly, Señor. Look, I know this is a tough time for you all. Change is difficult. But, this will be for the betterment of all your lives. I’ve lived in public housing with my wife and children. I believe in it, I do. I stood in silent vigils ‘till the restricted covenant laws of Central and La Brea Avenues were lifted, allowing Negro families to move in for the first time, by the way. Believe me, Frank Wilkinson is for the people, I tell ya’... Now come on, this is a good thing. Whatta ya say?”

The crowd shouts skeptically, but Don Magdaleno silences them by shooting into the air. He tells them that they have to make personal sacrifices for the betterment of all. He signs the deed to his land and hands it to Wilkinson. Members of the crowd follow his example.

Union Station

California Congressman Norris Poulson steps off the train onto a darkened platform and is startled by The Watchman. He’s further spooked when The Watchman indicates that he and his cronies have been watching Poulson closely – they know he’s pro-business, anti-labor,

About the Play | Comprehension | Connections & Creativity

anti-communist – and they like what they see. They’re going to get Poulson elected the next Mayor of Los Angeles, victory guaranteed. Poulson agrees (how could he not?) and hits the campaign trail. Meanwhile, The Watchman, Mover and Shaker, are behind the scenes getting dirt on Wilkinson from their powerful contacts – Chief Parker and J. Edgar Hoover. Surprise – on May 26, 1953, Poulson wins! His first order of business as Mayor is to announce he is stopping the public housing project in Chavez Ravine. Maria confronts Wilkinson in his office at the Housing Authority. What happened? What is she supposed to tell all the people who expect to move into the beautiful and affordable homes the city promised?

Wilkinson was as blind-sided as she was. On top of that, he’s been called before the California Un-American Activities Committee. She offers to help, but he warns her that she needs to be careful, too. They’re both terrified.

Baby HUAC: House Un-American Activities Committee

The Committee Chairman orders Wilkinson to list the names of all the organizations he’s been a member of since graduating from college. When Wilkinson respectfully refuses, the Chairman demands to know if he is or ever has been a member of the Community Party. He refuses again, stating,

“The greatest threat to our country today is fear; this hysteria that grips the land jeopardizes everything our country was founded on. My past associations are irrelevant to these proceedings. What this committee is doing is only insuring that the working poor, the average man and woman, will never have a right to dignified affordable housing. And that will have dire consequences for generations to come... Fire me, send me to jail, but don’t push the poor out of the cities, by golly, and don’t kill public housing in this country... History will find us guilty of destroying democracy today. I am an American, Mr. Chairman...”

As Wilkinson is ushered out of the hearing room, Manazar describes the state of the old neighborhood now that people are leaving,

“The homes, the barrios, the people scattered into dark oblivion, the city, pushing down on the heart of memory... Lonely winds whip across the hills... Passage of time yet time stands still... Golden dusk... Cold Blue Night... A flock of ravens like shadows passes across the Palo Verde schoolyard where chavalios once squealed with delight... Dust, ghosts and spirits stir as the Santa Ana winds whip through the hills of the baby Santa Monica Mountains... The sun is setting on the Ravine.”

Act II – Let’s Play Ball!

It’s now 1957. Los Angeles County Supervisor is taking Brooklyn Dodgers’ owner Walter O’Malley on a helicopter tour of Chavez Ravine – the perfect location for a new baseball stadium. Per the Eminent Domain proceedings, the land is designated for public use, and Hahn assures O’Mally that the City Council can be convinced that a ballpark fits the bill. O’Malley hesitates – people in Brooklyn are going to hate him for taking the team west. Cub reporter Millie Miller from the Los Angeles Herald-Examiner corners Mayor Poulson

About the Play | Comprehension | Connections & Creativity

in his office. She wants him to confirm the rumor that the Dodgers are leaving Brooklyn. Poulson is evasive, but thinks the deal is dead. She presses – so why did O’Malley put Ebbett’s Field (the Brooklyn Dodgers’ home stadium) up for sale? Why is O’Malley urging the New York Giants to move to San Francisco? And why did O’Malley just purchase Wrigley Field in South Central Los Angeles? Why would he do all that if he weren’t seriously considering a move to California?

Miller tells Poulson not to give up. A major league baseball team could mean big things for the city of Los Angeles – jobs, growth, civic pride, and property taxes! Poulson gets on a plane to Dodgers Spring Training Camp in Florida, to seal the deal! News of the Dodgers’ move to Los Angeles goes public and Brooklynites are not happy.

Neither is Maria. She continues to rally the residents of Chavez Ravine, handing out flyers, organizing protests. All is not lost – the housing project is no longer an obstacle, so it’s possible they could get their homes back. Tomorrow is election-day, and if Proposition B is voted down, the city won’t be allowed to use the land in the ravine for private interests – such as a privately owned baseball team. But she’s up against Hollywood this time.

Dodger-thon for Prop B Fundraiser, 1958

A telethon is in progress. The spin has successfully managed to manipulate the real issue at stake in Proposition B (for baseball!) – now everyone thinks it’s a vote for or against baseball, when it is not specifically about baseball at all.

Hollywood stars have lined up to help encourage people to vote “Yes!” Celebrities Cleve Herman, Dick Walsh, Abbott & Costello (reenacting their famous “Who’s on First” routine in both English and Spanish) all make an appearance.

While the telethon airs, Maria personally takes to the streets to make sure everyone votes. She comes across Lencho, Sal and Joe, warming themselves around a small outdoor fire. Joe doesn’t think there’s much use in voting at this point – many of the streets in the old neighborhood have already been demolished, the Palo Verde Elementary was literally buried, and a movie studio bought a whole row of houses for a dollar to use in “To Kill a Mockingbird.” Maria can’t believe they’ve given up.

The men reminisce about playing baseball in a Pee Wee League when they were kids. They didn’t have fancy uniforms and they played with worn-out hand-me-down gloves, but they were really good. Good enough to win the championship. Lencho sums it up, “When the last shotgun shack is gone from here, I will be sad, yes, but deep in my Corazon, verily I say to you... we all love baseball!”

In the night sky, flying saucers (or are those mini-Dodger Stadiums?) fill the sky.

About the Play | Comprehension | Connections & Creativity

Election Night

In the Pacific Dining Car of a train, The Watchman, Mover, Shaker and Poulson celebrate the victory of Proposition B. Miller enters and reminds them that it won, but only barely. The men don't like her attitude, but she's unfazed. She points out that they still have to deal with the families that have refused to leave – families, senior citizens, women and children who have vowed to fight until the bitter end. An event like that, with newspapers and TV cameras standing by, would surely be public relations suicide.

