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SECTION I: THE PLAY

Synopsis
Setting
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SYNOPSIS
Two words set in motion playwright Sanaz Toossi’s intricate and profound New York debut: “English Only.” This is the mantra that rules one classroom in Iran, where four adult students are preparing for the TOEFL — the Test of English as a Foreign Language. Chasing fluency through a maze of word games, listening exercises, and show-and-tell sessions, they hope that one day, English will make them whole. But it might be splitting them each in half.

SETTING
A classroom.
2008. Karaj, Iran

THEMES
Language & Identity
Cultural Assimilation
Discrimination
SECTION II: CREATIVE TEAM

Creative Biographies
Characters/Cast List
Interviews with the Playwright & Director—From Roundabout Theatre’s Upstage Guide
CREATIVE BIOGRAPHIES

SANAZ TOOSSI (Playwright) is an Iranian-American playwright from Orange County, California. Her plays include Wish You Were Here (Williamstown Audible 2020; Playwrights Horizons 2022; Stavis Award) and English (Atlantic/Roundabout 2022; Weissberger New Play Award; Kilroys’ List 2019). She is currently under commission at Atlantic Theater Company, Williamstown Theatre Festival, Manhattan Theatre Club, South Coast Repertory, IAMA Theatre, and Oregon Shakespeare Festival (American Revolutions Cycle). Sanaz is a member of Youngblood and was the 2019 P73 Playwriting Fellow. She was a recipient of the 2020 Steinberg Playwright Award and the Laurents/Hatcher Foundation Award. MFA: NYU Tisch. TV: 5 Women, A League of Their Own, Invitation to a Bonfire. Sanaz is a proud child of immigrants.

KNUD ADAMS (Director) Previously with Atlantic, Knud directed Eboni Booth’s Paris, which was hailed by New York Magazine as one of the “10 Best Theater Moments of 2020.” Other world premieres include: The Headlands by Christopher Chen (LCT3), Notes on My Mother’s Decline by Andy Bragen (Play Co), Tin Cat Shoes by Trish Harnetiaux (Clubbed Thumb), The Workshop by Torrey Townsend (Soft Focus), Asshole by Justin Kuritzkes (JACK), and Tom & Eliza by Celine Song (JACK). Knud is an alumnus of the Drama League Next Stage Residency and Fall Directing Fellowship, the Soho Rep Writer/Director Lab, the Playwrights Horizons Directing Residency, and Kenyon College. Next up: Private by Mona Pirnot (Mosaic) and Bodies They Ritual by Angela Hanks (Clubbed Thumb).
CHARACTERS/CAST LIST

TALA ASHE
Elham

AVA LALEZAZARDEH
Goli

POOYA MOHSENI
Roya

MARJAN NESHAT
Marjan

HADI TABBAL
Omid
BEHIND THE SCENES LOOK AT REHEARSAL
BEHIND THE SCENES LOOK AT REHEARSAL

From Roundabout Theatre’s Upstage Guide, An interview with Playwright Sanaz Toossi:

Roundabout Teaching Artist Leah Reddy spoke with playwright Sanaz Toossi about her work on *English*.

**LEAH REDDY:** What is your theatre origin story? How did you come to playwriting?

**SANAZ TOOSSI:** I was a weird theatre kid, so I had always loved and gravitated to theatre. After I graduated college, I had a bit of a meltdown; I felt my life going in a direction that scared me. So I decided to take a leap.

**LR:** What inspired you to write *English*?

**ST:** A lot: the disrespect for immigrants, my own insecurities over my English and Farsi-speaking abilities, how devastating it is not to be understood.

**LR:** I’m struck by the approach you took to having the characters - all of whom are native Farsi-speakers - speak unaccented English to indicate that they’re speaking Farsi, and accented English when they’re speaking English in the play. Can you tell us how you landed on this approach?

