



Theatre Virtual Learning

Introduction to Theatre Design & Production Crafting a Character Costume

Date: May 5, 2020



Lesson: May 5, 2020

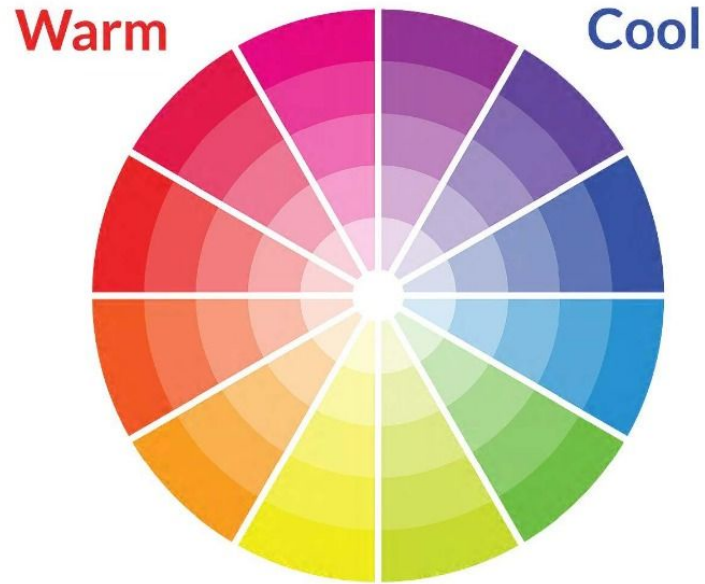
Objective/Learning Target:

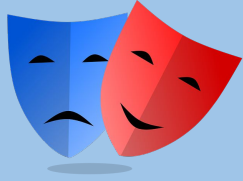
The student will explore the role of color in costume design.

Crafting a Character Costume

Let's Get Started / Warm Up Activities:

List three colors and ideas or feelings you associate with them. Can color play an important role in telling the story of a play or musical?

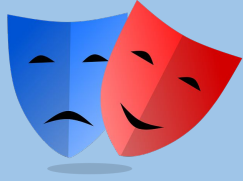




Lesson: Choosing a Color Palette

- A color palette is a range of colours that are carefully selected and put together.
- Unless students are doing some sort of a rainbow-themed show, a color palette will only include particular colors, and particular tones and shades within those selected colors, while excluding other colors, shades, and tones. Colors could be bold, muted, pastel, jewel-tone, dull, bright - or a combination of all of these. It depends on the show itself, and the look and feel that the costume team wishes to present.
- The most important concept for students when they are selecting a color palette is to know WHY they are selecting those specific colors. Ultimately, their choices must support the story being presented onstage.



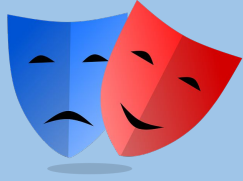


Lesson: Choosing a Color Palette

THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN CHOOSING COLOR PALETTE:



Historical accuracy: In certain time periods, such as the Renaissance, some colors were reserved for those of royal or noble birth. Purple is generally considered to be a royal color, as is true red. Peasants and merchants didn't wear these colors because they simply didn't have the means to purchase fabrics or dyes in those colors as they were imported from distant countries and tended to be very expensive. Lower-class people generally wore earth-toned fabrics - browns, greens, blues, and so on - as they were much easier to acquire and maintain. In this case, color is a great way to show class distinctions as well as representing the time period.



Lesson: Choosing a Color Palette

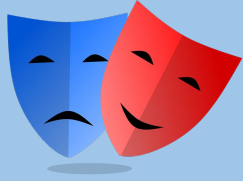
THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN CHOOSING COLOR PALETTE:

The mood or emotion the character is intended to evoke:

In the Disney/Pixar movie *Inside Out*, each of the personified emotions has a distinct color. Joy is sunshine yellow, Sadness is (clearly) blue, Anger is passionate red, Disgust is envious and jealous green, and Fear is light purple – a color often associated with spooky Halloween. The color is an easy identifier of each emotion’s primary purpose in Riley’s “head”quarters.

Think of the mood that each character is meant to evoke. A villainous or scary character might typically be dressed in black, green, or purple – think of Severus Snape from the Harry Potter series. A heroic character might dress in a strong jewel tone – think of Spiderman, Captain America, and Wonder Woman in their bold red and blue outfits. A cute character might wear pink, a powerful character might wear red, while a depressed character might wear blue. However, creating a contrast is also an interesting concept. A villain dressed in a pastel costume, such as Dolores Umbridge in her pink wardrobe, or Velma Von Tussle (from *Hairspray*) in her fancy dresses and perfectly coiffed hair, can be fascinating as well.





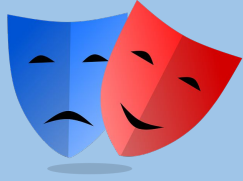
Lesson: Choosing a Color Palette

THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN CHOOSING COLOR PALETTE:

Showing connections or contrasts between

characters or groups of characters: color palettes are a simple and clear way to group similar characters together, or show difference between the groups. Costuming similar groups of characters in similar colors is a great way to show connections between families, class distinctions, similar trades or employments, cliques, or friend groups. Think about the signature pink of The Plastics in *Mean Girls*, or the red and white of the East High Wildcats in *High School Musical* – these colors bond the characters together.





Lesson: Choosing a Color Palette

THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN CHOOSING COLOR PALETTE:

Creating an overall look or concept for the show:

show: Sometimes convention is entirely thrown out the window and shows are costumed in a style that may be anachronistic or stylistically unusual for the time period or subject matter of the show. This is most evident in a show like *Chicago* where, despite the Jazz Age time period, most productions costume their performers in various modern, tight-fitting dance ensembles – and entirely in black. Everybody – from the Cook County Jail inmates to the members of the press to Roxie and Velma themselves – is dressed in different textures of black lace, mesh, fishnet, spandex, and frills (and despite being entirely the same color, each fabric looks very different under the stage lights!). Obviously, that is not what prison inmates in the 1920s would actually wear, but it does create a striking look onstage.



Color in costume design...

Red: Love, passion, anger, blood, violence

Orange: optimism, energy, superficial, autumn, fire

Yellow: cheerful, impatient, cowardly, sickly

Green: balance, harmony, growth, life, money, greed, jealousy

Blue: sadness, calm, peace, loneliness, loyalty, ocean

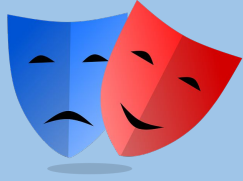
Purple: creative, mysterious, royal, sexy, immature

Brown: earth, poverty, dirty, solid

Black: death, power, scary, uncertain

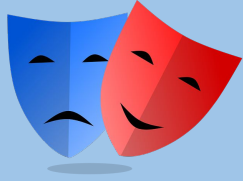
White: cleanliness, purity, innocence, snow





Practice: Develop a color palette!

1. First, choose one of the following that you know well:
 - a. A play or musical
 - b. A movie or TV Show
 - c. A short story/novel
2. Make a list of characters and groups of characters you would design costumes for in the show.
3. Develop a color palette for your costume vision and an explanation of each. This color palette can be represented in collage form. This can be a collage you make from materials (magazines, fabric, paper, etc) at home or you can do it digitally with pictures online.
4. Share your collage and vision with someone!



RESOURCE: EXAMPLE

Show: Little Shop of Horrors

Skid Row Residents: Ensemble members and skid row residents will be dressed in muted, dingy browns and greys. This represents the environment they live in, and the feeling of being down on your luck.