7th Inning Stretch!

1981, Opening Day. Vin Scully summarizes the game so far – the Astros have yet to score against young pitcher Valenzuela. Scully invites the audience to stand and join him singing the National Anthem. The cast comes out as vendors, throwing peanuts into the audience as we all sing.

The Dodger Dog Girl enters and sings her love ballad to Fernando. He can see her, but no one else can. She comforts him. “Don't be escared mijo... from death comes life, right? From the ashes of the Ravine comes a perfect Mexican, throwing fire!” She levitates with the help of DWP workers and very obvious ropes and pulleys. After nearly falling out of her harness, she resumes selling Dodger Dogs.

Back to 1958. Maria is in an interrogation room, cuffed. Two detectives grill and bully her, playing Good Cop/Bad Cop. They want to know about marijuana they found growing in the ravine, and where she got the copy of Marx's Red Book. When she won't answer their questions, Bad Cop slaps her. They tell her she'd better get the last families living in the ravine to pack up and move, or else. But Maria isn't intimidated. They demand she give them the names of the other people resisting the eviction orders. She does – everyone's nicknames.

As she lists name after name, Manazar joins her reciting his poem, “Our backyard, a hand that touched a still wild river...” The Detectives disappear. Maria, free of her cuffs, takes center-stage holding a pump action shot gun. She continues her list of names, “We are not the Mulholland's... the Lankershims or the Van Nuys'... but you'll remember this name... ,” firing her gun for punctuation, “Arechiga, Cabral, Casos y Lopez, Perez, Ramirez...”

We've reached the final standoff – May 8, 1959. The residents gather behind Maria as she faces the sheriffs and idling bulldozers. She shouts, “You took our sons to fight your war, and now you take our homes, our land... Mi casa no es tu casa, Señor... Why don't you go tell the pinche sheriff to build a stadium in his own Goddamned backyard!”

Through real news footage and newspaper photographs, we see the last families in Chavez Ravine being physically dragged away, while bulldozers demolish their homes.

About the Play | Comprehension | Connections & Creativity

Dodgers Stadium, 1981

Bottom of the 9th and the Astros still haven't scored. Fernando is only two strikes away from pitching a shutout. As he prepares to pitch, Maria describes the days after the evictions, when people walked through the streets in mourning, carrying candles, saying prayers and singing songs about how Mexican families will return to live in their homes.

Strike 2!

Nicky Apodaca III tells Fernando how much the Dodgers mean to him. His grandfather – remember the local comedian? – brought him to opening day when he was just 13. Now he's brought his one-month old daughter. Apodaca acknowledges and laments the problems in recent years – like the brutal beating of San Francisco Giants' fan Bryan Stow, and the ugly McCourt divorce – but his attachment to the Dodgers runs deeper than that. “Dodger Stadium was the best thing that every happened to L.A. – and believe me, a lot of Chicanos feel the same way.”

Frank Wilkinson explains what happened to him in the aftermath of the Un-American Activities Committee hearing. He spent a year in Lincoln Heights Jail. Upon his release, he was blacklisted, only able to get a job as a janitor. The FBI pursued him for 34 year, and even initiated a plot to have him assassinated.

Maria tells Fernando that, even though the battle for Chavez Ravine was ultimately lost, it made her who she is today, “It taught me that the poor could stand up and fight and haunt the colonial ghosts of L.A. and beyond.”

Maria and Henry disappear, Fernando returns his attention to the game. He pitches – Strike 3! It's a shutout! As the crowd celebrates, Vin Scully signs off, “Drive home safely and so long from beautiful Chavez Ravine!”

El Fin.

Comprehension

This section includes background information about the setting and subject matter of the play. We have selected the information that most directly connects to or informs what happens in the play.

This section furthers and deepens the background information provided in the Discovery Guide. It can be shared before the play and/or discussed after the performance. It can also be used to provide research topics for your classroom.

Timeline

From *Culture Clash: Oh, Wild West! The California Plays*, New York: Theatre Communications Group, 2011. Print. (pages 8-11)

Julián Chávez's Ravine, 1840-1981

The following is a timeline of important moments in the history of the area known as Chavez Ravine and the people associated with it. Culture Clash's play follows this chronology closely, only occasionally making minor alterations to the sequence of event for the sake of clarity and/or dramatic effect. One bit of history that has been left out of the play is the fact that the Dodgers relocated to Los Angeles long before ground had been broken for their new stadium, playing four seasons in the Los Angeles Coliseum before they played their first game in Chavez Ravine.

1840s Julián A. Chávez, a City Councilman, acquires land near the center of the Pueblo of Los Angeles, in an area that becomes known as Chavez Ravine. Appraised value, \$800.

1910-11 Mexican Revolution leads to resignation of President Porfirio Díaz in 1911, followed by years of unrest. Many of the first residents of Chavez Ravine are refugees from the revolution and its aftermath.

1949 National Housing Act passed by Congress; \$110 million is made available to Los Angeles' City Housing Authority (CHA), a federal agency to build subsidized low-income housing.

August 1949 L.A. City Council unanimously approves public housing projects for eleven sites around Los Angeles, including Chavez Ravine.

July 24, 1950 CHA sends letter to residents of Chavez Ravine announcing public housing plan; soon thereafter begins land purchase in Chavez Ravine; initiates eminent domain proceedings against reluctant landowners.

December 26, 1951 City Council votes 8—7 to cancel contract with CHA and to block its plan for public housing. The following April, California Supreme Court orders city to honor contract.

June 1952 City-wide referendum upholds Council's decision to cancel public Housing, but CHA continues to move forward.

August-September 1952 CHA site manager Frank Wilkinson is asked about his possible communist affiliations and is subsequently forced to testify to the California Senate Committee on Un-American Activities. When he refuses to answer questions, he is fired from CHA.

About the Play | Comprehension | Connections & Creativity

December 26, 1952 On behalf of a small group of powerful businessmen, Norman Chandler, publisher of the Los Angeles Times, sends letter to Congressman Norris Poulson, drafting him to run for mayor as an anti-public housing candidate against pro-housing incumbent Fletcher Bowron.

May 26, 1953 Poulson defeats Bowron in L.A. mayoral election. Immediately cancels Chavez Ravine housing project.

1953 Roz Wyman elected as youngest City Council member and first woman on the Council. Her campaign includes support for bringing major league baseball to L.A.

1953-58 Only a dozen or so families remain in the Ravine, having resisted eminent domain condemnation; the city leaves them alone for five years while looking for a use for the city-owned land.