**ST:** I’d played with this conceit before when trying to write a family drama. I grew up in a bilingual household, and I felt that for an audience to truly empathize with my (native Farsi-speaking) characters, I couldn’t actually write dialogue in Farsi, because the Farsi would act as a barrier to understanding the characters’ inner lives. I’ve changed my mind about this. I love hearing different languages onstage. It certainly does not keep me from engaging. And in a way, I was re-enforcing the notion of non-English as "other." Still, this conceit works for *English*, because to understand the difficulty of the English, you really have to understand the comfort of the Farsi and thus the tragedy of being robbed of your mother tongue.

**LR:** Can you talk about your collaboration with director Knud Adams on this production?
ST: I think Knud looks at everything from a fascinating tilt. I like to work with directors who understand the heart of my play but also make me think about it differently. And we're very aligned on what we're trying to create and what we're not trying to create. Is English a political play? Yes, as much as any other play. But it's also a comedy. It's rooted in a space. The play has a thesis that we're going to honor, but we also want to create something beautiful and interesting.

LR: What advice do you have for young people who want to write for the theatre?

ST: Write a lot! Don't be afraid of the first pancake. Overcome your fear of writing trash. Be kind to yourself as you find your voice.

Roundabout Teaching Artist Leah Reddy spoke with director Knud Adams about his work on English.

LEAH REDDY: What is your theatre origin story? How did you come to directing?

KNUD ADAMS: We moved around a lot growing up—between California, France, England, Scotland, and Ohio—so my education was a little spotty. (I somehow missed out on long division entirely.) But art was a constant source of comfort and escape, including visiting museums, acting in the village pantos, writing epic fantasy novels, painting miniatures, watching Turner Classic Movies...

It wasn't until college that I found a way to combine these interests. I had been spending too much time in the art building, where I inhaled darkroom chemicals for six hours straight and almost cut off a finger in the sculpture studio. I started directing to force some sociability and channel my troublemaking.

LR: What drew you to English? What do you look for in plays you choose to direct?

KA: Instinctively, I'm drawn to a range of stories and styles. One constant is great dialogue — language that sparks like real life and creates the opportunity for performances of complex interiority.
For me, there also needs to be some kind of atmospheric challenge. I'm highly visual, and I try to bring an architectural sophistication and cinematic precision to the stage. To make theatre that doesn't look like theatre. Some plays invite a braver approach, and I like to be of use. “The pitcher cries for water to carry / and a person for work that is real.”

On a personal note, I come from a family of teachers, and my mother is an English as a Second Language specialist, so I appreciate the joys and heartbreaks of the classroom.

LR: *English* is tightly focused on language. How would you describe your relationship to language and text as a director?

KA: One theme of the play is that we are different people in different languages — that your tongue and thoughts and identity are all connected and shape each other. That’s something I experienced firsthand when, as a kid, I moved to a country where I didn’t first speak the language and had to dive into the public schools.

Directing is also a kind of language — a "Way of Seeing," to reference John Berger. On stage, composition is text. Pause is text. Light is text... All of it part of the Gesamtkunstwerk [a term that means “total work of art” in German].

LR: This play is rooted in a specific time period in Iranian history and informed by Iran's relationship with the United States. Was research into that time and place a part of your process?

KA: Yes, very much, but I think it's important to say that *English* is not, on its face, a political play. That in itself is kind of radical. It's about a group of Iranians who are funny, romantic, competitive, and witty...who are allowed the full scope of their humanity.

Still, it’s important to understand the circumstances in which these characters make choices for their futures and their families. For me, that began with a lot of background reading. (I'm currently enjoying *A History of Modern Iran* by Ervand Abrahamian.) I've also been profoundly inspired by the films of Asghar Farhadi. For our design process, we've looked at hundreds of research images, from Iranian street photographers, the social media accounts of every language center in Tehran and Karaj, and personal photos from members of the team. We're also bringing in a historian/dramaturg to help
advise on the specific time period. There’s a tremendous amount of work that goes into making something that hopefully feels true and specific as well effortless and fun.

