THE GREAT LEAP

By Lauren Yee
Directed by Taibi Magar
TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION I | THE PLAY
Synopsis
Settings
Themes

SECTION II | THE CREATIVE TEAM
Playwright & Director Biographies
Characters/Cast List

SECTION III | YOUR STUDENTS AS AUDIENCE
Theater Vocabulary
The Great Leap Basketball Vocabulary
The Great Leap in Context

SECTION IV | YOUR STUDENTS AS ACTORS
Reading a Scene for Understanding
Practical Aesthetics Exercise
Scene Analysis Worksheet

SECTION V | YOUR STUDENTS AS ARTISTS
Post Theater Creative Response Activity
Common Core & DOE Theater Blueprint

SECTION VI | THE ATLANTIC LEGACY
Sources
Section I: The Play
Synopsis
Settings
Themes
**SYNOPSIS**

San Francisco, spring 1989. Manford Lum, locally renowned on the sidewalk basketball courts of Chinatown, talks his way onto a college team, just before they travel to Beijing for a “friendship” game. When they arrive, China is in the throes of the post-Cultural Revolution era, and Manford must juggle international politics and his own personal history. Inspired by events from her father’s life and (short-lived) basketball career, playwright Lauren Yee (The Hatmaker’s Wife) makes her Atlantic debut with this tender and fearless new play.

**SETTING**

San Francisco and Beijing 1989

**THEMES**

Family relationships
Cultural identity
Challenging cultural stereotypes/expectations
Section II: Creative Team

Playwright & Director

Biographies

Cast/Characters
Lauren Yee (Playwright) was born and raised in San Francisco. She received her bachelor’s degree from Yale University, and her MFA in playwriting from UCSD, where she studied under Naomi Iizuka. Lauren Yee’s play *King of the Yees* is enjoying its premiere this season at The Goodman Theatre and Center Theatre Group, followed by productions at ACT Theatre and Canada’s National Arts Centre. Other plays include *Ching Chong Chinaman* (Pan Asian, Mu Performing Arts), *The Hatmaker’s Wife* (Playwrights Realm, Moxie, PlayPenn), *Hookman* (Encore, Company One), *In a Word* (SF Playhouse, Cleveland Public, Strawdog), *Samsara* (Victory Gardens, O’Neill Conference, Bay Area Playwrights Festival), and *The Tiger Among Us* (MAP Fund, Mu). She was a Dramatists Guild fellow, a MacDowell fellow, a MAP Fund grantee, a member of The Public Theater’s Emerging Writers Group, a Time Warner Fellow at the Women’s Project Playwrights Lab, a Shank playwright-in-residence at Second Stage Theatre, a Playwrights’ Center Core Writer, and the Page One resident playwright at Playwrights Realm. She has been a finalist for the Jerome Fellowship, the PONY Fellowship, the Princess Grace Award, the Sundance Theatre Lab, and the Wasserstein Prize. Her play *Samsara* has been a nominee for the Susan Smith Blackburn Prize and the L. Arnold Weissberger Award, and her play *In A Word* won the Francesca Primus Prize and was a finalist for the ATCA / Steinberg Award. Her play *The Hatmaker’s Wife* was an Outer Critics Circle nominee for the John Gassner Award for best play by a new American playwright. Her work has been published by Samuel French. Lauren is a member of the Ma- Yi Theatre Writers Lab. She is currently under commission from the Denver Center, the Geffen Playhouse, La Jolla Playhouse, Lincoln Center Theatre / LCT3, Mixed Blood Theatre, Portland Center Stage, South Coast Rep, and Trinity Rep.