1955 Wyman sends letter to Walter O'Malley, owner of the Brooklyn Dodgers, suggesting she and fellow Council member Ed Roybal travel to Brooklyn to discuss possible Dodgers move to L.A. O'Malley rebuffs the offer.

October 1955 Dodgers win World Series.

October 12, 1956 Dodgers stop in L.A. on way to exhibition games in Japan. First meeting of O'Malley and L.A. County Supervisor Kenneth Hahn. O'Malley, unhappy that he can't get a new stadium built in Brooklyn, tells Hahn he intends to move the team, but swears him to secrecy.

January—February 1957 O'Malley buys minor-league L.A. Angels and their stadium, Wrigley Field, in South Los Angeles.

March 1957 Poulson and a delegation of L.A. leaders travel to Dodgers spring training camp in Vero Beach, Florida, to convince O'Malley to move the team.

May 1957 O'Malley and Hahn take helicopter ride over the city; when O'Malley sees Chavez Ravine, he comments on its suitability for a ballpark.

October 7, 1957 City council votes 10—4 to grant O'Malley three hundred acres in the Ravine in exchange for Wrigley Field; city will pay \$2 million dollars to clear and grade land; county will spend \$2.75 million for access roads. O'Malley will set aside and develop forty acres for recreation, will pay to build his own stadium.

October 8, 1957 O'Malley publically announces his intention to move to L.A. Sends Poulson telegram: "Get your wheelbarrow and shovel. I'll see you in Chavez Ravine."

April 1958 Dodgers begin first season in L.A., playing in the Coliseum.

About the Play | Comprehension | Connections & Creativity

June 3, 1958 Proposition B to approve city's deal with O'Malley passes by a narrow margin (25,000 votes).

January 1959 California Supreme Court dismisses lawsuits brought by private citizens attempting to challenge validity of L.A.'s contract with the Dodgers.

April 1959 L.A. radio station KWKW begins first regular Spanish-language broadcasts of major league games, with René Cárdenas doing play-by-play. Jamie Jarrín joins him in the booth next year.

May 8, 1959 Sheriff's deputies evict last family from house in Ravine. Bulldozers begin final demolition. Family continues to camp on land for another week.

September 1959 Dodgers break ground for new stadium. Team ends its second season playing in Coliseum by winning World Series.

1961 Poulson loses bid for third term to Sam Yorty. Blames loss on Dodger Stadium controversy.

April 10, 1962 Opening of new Dodger Stadium in Chavez Ravine.

April 1981 Fernando Valenzuela begins rookie season by pitching opening-day shutout against Astros. Wins first eight starts, including five shutouts. Becomes first to win Rookie-of-the-Year and Cy Young Award (for best pitcher) in same season.

Historical characters (in order of appearance)

Vin Scully The play-by-play announcer for the Dodgers. 2015 will mark his 65th season with the Dodgers.

Fernando Valenzuela Former major league baseball pitcher. Nicknamed "El Torro." Pitched for the Dodgers from 1980-1990. From 1990-1997 he pitched for the California Angles, Baltimore Orioles, Philadelphia Phillies, San Diego Padres, and the St. Louis Cardinals. After retiring in 1997, coached Team Mexico in the 2006, 2009, and 2013 World Baseball Classic. Now works for the Dodgers organization as a Spanish-language sportscaster for National League West games.

Richard Neutra Austrian American architect. Did most of his work in Southern California. One of the key figures in the Modernist movement.

Frank Wilkinson Civil liberties activist, focused particularly on housing rights. Served as Special Assistant to the Executive Director of the Los Angeles Housing Authority, he fought for the integration of public housing, as well as further public housing developments.

About the Play | Comprehension | Connections & Creativity

Manazar Gamboa Los Angeles poet. Discovered his love of writing while in prison. After his release, he became a pioneer in arts education for incarcerated and probationary youth.

Howard Holtzendorf Executive Director of the Los Angeles Housing Authority.

Pete Seeger American activist and folk singer, member of the folk group the Weavers. Was blacklisted during the McCarthy Era. One of the most prominent protest singers in the country, he championed civil rights, environmentalism and the peace movement.

Norris Poulson 36th Mayor of Los Angeles, served from 1953 to 1961. When he lost reelection in 1961, he blamed the controversy around Dodger Stadium.

Police Chief William Parker Chief of the LAPD from 1950 to 1966.

J. Edgar Hoover Director of the FBI from 1924 to 1972.

Walter O'Malley Owner of the Brooklyn and Los Angeles Dodgers from 1950 to 1979.

Kenneth Hahn On the Los Angeles City Council from 1947 to 1952. Member of the Los Angeles Board of Supervisors from 1952 to 1992.

Cleve Herman Radio sportscaster on Los Angeles station KFWB from 1952 to 1990.

Dick Walsh An executive with the Dodgers, served as liaison between the Dodgers and the city of Los Angeles. After Dodger Stadium was complete, became Director of Stadium Operations.

Ronald Reagan Actor and politician, served as the 33rd Governor of California 1967-1975, and as President of the United States, 1981 to 1989.

Rosalind Wyman Was elected to the Los Angeles City Council in 1953, when she was just 23 years old. She served on the council until 1965.

Bud Abbott and Lou Costello American comedy duo in the 1940s and 1950s, they worked on stage, radio, film and television.

Jaime Jarrín Spanish-language sportscaster for the Los Angeles Dodgers from 1958 to the present. Famous for saying, "Se va, se va, se va y desbídala con un beso!" after homeruns. ("It's going, going, and kiss it goodbye!")

Activism

United Farm Workers of America (UFW)

A labor union for farm workers working in the United States. Founded in 1962 by Dolores Huerta and César Chávez to address the needs of farm workers primarily in California, the UFW now has 10,278 members from across the country. The UFW's early successes include strikes in the 1960s and 1970s against California grape growers. The union's core values reflect a commitment to non-violence, empowerment, integrity, innovation, and a Si Se Puede® Attitude, "The embodiment of a personal and organizational spirit that promotes confidence, courage, and risk taking." See www.ufw.org for more information.

Chicano Moratorium

Founded in 1969 in Southern California, the Chicano Moratorium was a coalition of Mexican-American anti-war activists who opposed the Vietnam War. Led predominantly by high school and college students deeply committed to social justice, the Chicano Moratorium organized activities and protests from 1969 through 1971. Their largest demonstration was held in 1970 in East LA and drew over 30,000 participants. That demonstration was violently broken up by police, and four demonstrators were killed, including Los Angeles Times award winning journalist Rúbén Salazar, who had consistently reported on police brutality and civil rights violations.