**LR: What advice do you have for young people who want to direct for the theatre?**

**KA:** I hope the industry looks different today from the one I entered 10 years ago, so I’d hesitate to offer old advice. I would say:

- Don’t quit a part-time job, with healthcare benefits, to pay to intern at a theatre.
- Nurture other interests, whether that’s history, politics, psychology, fashion, art... Theatre is a pastiche art form, and it can become stale and incestuous when it only references itself.
- If it matters to you, try to put it on stage. When you can, let the work speak for itself.
SECTION III: YOUR STUDENTS AS AUDIENCE

Theater Vocabulary
Vocabulary from *English*

English in Context, From Roundabout Theatre’s Upstage Guide:
  - Iran in 2008
  - English Language Teaching
THEATER VOCABULARY

TEACHER OBJECTIVE
To be able to discuss theater through a common, shared vocabulary.

STUDENT GOAL
To understand that the most effective way to discuss theater and new ideas is through a shared vocabulary.

ACTION: The events that move along the story of the play and which influence the characters within the play.

CHARACTERS: Individuals the audience learns about from their actions and reactions.

ENSEMBLE: A group of performers working together to create a complete production.

DIALOGUE: The exchange of speech between two characters which reveals the feelings of the character as well as the story of the play.

MONOLOGUE: A speech by one actor on stage, which is intended to reveal the inner thoughts of the character the actor plays.

CHARACTER ARC: The change produced in a character by the events and other characters in the play.

MUSICAL THEATER: A twentieth century creation where writers and musicians collaborate to create a play which features song, dance and drama.

MOOD: The overall feeling the play evokes.

COSTUME: The clothes, boots, etc., worn by the actors based on their character.

PROP: Objects used by an actor to enhance their character. For example, wine glasses at a bar for drinks.

SET: The constructed environment of a play within which the action takes place.

SOUND: Noises and music used in the play.
VOCABULARY FROM ENGLISH

TEACHER OBJECTIVE
To be able to discuss theater through a common, shared vocabulary.

STUDENT GOAL
To understand that the most effective way to discuss theater and new ideas is through a shared vocabulary.

Farsi: The modern Persian language, a member of the Iranian branch of the Indo-European family written in Arabic script. The official language of modern day Iran, parts of Afghanistan and the central Asian republic of Tajikistan

MCAT: The Medical College Admission Test is a computer-based standardized examination for prospective medical students in the United States, Australia, Canada, and Caribbean Islands. It is designed to assess problem solving, critical thinking, written analysis and knowledge of scientific concepts and principles.

TOEFL: The TOEFL iBT® (Test of English as a Foreign Language, internet-Based Test) is a language assessment required for admission to universities in more than 130 countries, including the U.S. The test is administered via computer; test takers wear noise-reducing headphones, speak into a microphone to record responses to speaking tasks, and type responses to writing tasks. The worldwide recognition of the TOEFL means that any international student who wishes to study abroad, especially in English-speaking countries, must take the TOEFL to be considered for admission. The test was initially launched in 1964 and has had several major revisions since then. The first computer-based version was introduced in 1998, and in 2005 the TOEFL became entirely internet-based.
ENGLISH IN CONTEXT

From Roundabout Theatre’s Upstage Guide:

IRAN IN 2008

*English* takes place in Karaj, Iran in 2008. Prior to the Iranian Revolution of 1979, Karaj was a satellite city about 30 miles west of Tehran. It was primarily a center for industry and agribusiness. In the past few decades, the city has grown considerably. Metropolitan Karaj, with a population of 2.5 million, is now Iran’s fourth-largest city. It has a mix of social classes, with many of the residents having moved away from the congestion and high cost of living in Tehran. To better understand the stakes and circumstances of *English*, let’s look at some of the key sociopolitical factors affecting the time and place.