TAIBI MAGAR (Director) is an Egyptian-American director based in New York, and a graduate of the Brown/Trinity MFA program. Most recently she directed the critically acclaimed *Master at the Foundry Theatre* (NYT Critics Pick). Other recent projects: *Underground Railroad Game* (Ars Nova, NYT Critics Pick, Obie Award for Best New American Work), *Dry Powder* (The Alley), *We Are Proud to Present* (The Guthrie). In New York Taibi has directed and developed work for The Foundry, New York Theater Workshop, Ars Nova, TFANA, the Women’s Project Theatre, Rising Phoenix Rep and INTAR Theatre. She is the recipient of a Stephen Sondheim Fellowship, an Oregon Shakespeare Festival Fellowship, a Public Theater Shakespeare Fellowship, the TFANA Actors and Director Project Fellowship, a Usual Suspect at New York Theater Workshop, and is an alumni of Lincoln Center Directors Lab. Most recently, she received the Kaplan Fellowship for young artists. Taibi has directed and taught at many academic institutions, including Juilliard, Fordham University, Brown University and New York University. She is currently developing Patrick and Daniel Lazour’s *We Live in Cairo* (2016 Richard Rodgers Award) with New York Theatre Workshop. Upcoming projects: *Aleshea Harris’ Is God Is* (Soho Rep) and *Danai Gurira’s Familiar* (The Guthrie and Seattle Repertory Theatre).

CAST & CHARACTERS

ALI AHN (CONNIE)
Connie is Manford’s cousin and a UC Berkeley grad student. She’s level-headed and able to focus on the big picture.

NED EISENBERG (SAUL)
Saul is the coach of University of San Francisco’s men’s basketball team. A shit-talking, shot-blocking, washed up Larry Bird.

TONY AIDAN VO (MANFORD)
Manford is a young man who is intense, scrappy, and runs into trouble.

BD WONG (WEN CHANG)
Wen Chang is the coach of Beijing University’s men’s basketball team. He’s observant and efficient and favors three pointers over aggressive inside shots.
Section III: Your Students As Audience

Theater Vocabulary
*The Great Leap* Basketball Vocabulary
*The Great Leap* in Context
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.
**ASSIST**
A pass to a teammate who scores a basket immediately or after one dribble.

**BUZZER BEATER**
A basket in the final seconds of a game (right before the buzzer sounds) resulting in a tie or a win.

**CENTER**
One of the three standard player positions. Generally, the tallest member of the team, responsible for scoring, rebounding and defense near the basket.

**DUNK**
To score by putting the ball directly through the basket with one or both hands.

**FREE THROW**
An unopposed attempt to score a basket, worth one point from the free throw line.

**GUARD**
One of the three standard player positions.

**NBA**
National Basketball Association, the largest professional league in the United States.

**NCAA**
The National Collegiate Athletic Association, the primary governing body for intercollegiate sports in the United States.

**PICK AND ROLL**
An offensive maneuver in which a player interposes him- or herself between a teammate with the ball and a defender, then cuts quickly toward the basket for a pass from the same teammate.

**POINT GUARD**
Point guards are expected to run the team's offense by controlling the ball and making sure that it gets to the right players at the right time.
THE GREAT LEAP FORWARD

“Learn from the masses and then teach them.” —Mao Zedong

The Great Leap Forward was a Communist Chinese economic and social campaign intended to convert the country from an agrarian economy into a modern society. It was a sweeping plan, under the leadership of Mao Zedong, to transform China into a society able to compete with western industrialized nations, within a five-year time period. In January 1958, the Great Leap Forward was launched, and between 1958 and 1960, millions of Chinese citizens were moved to rural communes to work on farms and in manufacturing. Private farming was prohibited.

Mao announced that the Great Leap Forward plan would last from 1958 to 1963 so that with two more 5-year installments, China would have an economy that rivaled America.

The Great Leap Forward was halted in 1960 after a disastrous three years. As early as 1959, the Great Leap had started to have drastic consequences for the Chinese people. Mao’s plan placed political principles above common sense: the communes were tasked with goals and deadlines which they were incapable of achieving. The failed initiative is said to have cost an estimated 20 to 48 million lives as a result of catastrophic economic policy, compounded by drought, brutal treatment of the farmers, a flood that killed 2 million workers and the subsequent crop failures that led to widespread starvation, illness and death.

In addition, the Great Leap Forward had wreaked havoc on the environment: the communes were instructed to set up “backyard” production plants for needed supplies such as steel, timber and cement. In order to meet production quotas, the people cut down forests, melted their own pots and pans, and burned furniture, doors, and house timbers. They were also forced to use experimental Russian cultivation ideas that instead caused extensive erosion.