Glossary of baseball sayings

Baseball is often called, "America's pastime." So it's no surprise how many baseball terms and sayings have found their way into American vernacular. Whether or not you're a fan of baseball, you've likely used or heard one or two of these terms before. Here's a run-down of some of the most popular baseball terms used in everyday speech.

Ballpark Another term for the stadium or field where baseball is played. Can be used in two different ways: When someone has "hit it out of the ballpark (or park)" it means they've done something really well, done something exactly (or better than) right. When you're "in the ballpark," it means you're close to correct.

Batting a thousand In reference to batting statistics, it means a batter is hitting the ball every time they go to the plate. Of course, this is extremely rare and nearly impossible over a whole season, but in every day terms it means someone has succeeded over and over again.

Big league Major league, at the very highest level.

Bush league The opposite of "big league," it means amateur or second-rate.

About the Play | Comprehension | Connections & Creativity

Closer A pitcher brought in at the very end of a game to secure a win. In everyday life, a closer is someone who you can count on to complete an action successfully, as either a member of a team or on their own.

Cover your bases A defensive move, meaning to do everything possible to ensure safety and/or success. Like players in the outfield who have to be prepared for balls hit into the field, while at the same time staying close to the base they've been assigned to protect.

Curveball An unpredictable type of pitch that tricks the batter by unexpectedly curves without leaving the strike zone. If someone throws you a curveball, they've surprised you in some way, or taken an action you couldn't have predicted and therefore had a hard time reacting to appropriately.

Drop the ball To fall short of commitments or expectations on a specific project or responsibility. Also implies that the mistakes made were due to carelessness, laziness, or otherwise letting someone (yourself included) down.

Extra innings Like any innings beyond the ninth, if something goes into extra innings, it's gone on longer than usual or longer than planned.

Getting to first/second/third base Technically means progression toward a specific goal. In slang usage, refers to physical intimacy. First base might be a kiss, second base might be... well, you know...

Grand slam When a batter hits a home run with the bases loaded. A huge victory or complete success in a challenge that could have ended badly. Also, something that comes in four parts, like the four points earned in a grand slam (thank you, Denny's...).

Grandstanding Playing it up for a crowd, like a player showing off or behaving in a way that energizes and/or wins over the fans in the stands.

Grounder If someone hits a grounder (or ground ball), they've done the bare minimum to get by, nothing fancy, not terribly ambitious. Interesting... ground balls in baseball aren't as exciting as grand slams, but they're more reliable and pretty useful in getting players on base, especially getting a player from third base to home plate and scoring. Fans don't get riled up about ground balls, or the players who consistently hit them, though – we all love a home run slugger. What does that say about us?

Hardball From the difference between the ball used to play softball and the ball used to play baseball; means aggressive or tough.

Heavy hitter Like a player known for hitting home runs and scoring big points, a heavy hitter is a powerful person with a lot of influence, someone very successful in their field. (See also Slugger)

About the Play | Comprehension | Connections & Creativity

It's hit or miss An action that is either going to succeed or fail miserably, no in between, like every time a batter steps up to the plate.

Home run A complete success; efficiently and admirably achieving the desired outcome.

It ain't over till it's over! A famous quote from player Yogi Berra, the Yoda of baseball. Means that even if things are going really well (or if they're going terribly), you've got to keep your head in the game, stay focused on the task at hand. You can't get too confident, let your guard down, or give up, because you never know what might happen.

It's like déjà vu all over again! Another Yogism, referring to a situation or series of events that are pretty obviously repeating themselves.

Knock it out of the park See ballpark, grand slam and/or home run.

Left field (or Out of left field) Something unexpected, unusual, or downright confusing. There are a couple of opinions about where exactly the phrase derives from. 1) Since the majority of people, and therefore players, are right-handed, left field plays are unexpected; or 2) the players on defense are all focused on home plate, so if fans from the stands outside of the players' field of vision throw anything on to the field (a baseball that had been hit into the stands, inflatable beach balls, underpants), it's both a surprise and impossible to make sense of.

Off base Wrong, misguided, based on flawed and/or incorrect assumptions. As when a runner puts himself or herself in the position of being tagged out by getting too far from the base.

On deck When the next batter comes out of the dugout to warm up. So if you're on deck, you're up next to do your job and you're ready.

On the bench In the dugout, the bench is where the players sit when they're not either playing or warming up to play. If you're on the bench, you're waiting to be assigned a responsibility or job. While you're on the bench, you're expected to be ready to go in at any minute, so you should use the time productively. But usually you just spend a couple of hours doing nothing but chewing gum, staring into space, and gossiping with the person next to you.

Play ball "Let's get started!" or "Ready, set, go!"

Rain-check (or Rain-cheque) If a game was rained out, ballparks used to give fans rain-checks -- tickets that would let them back into the park on another game day. A rain-check is promise to do something at another time, usually in the context of a social engagement.

Right off the bat From the start, immediately.

About the Play | Comprehension | Connections & Creativity

Say it ain't so, Joe! A statement of disbelief, confusion, and disappointment. The phrase originates from one of the greatest scandals in all of baseball history. In 1919, a group of players on the Chicago White Sox made an arrangement with big-time gamblers to deliberately lose the World Series. They were caught, put on trial, and banned for life from playing baseball. As the story goes, when Shoeless Joe Jackson – a fan favorite, greatly beloved and admired – left the court house, a young boy outside begged him, “Say it ain’t so, Joe!” As it turns out, this touching moment sprang entirely from the imagination of a particularly poetic journalist. Even though it didn’t actually happen, the phrase quite accurately expresses the anguish we all feel when someone we thought was awesome turns out to be just a regular schmuck.

Screwball Wacky, unpredictable, absurd. A screwball is a pitch designed to behave erratically, curving in the opposite direction of a curveball. It’s rarely used for two reasons: 1) It’s incredibly hard to master and often goes wrong, and 2) the physical action required to pull it off is really, really, really bad for the pitcher’s arm and shoulder.

Shut out To block your opponent from any success.

Slugger In baseball, a power hitter, a player known for hitting the ball really hard, often hard enough to go out of the park. Often used to refer to someone who either 1) gives 110% in everything they do, 2) is known for their influence, power, and expertise, 3) someone who gets riled up often and easily, and regularly needs to be told to calm down, or 4) someone who punches very, very hard. Can be either positive or negative depending on context, although it is never positive when a slugger is both 3) and 4).

Step up to the plate (or Step up) Rise to the occasion, take responsibility for your actions, do the right thing even if it’s scary.