THE REVOLUTION OF 1979

The 1979 revolution was a major turning point in Iran’s history. The Shah—the sovereign ruler of the then-monarchy of Iran—Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, was overthrown by a mass revolution encompassing Iranians from different social backgrounds and political persuasions. The revolution was ultimately led by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

Khomeini, who had been previously exiled by the Shah for speaking out against him, preached that the Shah’s White Revolution, an aggressive and expensive modernization program, had made the country economically unequal and led the country to turn its back on Islamic principles. Khomeini warned that the Shah’s close political ties to the West would uproot traditional Iranian culture and overall sovereignty. In late 1978, religious students, economically disaffected young people, opposition leftists, and nationalist political groups took to the streets to protest the Western-tinged excess of the Iranian monarchy. After months of strikes and unrest, Iran’s armed forces declared their neutrality, which finally ousted the Pahlavi dynasty and brought a definitive end to the 2,500-year-old Persian monarchy. This event is known as the Iranian Revolution.
Despite the broad and multi-dimensional revolutionary coalition, Khomeini took charge in the wake of the Iranian Revolution. He declared Iran an Islamic republic guided by Islamic principles and himself Supreme Leader of the land. He created a new constitution that sought to blend republican institutions such as a parliament and a popularly elected executive branch with an Islamized judicial system. Public offices were reserved for clerics. The country officially became the Islamic Republic of Iran in 1979. To this day, the Supreme Leader sits atop Iran’s political power structure, above the President. While Iran’s President and members of the Parliament are publicly elected every four years, their powers are checked by those of the Supreme Leader and the Council of Guardians—half of whom are appointed by the Supreme Leader himself. This entity is responsible for determining whether the laws passed by Parliament are in line with the Constitution and religious precepts of Islam (or Sharia).

The country’s current Supreme Leader is Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who succeeded Khomeini after his death in 1989. With Khamenei and his followers prescribing adherence to a rigid interpretation of Islam, many of the laws and policies in place in Iran in 2008 were designed to reinforce traditional values and suppress dissent. However, popular mobilization against state policies is common. It has regularly been expressed in the past three decades on the floor of the parliament, during elections, through strikes, and with popular gatherings in front of government buildings. At times this mobilization has been peaceful, but at other moments it has been met with state repression and violence.

Calls for deepening republican rule and democratizing society coalesced into the Reformist movement that gained popularity under President Mohammad Khatami (1997-2005). Reformists aspired to use their electoral support to pass legislation to modify laws and shift power away from the Supreme Leader and towards popularly elected offices and non-governmental organizations, or society at large.

**CENSORING DISSENT**

This political project was defeated by hardline supporters of the Supreme Leader who used a mix of intimidation and arbitrary powers to crack down on Reformists. In 2005, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, the strictly conservative Islamic mayor of Tehran, won the Iranian presidency by running on a platform in which he pledged to return to the core values of the Iranian Revolution of 1979. Once President Ahmadinejad came to power,
the government began to invoke issues of “national security” as a justification for silencing dissent among Iranian citizens and leaders of the Reformist movement. For example, the U.S. Global War on Terror and presence of U.S. troops in two of Iran’s neighbors—Afghanistan and Iraq—became evidence of plots by “enemies.” According to the 2009 World Report from Human Rights Watch, in that year Iran saw “a dramatic rise in arrests of political activists, academics, and others for peacefully exercising their rights of free expression and association in Iran.”

Iranian authorities suppressed freedom of expression and opinion during this period by arresting and imprisoning journalists who painted the government in a negative light and by strictly controlling what was published and what was taught in schools and universities. The internet was closely monitored, and websites or forums critiquing government policies were at risk of being blocked by the authorities.

A grassroots movement advocating for women’s rights, called the One Million Signatures Campaign, was a specific target of government meddling and censorship in 2008. The Campaign, co-led by the feminist activist Sussan Tahmasebi, sought signatures of support to reform Iranian laws discriminating against women and bring them in line with international human rights standards. The movement was peaceful, and yet security agents and judiciary powers prosecuted women involved in the campaign for "disturbing public opinion," and "publishing lies via the publication of false news." Despite the road blocks, the Campaign made progress toward their goals, including striking down a proposed tax on prenuptial arrangements which promoted polygamy.