In 1960, a devastating drought further added to the country’s troubles. In the face of the catastrophic results of the Great Leap, Mao Zedong was forced to resign from his position as Head of State, although he was allowed to remain in a powerful party position to save face and avoid public embarrassment. The program enforced on the people of China by Mao’s plan destroyed the ancient fabric of Chinese life and customs, demoralizing the people and leading to great suffering and loss of life.

CHINA’S CULTURAL REVOLUTION

In the 1960s, Mao Zedong came to feel that the current party leadership in China, as in the Soviet Union, was moving too far in a revisionist direction, valuing economics over ideological purity. Mao’s own position in government had weakened after the failure of his Great Leap Forward and the economic crisis that followed. Mao gathered a group of radicals, including his wife Jiang Qing and defense minister Lin Biao, to help him attack current party leadership and reassert his authority.

China’s relations with the Soviet Union had grown increasingly tense, and Mao was worried what Nikita Khrushchev’s denunciation of Stalin in 1956 and Khrushchev’s removal from office in 1964 meant for himself as China’s leader. To counter what he saw as the weakening of communist ideals, Mao issued a challenge to the country’s youth to keep the Revolution alive.
Students who answered Mao’s call for continuing revolution became the nucleus of the Red Guards. They targeted political enemies for abuse and humiliation. Under a campaign to wipe out the “Four Olds” — ideas, customs, culture, and habits — they carried out widespread destruction of historical sites and cultural relics, as well as ripping out the ancient pillars of Chinese spiritual and philosophical life: Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism, and ancient practices such as acupuncture and herbal medicine.

As the Red Guard grew more extreme, the People’s Liberation Army was sent in to control them. The Red Guards targeted the authorities on campuses, then party officials and “class enemies” in society at large. They carried out mass killings in Beijing and other cities as the violence swept across the country. The military joined the conflict, adding to the violence and the slaughter of civilians.

The chaos of the period, mass relocations and the closing of schools sharply curbed economic output.

Liu Shaoqi, China’s president, who attempted to undo some of the damage of the Great Leap Forward, was imprisoned and died from lack of medical treatment. Zhou Enlai, the second-most senior leader, survived by virtue of his public loyalty to Mao. Jiang Qing, a former actress and Mao’s wife, was the leading figure of the Gang of Four, radicals who attained political power during the Cultural Revolution. Arrested after Mao’s death in 1976, she committed suicide in 1991. Lin Biao was the leader of the People’s Liberation Army and played a crucial role in promoting the cult of Mao, which included ordering the compilation of the “Little Red Book”, a collection of the chairman’s sayings. Deng Xiaoping was a People’s Liberation Army veteran and leader who was purged during the Cultural Revolution. He returned to power after Mao’s death, pushing drastic economic reforms in the next decade.

**THE HISTORY OF BASKETBALL IN CHINA**

Basketball was invented in 1891 in Springfield Massachusetts, by James Naismith. The YMCA was an early sponsor and promoter of the game. The Y’s missionaries took basketball to, among other places, the port city of Tianjin, China. China’s ancient imperial dynasty was collapsing. Young Chinese elites were trying to emulate the military and industrial models of the West. To support them in their goals, the YMCA built gymnasiums, organized national and international sports tournaments, and preached that basketball could build stronger Chinese bodies and transform the country into a modern society.

Mao’s nationalist vision for the People’s Republic of China ended the YMCA’s programs and closed the door on the West. He taught that sports were a “bourgeois affectation,” but he permitted basketball because it was favored by the Chinese military, and because he personally loved it. 1. All other sports being banned by Mao, only ping pong and basketball remained for the Chinese people.

In the United States, basketball was becoming an increasingly popular urban sport, played in neighborhoods and on school playgrounds, and giving rise to creative, uniquely individual playing styles which led to the careers of stars like Bill Russell, Larry Bird, Wilt Chamberlain, Michael Jordan, Magic Johnson and so many others. In mid-20th century China, basketball existed in a social and cultural vacuum, as did China; the game was played to serve the ends of the military and the State.