Strike A failure, shortcoming or disadvantage.

Strike out To try something and not succeed.

Touch base From the requirement that a runner must touch all the bases in order to score a point, it means to connect or check-in with someone, fill them in, bring them up to speed. Usually about progress leading up to an event.

Wheelhouse If something is in or from your wheelhouse, it’s a skill that you are particularly expert in and can execute with confidence. It refers to the area in a batters swing (basically, the arc made by their bat when they swing) where they will make best contact with the ball.

Whiff To try, but fail; a.k.a. “a swing and a miss.” (Also used as a synonym for “smell,” but I don’t think that has anything to do with baseball... unless, of course, we’re talking about the mouthwatering scent of Dodger Dogs.)

About the Play | Comprehension | Connections & Creativity

Whole new ballgame After an extreme turn of events, where something has happened that changes everything.

A whole ‘nother ballgame Refers to something totally unrelated to a specific issue or event.

Additional Resources

Arranged alphabetically by title.

Articles (published and online)

Race and Public Housing: Revisiting the federal role

By Richard Rothstein, Economic Policy Institute, Commentary/Race and Ethnicity, December 17, 2012

<http://www.epi.org/publication/race-public-housing-revisiting-federal-role/>

Remembering Chavez Ravine: Culture Clash and Critical Race Theory

By David G. Garcia, in Chicano-Latino Law Review, Spring, 2006

PDF can be downloaded from Lat Crit: Latina & Latino Critical Law Theory, Inc.

http://latcrit.org/media/medialibrary/2013/10/als10_6_garcia.pdf

Revisiting the McCarthy Era: Looking at Wilkinson v. United States in Light of Wilkinson v. Federal Bureau of Investigation

By Frank Wilkinson from Loyola of Los Angeles Law Review, 33 Loy. L.A. Rev. 681, 2000

PDF can be downloaded from Digital Commons @ LMU and LLS

<http://digitalcommons.lmu.edu/llr/vol33/iss2/7>

“This Is No Slum!”: A Critical Race Theory Analysis of Community Cultural Wealth in Culture Clash’s Chavez Ravine

By Tara J. Yosso and David G. Garcia in Azlán: A Journal of Chicano Studies, Issue 32:1,

Spring 2007, University of California Regents

Books

Barrio-Logos: Space and Place in Urban Chicano Literature and Culture (CMAS History, Culture and Society Series)

By Raúl Homero Villa, University of Texas Press, May 15, 2000

Chavez Ravine: 1949 – A Los Angeles Story

By Don Normack, Chronicle Books, May 2003

Making a Better World: Public Housing, the Red Scare, and the Direction of Modern Los Angeles

About the Play | Comprehension | Connections & Creativity

By Don Parson with forward by Kevin Starr, University of Minnesota Press, September 20, 2005

Websites

Baseball in Early Los Angeles: Dodger Stadium

www.waterandpower.org/museum/Baseball_in_Early_LA_Page_2.html

Collected photographs of Chavez Ravine and the construction of Dodger Stadium, Water and Power Associates

The Chavez Ravine Story (or What Price Baseball?)

www.toonist.com/flash/ravine.html

Interactive animated website by Toonist creator Carlos Saldana, 1992-2003

Culture Clash – Official Website

www.cultureclash.com

The Great Wall of Los Angeles

www.judybaca.com

Mural by Judy Baca and community

See Chavez Ravine and the Division of the Chicano Community

The Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles

www.hacla.org

Online Archive of California: Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles Photograph Collection 1940s-1950s

See Southern California Library for Social Studies and Research

See Online items (200 photographs)

20 Years of Culture Clash (Exhibit)

www.digital-library.csun.edu/LatArch/cultureclash

California State University Northridge, Oviatt Library, Digital Collections

See also Latina(o) Cultural Heritage Archives

Connections and Creativity

This section provides ways to explore connections between the ideas presented in the play, the students' lives, and the world we live in. In addition, it provides opportunities for your students to use theatre to explore and express. Theatre activities are included that examine specific artistic aspects of the production, as well as delve deeper into the ideas and questions raised by the production. The questions, activities and information in this section can be used both before and after the performance.

Cultural Mapping

Age Group

Middle, high school and/or college

Length

20-40 minutes depending on the number of categories explored

Objectives

- Students will gain knowledge of similarities and differences in their classmates
- Students will be introduced to *Chavez Ravine* and begin to reflect on the play and any personal connection to the story.

Materials needed

Quotes from the play on the walls

Activity

- 1 Ask the students to move the desks to the side and stand in a circle.
- 2 Describe the room as a map of the world. Identify Los Angeles in the space. Have students who were born in Los Angeles gather in that place. Have the other students group themselves according to their birthplace (north, east, south or west of Los Angeles). Each group must determine two additional things that they have in common. Report back to the whole class. (Example: The members of the “north” group all like pizza and are the oldest in their families.)
- 3 Repeat activity using other divisions:
Oldest, middle, youngest, only child.
Speak one language, two languages etc.
Most inspired by music, image, movement, language
- 4 Quotes. Ask each student to stand by the quote that most intrigues them. Discuss in the group why they chose that quote. What intrigues them about it?

QUOTES:

- “I was born behind second base...” -
“But it’s not for our greater good.” –
“Was that a tremor or a shift in power?”
“These are sacred lands you’re pitching on...”
“If I cut my finger, the blood comes out blue, Dodger blue!”
“Memory is history singing in tune with the stars...”

Do You Know Your Neighbors?

Age Group

Middle, high school and/or college

Length

10 -15 minutes

Objectives

- Students will gain knowledge of similarities and differences in their classmates
- Students will be introduced to *Chavez Ravine* and begin to reflect on the importance of neighbors in the play and in their own lives.

Activity

- 1 Discuss neighbors. Ask if students feel like they know their neighbors where they live? Discuss how knowing people in the community made Chavez Ravine worth fighting for.
- 2 Everyone stands in a circle except for one person who stands in the middle. This person is “it”. It goes up to anyone in the circle and asks “Do you know your neighbor?” The person being asked can either say “yes” or “no”.
- 3 If they say “yes” then the person’s two neighbors (the two people directly next to them, standing on either side) have to switch spots before “it” can steal one of their spots. Whoever is left out of the circle is now it.
- 4 If the person says “no” then they must add “But I know people who _____.” They fill in the blank with any category that pertains to one or more players in the circle. Those players must leave their spot and try and find a new one before “it” steals their spot. For example the persona can say “No, but I know people who love the Dodgers” and then everyone in the circle who is a Dodger fan must find a new spot.
- 5 Other categories could include: people who are wearing blue, people with glasses, people who like pizza etc.
- 6 Discuss what makes a good neighbor both in the student’s lives and in the neighborhood of Chavez Ravine that we see in the play and/or documentary. How do commonalities and differences both contribute to making a good neighbor?