**BRAIN DRAIN**

The pattern of “brain drain”—the emigration of highly educated or trained citizens—intensified across Iran in the mid to late 2000s, as intellectuals and highly skilled workers fled to avoid imprisonment for voicing beliefs that weren’t in line with governmental policies. During this time, dissident university professors were forced into early retirement, and politically active students were prevented from registering for their next school semesters. According to the Center for Human Rights in Iran, at least 200 students were arrested between June 2007 and December 2008, many of whom were subject to “torture and ill-treatment” for speaking out against the government. For less politically-minded Iranians, high unemployment and the unpredictable economic
conditions were reasons to seek careers and opportunities to study outside of Iran. The presence of a large diaspora, who had left during the revolution or the Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988), made the prospect of immigration even more tangible.

**INTERNATIONAL SANCTIONS ON NUCLEAR DEVELOPMENT**

Simultaneously, rumors that Iran was secretly developing nuclear weapons became a pressing global concern. Following past attempts at curbing Iran's nuclear program, the United Nations Security Council demanded in 2006 that the country suspend all uranium enrichment and reprocessing activities. In the two years that followed, as Iran continued to defy the UN's orders, increasingly tight economic sanctions were placed on the country in an attempt to block the import and export of sensitive nuclear materials and equipment. By 2008, the UN Security Council had adopted three separate resolutions to sanction Iran economically for its nuclear program. Despite growing evidence otherwise, Iran maintained that their uranium enrichment activities were for the purposes of civilian technology rather than weapons development. Unbeknownst to Iranians in 2008, the situation would become even worse after 2008. Under President Obama, the U.S. was able to organize an international campaign to isolate and impose severe economic sanctions that limited Iran's ability to export oil, attract foreign investment, and import necessary goods. Under President Trump these steps were escalated into a “maximum pressure” campaign.

**ECONOMIC TURMOIL**

In March 2008, in spite of the recent third round of UN economic sanctions, Iran’s economy was set to remain steady thanks to record prices for crude oil. But after President Ahmadinejad boosted social spending to “bring the oil money to people’s dinner tables,” Iranian inflation doubled to 30% with disastrous results. Many jobs were lost when local industries were damaged by both a flood of cheap imports and the central bank’s sudden credit-restriction policy. While this policy helped to reduce inflation, it also caused an increase in unemployment.

And yet, not everyone in Iran was facing economic turmoil. The unequal distribution of wealth was reinforced as certain individuals and social strata benefited from the state resources and an economy dominated by monopolies. Additionally, the poor housing and job markets were especially detrimental to the Iranian lower and middle classes.
Overall, between 2005 and 2007, the income of the top 20% in Iran rose more than four times as fast as that of the bottom quintile, creating a dramatic increase in the country’s margin of inequality.

**IRAN ON THE BRINK**

2008 was a year of tension for Iran. International sanctions, a tumultuous economy, a defeated Reformist movement, and an unwavering Supreme Leader fueled a collective culture of anxiety and fear over what might come next. Learning a foreign language, as the students do in *English*, would have been a key step toward obtaining a visa and unlocking the door to opportunities outside of Iran.
ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

ENGLISH EVERYWHERE
According to global business data platform Statista, 1.35 billion people worldwide use English, either natively or as a second language, in 2021. English is considered the lingua franca (a shared, bridge language) for global business and for many other industries including science, medicine, law, technology, and tourism. Statistics suggest the strength of a nation’s economy is related to its number of English speakers, so governments around the world are driving the demand for quality English language teaching (ELT). Over the past decade, ELT has become a booming growth industry valued at $33.5 billion in 2018 and estimated to be a nearly $55-billion industry by 2025.