When Mao died in 1976, his successor, Deng Xiaoping, began a series of reforms that transformed China over the next three decades. Not only did the economy begin to grow, but young Chinese could dye their hair, pierce their noses, join punk rock bands and play basketball, which became the most popular sport in China, even more than ping pong.
One problem was that the Chinese coaches didn’t understand how to develop strong players — many Chinese coaches of the time merely trained their teams by having them run drills repeatedly until their players dropped from exhaustion. This “molten-iron” training style, so deeply rooted in the Chinese sports system, provides one clue in the case of the missing point guards. The rigid Chinese training methods suppressed the very characteristics needed to produce an NBA-quality point guard: creativity, freedom, passion and leadership. Then Nike and the American National Basketball Association stepped in. The NBA had sold television rights in China, and owned corporate branding partnerships. David Stern, commissioner of the NBA, wanted to form a league in China; he attempted to import the flash and hyperbole of the NBA sports environment, with its busy running commentary, music, and exuberant cheerleaders.

But the Chinese government was not quite ready for all this. It was run by the monolithic Communist Party, which barred any opposition parties, censored the press, jailed dissidents and controlled the Chinese Basketball Association. David Stern didn’t realize it, but in attempting to import the razzledazzle of western sports, he was challenging the Communist Party. In Stern’s favor, however, private Chinese sports entrepreneurs had begun to want control over their own teams so they could fire bad managers and weak players, and up their game. These private teams were beginning to dominate the league, especially the Shanxi Brave Dragons from Guangdong Province. Boss Wang, volatile steel magnate and ambitious owner of the ragtag Dragons, took matters into his own hands, and hired an American coach, Bob Weiss from Dallas, Texas. During Weiss’s tenure in Shanxi, the basketball games that followed brought unpredictable, often outrageous outcomes, and a major culture clash.

CHINA IN 1971

In June of 1971, the United States ended its trade embargo of China. The following October, the United Nations General Assembly admitted the People’s Republic of China to the General Assembly. But the most surprising development came when it was announced that President Richard Nixon would visit China the following year. Since the Communists coming to power in China in 1949, Nixon had been one of the most outspoken critics of American efforts to establish diplomatic relations with the Chinese, his political reputation being based on his rigid anti-communist position.

A number of factors convinced Nixon to reverse his stance on China, first and foremost the Vietnam War. Two years after he had promised the American people “peace with honor,” Nixon was as entrenched in Vietnam as ever. His national security advisor, Henry Kissinger, saw a possible solution to this dilemma. Since China’s break with the Soviet Union in the mid 1960’s, the Chinese were desperate for new allies and trade partners. Kissinger aimed to use the promise of increased trade opportunities for China as a means to put increased pressure on North Vietnam — a Chinese ally — to reach an acceptable peace settlement. More importantly, in the long run, Kissinger believed that China might become a powerful ally with the U.S. against the Soviet Union. Kissinger called such foreign policy “realpolitik” or politics that favored dealing with other powerful nations in a practical manner rather than on the basis of political doctrine or ethics.

Nixon undertook his historic Chinese visit in 1972, beginning a gradual process of normalizing relations between the People’s Republic of China and the United States. Though his visit helped revive Nixon’s waning popularity and contributed to his 1972 reelection, it did not produce the short-term results for which Kissinger had hoped with the Vietnam conflict. Nixon’s visit did pave the way for future U.S. presidents to apply the principle of realpolitik to their international dealings.

THE TIANANMEN SQUARE MASSACRE

The Tiananmen Square protests of 1989, commonly known in mainland China as the June Fourth Incident, were student-led demonstrations in Beijing, the capital of the People’s Republic of China, in 1989. More broadly, it refers to the popular national movement inspired by the Beijing protests during that period, sometimes called the ‘89 People’s Movement. The protests were forcibly suppressed after the government declared martial law. At the height of the protests, an estimated one million people assembled in the Square. In what became known
in the West as the Tiananmen Square Massacre, troops with automatic rifles and tanks killed at least several hundred demonstrators trying to block the military’s advance towards Tiananmen Square where the protestors were gathered. The number of civilian deaths has been estimated variously from 180 to 10,500.