Tableau/Frozen Picture

Age Group

Middle, high school and/or college

Length

30 - 45 minutes

Objectives

- Students will practice using their bodies to communicate an idea or theme.
- Students will reflect on the varied interpretations of the theme.
- Students will reflect on the ideas explored in *Chavez Ravine* through a physical exploration of its themes.

Activity

- 1 Divide students into pairs. Student A is the artist. Student B is the sculpture. Have student A create a statue out of B on the theme of the “future”. Examples: Flying cars, world peace, destroying the environment, graduating from college. Statues can be realistic or symbolic, personal or global. Have each student title their statue and present to the class.
- 2 Repeat exercise with B as the artist and A as the sculpture.
- 3 Repeat with any of the following show-specific ideas: Public Good, Sacred Land, Power, Home, Slum, Baseball etc. Have each student sculpt an image that represents one of these themes.
- 4 Discuss what these mean to your students and what these ideas meant in *Chavez Ravine*. Are they similar or very different?

Inside/Out

Age Group

High school and/or college

Length

30 - 45 minutes

Objectives

- Students will explore different perspectives of their neighborhood community.
- Student will explore the idea of how a place feels from the inside and compare with how the place is viewed by the outside for both their own neighborhood and the community of *Chavez Ravine*.

Activity

- 1 In groups, ask students to create a tableau of their school or neighborhood community from the inside. As a member of that community, what is most important to depict?
- 2 Next, have them create a second tableau; of their school or neighborhood community from an outside perspective. How do they think outsiders see this community?
- 3 Share the two tableaus and discuss. Is there a school or neighborhood in Los Angeles that you have preconceived ideas about? What is your impression and where did that idea come from? What do you think that neighborhood feels like for the people who live there?

Variation

After seeing the play *Chavez Ravine*, have students discuss perceptions of the Chavez Ravine neighborhood by outsiders, such as the Housing Authority and other city officials and what the neighborhood felt like from the inside perspective of the people who lived there.

In the same small group, have students create two tableaus of Chavez Ravine in 1949; one from an insider perspective and one from an outsider perspective. Share the two tableaus and discuss. How did the different perceptions contribute to the battle over Chavez Ravine?

Senses Exploration

Age Group

Middle, high school and/or college

Length

10 - 15 minutes

Objectives

Students will explore and remember a place, a home or neighborhood through their 5 senses.

Materials needed

Paper and pens

Activity

- 1 Ask students to think about a place that matters to them. Have them close their eyes and really picture this place. Why does it matter to them?
- 2 On a piece of paper have them write 3 things they see, hear, smell, taste, feel in that place.
- 3 Have students share some examples with the class from each of the 5 senses.

Variations

After seeing the play Chavez Ravine, have students repeat this activity with 5 senses of the Chavez Ravine community. What sensory images do students remember?

Repeat the activity with 5 senses of Dodgers Stadium. For students who have gone to the stadium, what sensory images really stand out?

You can use this activity to lead into the "I Come From Poem".

I Come From... Poem

Age Group

High school and/or college

Length

15 - 45 minutes (depending on whether you watch the documentary)

Objectives

Students will reflect on where they come from; the neighborhood, people and heritage. Students will reflect on where the residents of Chavez Ravine came from and why it was worth fighting for.

Materials needed

Chavez Ravine 1949, An LA Story, documentary
Copies of the poem template below, pens, pencils

Activity

- 1 Watch the documentary Chavez Ravine 1949, An LA Story. What images, people or moments resonate for the class?
- 2 Discuss the words “I Come from” with your students. What does this phrase make them think of? What do you think it meant for the residents of Chavez Ravine.
- 3 Write the poem template (below) on the board. As a group, fill in the phrases for residents of Chavez Ravine. Discuss. What made this place worth fighting for? Are there phrases that the students would add like to add to this poem template?
- 4 Pass out copies of the I Come From poem. Have students reflect and fill in the poem based on their own lives. Can also do this poem with the 5 senses activity above
- 5 Have volunteers share their poems.
- 6 Discuss the similarities and differences between the student’s poems and the Chavez Ravine group poem.

I come from _____ (description of your neighborhood)

I come from _____ (a detail about your home—a smell, taste, or feeling)

I come from _____ (plant, flower, tree)

I come from _____ (a song you learned as a child)

I come from _____ (a family tradition)

I come from _____ (place of birth)

I come from _____ (family foods)

I come from _____ (a game you played as a child)

I come from _____ (a nickname)

I come from _____ (a dream for your future)

What Do You See?

Age Group

Middle, high school and/or college

Length

10-15 minutes

Objectives

- Students will explore the many stories in a picture.
- Students will explore different perceptions of the same image.

Activity

- 1 A student strikes a frozen pose. Stress that the student should just make a shape with his/her body and not try to tell a specific story. The rest of the class must see how many stories or interpretations they can see in the frozen picture. (Ex. A student striking a running pose could also be singing into a microphone, passing the baton, running for a bus, posing for a fashion shoot.)
- 2 Discuss how individual perception varies depending on what angle you see the frozen picture from. Discuss the different perceptions of the neighborhood during the battle for Chavez Ravine. How do the perceptions of this neighborhood and divergent perceptions of public good, shape the story we see?

Setting Game

Age Group

Middle, high school and/or college

Length

15 - 30 minutes

Objectives

- Students will explore place through physical activities and behavior.

Materials needed

Cards with setting/places listed on them. Examples: baseball field, grocery store, beach, gym, hospital, church, library, cemetery.

Activity

- 1 A student picks a card with a specific place on it and begins to silently act out an activity that would occur in that setting. (Ex. Lifting weights at a gym) Tell the students that when they know where the person is by what they see them doing; that they should join in with another non-verbal activity that happens in this place. (Ex. running on a treadmill, playing basketball).
- 2 Repeat with different students picking a setting card.
- 3 Discuss how the place or setting can impact or change our behavior.

Pictures to Life

Age Group

Middle, high school and/or college

Length

20 - 60 minutes

Objectives

- Students will reflect on the story and the person behind the picture by analyzing a photograph.
- Students will communicate the character's thoughts, feelings and activities through tableau and writing.

Materials needed

Chavez Ravine 1949, A Los Angeles story by Don Normark (book and/or video) or images from the internet.