ESL TEACHERS WANTED

“Yes, I am a TOEFL instructor, but more importantly, I am a coach, a cheerleader, a friend, a shoulder to cry on, and a source of inspiration for my students. In short, their futures are in my hands. I cannot make this claim about any other course I have taught ... nothing has brought me greater joy than helping my TOEFL students actualize their dreams.”

—Bruce Stirling, TOEFL Instructor

Approximately 250,000 English speakers now teach English in non-English-speaking countries each year. While a teaching background is usually not required, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, most overseas employers require certification of some kind for their English teachers. Such certificates include:

- Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL): qualifies you to teach in foreign countries, formal schools, private organizations/companies, and private tutoring.

- Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults (CELTa): a widely respected TEFL certification, awarded by the University of Cambridge.
• Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL): qualifies you to teach students who recently emigrated to an English-speaking country, and also qualifies you for many online teaching jobs.

• Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL): a general certification to teach both EFL and ESL, both at home and abroad.

• The Test of English as Foreign Language (TOEFL) certificate, combined with one of the above certificates, allows you to teach students to take the TOEFL exam.

Besides teaching, the growing ELT industry also offers a range of career opportunities, including owning or directing an English school; writing and publishing; and curriculum design and tech jobs in the expanding online instruction field.

ELT IN IRAN

Like the rest of the world, Iran has seen a rise in ELT and teacher training over the past two decades, but Iran’s relationship to English remains fraught. A 2019 study by Aman Rassouli and Nedet Osam (Eastern Mediterranean University) investigated two different positions on the teaching of English in Iran. The Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI), under the direction of the Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, sets official policy on how English should be taught and used. From the government’s position, English is perceived as “the language of enemies”—referring specifically to the U.S. and the U.K. The IRI has screened ELT training programs, dismissed all native speakers of English from the system, censored hints of Western culture from teaching materials, and banned the teaching of English in primary schools.

The study suggested a contrasting view of ELT in Iranian society. A majority of the 472 undergraduate students surveyed by Rassouli and Osam believed that learning English was advantageous for them personally. They viewed knowledge of English as a mark of social prestige and literacy. Because English is perceived as an important element of social status, many Iranian families are willing to invest financially in their children learning English to help improve their position in society.
Notably, the study found that although individuals hold positive attitudes about learning English to meet their own needs, the IRI's policies have succeeded in limiting the influence of English language culture in Iran and in preventing individual Iranians from developing favorable perceptions of the West.
SECTION IV: YOUR STUDENTS AS ACTORS

Reading a Scene for Understanding
The Atlantic Technique Exercise
Scene Analysis Worksheet
READING A SCENE FOR UNDERSTANDING

TEACHER OBJECTIVE
To introduce the Practical Aesthetics “tools” for breaking down a scene. To understand the character and the story of the scene by relating the character’s actions to the student’s own life.

STUDENT GOAL
To understand that an important part of creating a simple, honest character involves knowing what that character wants.

MATERIALS
Pens, pencils, copies of the following scene from the play, and copies of the Literal, Want, Action, As-If worksheet and/or Mini-Lesson.

THE ATLANTIC TECHNIQUE EXERCISE

STEP ONE
Divide the students in pairs. Ask the students to select which character they want to portray.

STEP TWO
Allow the students time to read the scene silently to themselves.

STEP THREE
Ask the students to read the Introduction to the Practical Aesthetic Introduction sheet and have the students answer the four questions on the Scene Analysis Worksheet.

NOTE: The four questions and the students’ answers to them from the basis for the Practical Aesthetics scene analysis; and enables the actor to create a simple, honest character. They’re simply being honest to their own experiences!

STEP FOUR
After the students have completed the question worksheet, ask each actor to read the scene in front of the classroom for an audience. Students should incorporate the ideas from the worksheet as they read the scene.
OMID
Is it enough for you— to have halfway conversations with your students?

MARJAN
I love teaching English.

OMID
But is it enough?

MARJAN
It’s still English.

OMID
Do you speak it at home? With your husband?

MARJAN
No.

OMID
Because he’s Iranian.

MARJAN
Because he doesn’t know it.