Activity

- 1 Look through the photographs in the book or those shared in the video. Ask each student to find an image that intrigues them. If there is more than one person in the picture, ask the student to select one person to focus on.
- 2 Have each student reflect: What is the story in this picture? What is this person thinking or feeling at this moment? If this person could speak, what would they say?
- 3 Have each participant freeze in the image in their picture. If the picture only shows the face, have them imagine the physicality of the body.
- 4 One at a time, ask each participant to share something that his or her character is thinking or feeling. Ask the other participants to listen for the beginning of stories in the shared thoughts and feelings.

Variation

- Character Biography: Have each participant create a character biography including: character's name, habitat (where and when), greatest want, greatest fear, most important being, most peaceful place and job. Let them know that as the writer, they will use their imagination and observation to answer the questions. If the picture is historical, they can also research to get more information.
- Ask for volunteers to share their profiles.

Variation

- A Day in the Life: Using the character biography, have each student write an ordinary day in the life of their character. What do they imagine daily life is like in Chavez Ravine? What is an "ordinary" day for your character?
- Discuss that plays seldom take place on an ordinary day. For example, the play *Chavez Ravine* shows us the day the residents got their evictions notices. Have the students look back at their character profile. What would happen if the character's greatest want or greatest fear came true? How would that change this ordinary day?

The History of this Spot

Age Group

Middle, high school and/or college

Length

20 - 45 minutes depending on class size.

Objectives

- Students will share a favorite place with the group.
- Students will reflect on what makes a place important or meaningful.
- Students will research and share the history of their favorite spot.
- Students will reflect on who and what was there before.

Materials needed

Scrap paper and markers or crayons

Activity

- 1 Ask your class to think of their favorite place in Southern California. Let them know it can be anywhere they like to go and spend time.
- 2 Ask them to draw or visually represent that place on their paper. Stress that they don't have to draw well!
- 3 Create a "map" on the floor. Using your school as the center of the map, ask students to place their drawing north, south, east or west of the school.
- 4 Take a walking tour. Stop at each drawing and ask if the student wants to share their place and why it matters.
- 5 Ask if anyone knows the history of their favorite place. What was there before? Who lived there before?
- 6 Have students research the history of this spot and share back with the class. Have a group research the history of the land where your school is. Who was there before? What was there before?

An Introduction to Oral Histories

Age Group

High school and/or college

Length

Approximately 50 minutes

Summary

The members of Culture Clash recorded hundreds of interviews with people who used to live in Chavez Ravine. They wanted to know how the people felt living there and then having to leave their homes. Culture Clash never lived in Chavez Ravine. But they used empathy to ask and listen to the people who did. That helped them understand what that might be like. Then, they could share those stories and emotions on stage. In this exercise, you get to try to understand a little bit about how your classmates might feel about a few short moments in their life. You will be working like any interviewer/reporter you have seen on TV.

Objectives

- Students develop listening, recording and presentation skills.
- Students develop an awareness of point of view and perspective.

Materials needed: (if applicable)

- Recording device (audio and/or video)
- Notebook
- Internet access

Activity

- 1 Students form pairs.
- 2 One student is the interviewer and the other is the interviewee. The exercise will be repeated so the students can swap roles.
- 3 The interviewer tapes/records the conversation after testing the equipment and sound levels to ensure recording device is working.
- 4 The interviewer asks the following three questions:
 - a Have you ever been accused of something you didn't do?
 - b What were the circumstances of the last argument you had with someone?
 - c What is something people would be surprised to know about you?
- 5 Students reverse roles.
- 6 The interviews are transcribed.
- 7 In a moderated conversation, students can volunteer to share what they learned about their partner. Teacher engages the students using the questions below as a springboard. Ultimately, teachers can explore the role empathy played in the interview.
- 8 With students' permission, transcribed interviews can be posted online in a class blog.

Variations

If this is a theater based class, the interviews can be transcribed and performed using simple

About the Play | Comprehension | Connections & Creativity

costume pieces, props and sets. This variation can be done either in the style of a staged reading or an actual memorized series of short performances.

Tips

If time permits, play audio/video internet clips of people who know how to conduct a strong interview. Oprah, Larry King, Barbara Walters, Terry Gross. Engage students in a conversation about what makes the interviews strong. What is the interviewer doing or not doing? Saying or not saying?

Quotes

“The great gift of human beings is that we have the power of empathy, we can all sense a mysterious connection to each other.” - Meryl Streep

Examples

Great interview example questions can be found at this NPR Storycorps site:
<http://storycorps.org/great-questions/question-generator/>

Vocabulary

Empathy: noun

The ability to understand and share the feelings of another.

Origin: early 20th century: from Greek *empathia* (from *em-* ‘in’ + *pathos* ‘feeling’) translating German *Einfühlung*.

Interview: noun

The meeting of people face to face, especially for consultation; a conversation between a journalist or radio or television presenter and a person of public interest, used as the basis of a broadcast or publication.

Origin: early 16th century (formerly also as *enterview*): from French *entrevue*, from *s’entrevoir* ‘see each other,’ from *voir* ‘to see,’ on the pattern of *vue* ‘a view.’

Question: noun

A sentence worded or expressed so as to elicit information.

Origin: late Middle English: from Old French *question* (noun), *questionner* (verb), from Latin *quaestio* (n-), from *quaerere* ‘ask, seek.’

Reflection questions/prompts

- 1 How did it feel to ask the questions? What was going through your mind during the interview?
- 2 How did it feel to be interviewed? What was going through your mind during the interview?

Creating Public Good Now

Age Group

High school and/or college

Length

50 minutes-1 hour and can be an on-going project as well

Summary

Part 1 of this activity begins with an overview about the question of what “public good” means and Part 2 solicits examples from the students through a theatre sculpture game. Part 3 explores students engaging in a model of how they might create public good at their school.

Objectives

- To have the class create their definition of public good with the support of their teacher or teaching artist facilitating the discussion.
- By the end of the activity, students have decided on action steps to bring their ideas for public good to their school government, other student organizations or partnerships in order to begin bringing their projects to life.
- This activity is meant to introduce students to the concept of civic engagement so they might actively consider their own engagement beyond high school.

Materials needed: (if applicable)

- Large Post-It or butcher paper for each group to scribe their ideas/proposals.
- Sharpies or large felt pens for scribing ideas/proposals.

Activity

Part I: What is Public Good? (5-7minutes)

- 1 Introduce the subject of Public Good by opening up a discussion with the students and ask: What is public good? Who benefits?
- 2 Ask the students if they agree with this definition:
In economics, the definition and an example of public good is:
 - a a commodity or service that is provided without profit to all members of a society, either by the government or a private individual or organization.
 - b i.e., “a conviction that library informational services are a public good, not a commercial commodity for the benefit or well-being of the public.”

Part II: Creating Public Good Clearly Demands Independent Action (10-15 minutes)

- 3 Divide students into small groups of 3-5, depending on the size and make-up of the class.
- 4 To demonstrate/review what a frozen picture or tableau is, first have each student, all at once, express a gesture of:
 - a Happiness

About the Play | Comprehension | Connections & Creativity

- b Sorrow
- c Giving

Once a gesture is formed, say, “Freeze!” and have the students stay in the pose for a few seconds and experience their expression.

- d Now with their group, ask them to discuss examples of public good. You can spur their responses with this hint: Have you ever enjoyed going somewhere and the admission was free or the project was outdoors and of no charge for the public to enjoy? Or is there a service that is available to the public for your safety at no charge as long as it is not a false alarm?
- e As a group, decide and create one of your examples as a frozen picture/scenario of public good.
- f Have each group share their frozen pictures of public good.
- g If time allows, ask the group what they see in the presenting group’s frozen picture and talk about how that scenario is an example of public good.

Part III: How does public good come into being in our community, our society?

With the remainder of class: 5 minutes to brainstorm, 5 minutes to write down their ideas, 5 minutes for action steps, 13 minutes for the whole group to come back together and share out their projects and action steps. Give each group a large piece of paper and sharpie or felt pen to scribe their ideas and actions steps.

- 5 Still in their small groups, after sharing their frozen scenarios, ask the students to brainstorm and find one idea for a public good project for their school. What does your school need that each student can enjoy without cost to them? What will enrich their lives as a member of our school community and society?
- 6 Ask the groups to write their idea down on the large paper.
- 7 Ask the groups to create three action steps if they were to follow through and begin this project. Write four action steps down on the paper as well. Action steps include answering these questions even if the group is unsure or still imagining their project—dream big!: What? Who? Where? When?
- 8 Remind the students that they can use action steps to connect with student government, other student organizations, or community partners to get their project started.
- 9 Using the baseball metaphor in Chavez Ravine, have each group choose a spokesperson to pitch their idea to the entire class.

Variations

To further this curriculum, the class can choose one or two of the ideas and bring it to fruition as a class service project. Perhaps it can connect to other curriculum and students can join in the greater Los Angeles effort to increase civic engagement for service and public good.

**QUOTE: “IT’S BETTER TO DIE ON YOUR FEET THAN LIVE ON YOUR KNEES.
- CHAVEZ RAVINE**

About the Play | Comprehension | Connections & Creativity

How can public good help so no one has to live on their knees?

Reflection questions/prompts

This is a link to Cal State LA's Center for Engagement, Service, and Public Good. Perhaps they can become a partner in your project:

<http://www.calstatela.edu/univ/ppa/publicat/cal-state-la-president-opens-new-center-engagement-service-and-public-good>

Here is an example of how this project created Charity/Kindness to Build Community (at school, neighborhood, city, state) Eric Garcetti put forth this project last year regarding Civic Engagement and how we are, Los Angeles, apparently one of the worst cities for civic engagement. Thus the LA Civic Engagement Lab was born. A big grant was given—Homeboy Industries was a recipient!!!

This website might inspire teachers to partner with winners of this grant contest and/or to look at the projects that were granted.

<http://mylazo50.makegood.is/projects/LACivicLab>

Credits

Center Theatre Group Education and Community Partnerships

Leslie K. Johnson

Director of Education and Community Partnerships

Katie Mackenzie

Director of Department Operations

Traci Cho Kwon

Director of Arts Education Initiatives

Jesus Reyes

Program Manager, Community Partnerships

Camille Schenkan

Program Manager, Next Generation Initiatives

Katrina Frye

Program Associate

Melissa Hernandez

Program Associate

Rosemary Marston-Higdon

Program Associate

Kelly Muchnick

Communications Coordinator

Shannon Winston

Department Coordinator

Khanisha Foster

Resident Teaching Artist

Debra Piver

Resident Teaching Artist

Center Theatre Group's mission is to serve the diverse audiences of Los Angeles by producing and presenting theatre of the highest caliber, by nurturing new artists, by attracting new audiences, and by developing youth outreach and education programs. This mission is based on the belief that the art of theatre is a cultural force with the capacity to transform the lives of individuals and society at large.

Education and Community Partnerships

Theatre is an enduring and powerful tool for communicating ideas, stories, emotions and beliefs that fuel the intellect, imagination and creative spirit. Center Theatre Group believes that stimulating awareness, creativity, dialogue and an inquisitive mind is integral to the growth and well-being of the individual and the community; and that nurturing a life-long appreciation of the arts leads inextricably to an engaged and enlightened society.

Center Theatre Group's education and community partnership programs advance the organization's mission in three key ways:

Audiences: Inspiring current and future audiences to discover theatre and its connection to their lives;

Artists: Investing in the training, support and development of emerging young artists and young arts professionals who are the future of our field; and

Arts Education Leadership: Contributing to the community-wide efforts to improve the quality and scope of arts education in Los Angeles.

SPECIAL THANKS

Education and Community Partnerships receives generous support from Eva & Marc Stern, the Artists & Educators Forum and Center Theatre Group's Corporate Circle.



Additional support for Education and Community Partnerships is provided by The Sheri and Les Biller Family Foundation, the Employees Community Fund of Boeing California, The Louis L. Borick Foundation, The Sascha Brastoff Foundation, The Eli and Edythe L. Broad Foundation, Brookside Fund, the Brotman Foundation of California, Diana Buckhantz & Vladimir & Araxia Buckhantz Foundation, the Carol and James Collins Foundation, the Culver City Education Foundation, the James A. Doolittle Foundation, the Joseph Drown Foundation, the Fineshriber Family Foundation, the Ella Fitzgerald Charitable Foundation, The Friars Charitable Foundation, the Lawrence P. Frank Foundation, The Rosalinde and Arthur Gilbert Foundation, The Green Foundation, the William Randolph Hearst Education Endowment, HUB International Insurance Services, Reneet & Meyer Luskin, the Music Center Fund for the Performing Arts, the Kenneth T. & Eileen L. Norris Foundation, the Rosenthal Family Foundation, Laura & James Rosenwald & Orinoco Foundation, Sony Pictures Entertainment and Dwight Stuart Youth Fund.