OMID
You were speaking English for nine years. Do you not need that part of yourself at home or—

MARJAN
No, I do. I have it. There. You should marry an American girl. If that’s what you’re asking.
OMID
That’s the plan.

Beat.

OMID
I want to be like you. You could live anywhere. You could learn any language. You could do anything and you’re here.

MARJAN
Nine years isn’t as long as you think.

OMID
But it is a good... chunk. I think chunk is right.

OMID
Chunk. Yeah.

MARJAN
It took me two years alone to figure out the bus routes. Which lines wen north/south, which went east/west. And the sounds of the bus— the bus doors would swoosh open. The buses here don’t swoosh. They... I don’t know what they do. Nine years they called me Mary. Isn’t Mary a nice name?

OMID
Yeah. Classic.

MARJAN
When I came back here, I didn’t know what to answer to.

OMID
Should I have an American name?

MARJAN
Omid is a nice name.
THE ATLANTIC TECHNIQUE INTRODUCTION

ANALYSIS
Script analysis is the process of breaking down a beat within a scene. We ask four questions in order to do this.
1. What is the character literally doing?
2. What does the character want?
3. What is the essential ACTION?
4. What is that action like to me? It is AS-IF...

LITERAL: In this step, the actor determines what the character he or she is playing is literally doing according to the text.

PURPOSE: An actor has to travel far—think of this preparation as the road map.

WANT: In this step, the actor identifies the goal of the character in the scene, specifically what the character wants from the other character/s in the scene. The given circumstances of the story inform the WANT.

PURPOSE: To focus the actor on the characters’ interaction.

ACTION: Playing an ACTION is the physical pursuit of a goal. Defining the ACTION of the scene allows the actor to determine what result or CAP he or she is looking for from the other actor/s in the scene.

EXAMPLES:
- Put someone in their place / Beg someone for forgiveness / Get a favor
- Get someone to let me off the hook / Force someone to face the facts
- Inspire someone to greatness / Get someone to see the light

PURPOSE: Using an action gives the actor a task and a specific point of view. The Atlantic Theater Company teaches that the Action creates character.

AS-IF: In this step, the actor personalizes the action by finding a real-life situation in which they would behave according to the action they have chosen for the scene.

EXAMPLE: Get a favor. It’s AS-IF I forgot to do my science homework and I’m asking my
teacher for an extra day to hand it in.

**PURPOSE**: To gain personal insight and urgency to the scene or beat.

**TACTICS & TOOLS**: Different ways an actor goes about getting his action.

**EXAMPLE**: Plead, flirt, demand, inspire, challenge, level, threaten.

**LIVING IN THE MOMENT**: Reacting impulsively to what the other actor in the scene is doing, from the point of view of the chosen action.
### SCENE ANALYSIS WORKSHEET

Here are your “tools” for understanding your character:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHAT IS MY CHARACTER LITERALLY DOING?</th>
<th>If you’re playing MARJAN</th>
<th>If you’re playing Omid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marjan is literally talking to Omid about English's role in their lives.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Omid is literally talking to Marjan about each other's relationship to English.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHAT DOES MY CHARACTER WANT?</th>
<th>If you’re playing MARJAN</th>
<th>If you’re playing Omid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marjan wants Omid to realize the beautiful opportunities of English.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Omid wants Marjan to share her true self with him.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHAT IS THE ACTION I’M GOING TO PLAY?</th>
<th>If you’re playing MARJAN</th>
<th>If you’re playing Omid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To get someone to seize a great opportunity.</td>
<td></td>
<td>To get someone to bend the rules.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THE AS-IF...</th>
<th>If you’re playing MARJAN</th>
<th>If you’re playing Omid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>As if I'm trying to get my guardian allow me to go on tour with an artist I love.</td>
<td></td>
<td>As if I'm trying to get my teacher to tell my parents I passed a test to gain a privilege (vacation, party, etc.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SECTION V | YOUR STUDENTS AS ARTISTS

Post Theater Creative Response Activity
Common Core & DOE Theater Blueprint
POST THEATER CREATIVE RESPONSE ACTIVITY
Developing a Personal Creative Response

TEACHER OBJECTIVE
To develop critical thinking skills through examining a theme in *English* and relating that to an individual creative response.

STUDENT GOAL
To examine a theme from English and to relate their own experience to the truths and messages of the play, resulting in their own creative response.

MATERIALS
Pencils, pens, writing paper or word processing software.

STEP ONE
Discuss the way language influences identity for the characters in *English*. Explore why each of the characters is learning English and the influence it has on their sense of identity.

STEP TWO
Ask the students to respond to the prompt: What impact does the language or the languages you speak have on your identity?

STEP THREE
Ask the students to share their thoughts.
**COMMON CORE & DOE THEATER BLUEPRINT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ENDURING UNDERSTANDING</th>
<th>STRAND BENCHMARKS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theater creates a world in which the audience can explore the human experience. The same work of art can communicate different messages to different people.</td>
<td><strong>THEATER MAKING: ACTING</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS</td>
<td>Benchmark: Students increase their ability as imaginative actors while continuing to participate as collaborative ensemble members. Students demonstrate the ability to reflect on and think critically about their own work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the relationship between language and identity?</td>
<td><strong>THEATER MAKING: PLAYWRITING/PLAY MAKING</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is cultural assimilation necessary or is it better to retain all or part of your cultural identity?</td>
<td>Benchmark: Students refine their ability as playwrights to express point of view and personal vision.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEVELOPING THEATER LITERACY</td>
<td><strong>MAKING CONNECTIONS THROUGH THEATER</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benchmark: Students develop skills as critics by analyzing the critical writings of others.</td>
<td>Benchmark: Students demonstrate a capacity for deep personal connection to theater and a realization of the meaning and messages of theater.</td>
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<tr>
<td>WORKING WITH COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL RESOURCES</td>
<td><strong>WORKING WITH COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL RESOURCES</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Benchmark: Students invigorate and broaden their understanding of theater through collaborative partnerships with theater professionals.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
References:

From Roundabout Theatre’s Upstage Playgoer’s Guide:


“Allow Peaceful Celebrations of National Student Day.” Center for Human Rights in Iran, 8 Mar. 2012.


“Inside Iran - The Structure Of Power In Iran | Terror And Tehran | FRONTLINE.” PBS, Public Broadcasting Service.


SECTION VI | THE ATLANTIC LEGACY

Atlantic Theater Company & Atlantic Acting School

At Atlantic, our aim is singular—to empower simple and honest storytelling that fosters greater understanding of our shared world. We are a family of artists dedicated to exploring essential truths onstage, be it a show at Atlantic Theater Company or a class at Atlantic Acting School. As a producer, presenter, and educator of theater, we are driven by the belief that theater can challenge and transform our ways of thinking and urge us to reflect on our role in society. From our Tony Award and Pulitzer Prize-winning productions to our community-based education programs, we are committed to uncovering and celebrating the stories of our varied human existence.

Founded as an ensemble of impassioned artists in 1985, Atlantic Theater Company has grown into a powerhouse Off-Broadway company. We challenge, inspire, and awaken audiences with truthful storytelling presented across our two venues, the Linda Gross Theater and the intimate Stage 2 black box. As a producer of compelling new works, we are committed to championing the stories from new and established artists alike, amplifying the voices of emerging playwrights through our deeply collaborative programs and initiatives.

At Atlantic Acting School, we equip our students with the physical, emotional, and tactical tools of acting to discover their truths, and prepare them for success beyond our doors. From our full-time and evening conservatories to our NYU Tisch studio, and our after-school and summer programs for kids and teens, our immersive, learn-by-doing approach is central to an Atlantic Acting education. We have mentored and trained outstanding artists for more than 30 years. No matter their age or background, our students learn to break through their creative comfort zones in service to bringing essential human stories to life.