Set against a backdrop of rapid economic development and social change in post-Mao China, the protests reflected anxieties about the country’s future in the popular consciousness and among the political elite. The reforms of the 1980s had led to a growing market economy which benefitted some people but seriously disaffected others; the one-party political system also faced a challenge of legitimacy. Common grievances at the time included inflation, limited preparedness of graduates for the new economy, and restrictions on political participation. The students called for democracy, greater accountability, freedom of the press, and freedom of speech, though they were loosely organized and their goals varied.

As the protests swelled, the authorities veered back and forth between conciliatory and hardline tactics for dealing with the protests, exposing deep divisions within the party leadership. By May, a student-led hunger strike galvanized support for the demonstrators around the country and the protests spread to some 400 cities. Ultimately, China’s leader Deng Xiaoping and other Communist Party elders believed the protests to be a political threat, and resolved to use force. Communist Party authorities declared martial law on May 20, and mobilized an estimated 300,000 troops to Beijing, who began shooting, killing and running over the protestors.

The Chinese government was condemned internationally for the use of force against the protestors. Western countries imposed economic sanctions and arms embargoes. China’s government initially condemned the protests as a counterrevolutionary riot, and criticized other nations. It made widespread arrests of protestors and their supporters, suppressed other protests around China, expelled foreign journalists, strictly controlled coverage of the events in the domestic press, strengthened the police and internal security forces, and demoted or purged officials it deemed sympathetic to the protests. More broadly, the suppression temporarily halted the Chinese policies of liberalization in the 1980s. Considered a watershed event, government reaction to the protests strictly limited political expression in China well into the 21st century. Memory of the Tiananmen Square Massacre is directly associated with questioning the legitimacy of Communist Party rule, and remains one of the most sensitive and widely censored political topics in mainland China.

**TANKMAN**

Tank Man (also known as the Unknown Protester or Unknown Rebel) is the nickname of an unidentified man who stood in front of a column of tanks on June 5, 1989, the morning after the Chinese military had suppressed the Tiananmen Square protests of 1989 by force. As the lead tank maneuvered to pass by the man, he repeatedly shifted his position in order to obstruct the tank’s attempted path around him. Because this incident was caught on tape, it was seen worldwide.

More than 28 years after the incident, there is still no reliable information about the identity or fate of the man; the story of what happened to the tank crew is also unknown. At least one witness has stated that “Tank Man” was not the only person who had opposed the tanks during the protest. Shao Jiang, who was a student leader, said: “I witnessed a lot of the people standing up, blocking the tanks.” Tank Man is unique in that he is the only one who was photographed and recorded on video. His image has become an iconic symbol of peaceful protest against authoritarian regimes.
Section IV: Your Students As Actors
Reading a Scene for Understanding
Practical Aesthetics Exercise
Scene Analysis Worksheet

The following activities are designed to assist your students in understanding the actor’s “job.” Like every job, even acting has its “tools.”

The Practical Aesthetics acting technique was developed by David Mamet, William H. Macy, and the founding members of the Atlantic Theater Company. This technique offers the actor a set of analytical tools to understand the playwright’s intentions and what the characters want. This process of script analysis helps define the actor’s job on stage.

“Actors should remain truthful to the story and their character.”
- David Mamet, American playwright & noted actor, William H. Macy, founders of Atlantic Theater Company
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 Great Leap, and copies of the Literal, Want, Action, As-If worksheet and/or Mini-Lesson.

PRACTICAL AESTHETICS 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 Acting Technique sheet and have the students answer the four questions on the Scene Analysis Worksheet.

NOTE: The four questions and the students’ answers to them form 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 pair of actors to read the scene in the front of the class room for an audience. The students should incorporate the ideas from the worksheet as they read the scene.
CONNIE: YO, COUSIN!

MANFORD: HI, CONNIE.

CONNIE: I HEAR YOU WANT TO PLAY.

MANFORD: NO, I DON'T.

CONNIE: I HEAR YOU LOOKING FOR A LITTLE ONE-ON-ONE.

MANFORD: NO, I'M NOT.

CONNIE: YOU'VE BEEN OUT HERE FOR AN HOUR NOW, DINNER'S COLD, SO WHAT ELSE ARE YOU OUT HERE FOR?

MANFORD: GO BACK INSIDE, CON.

CONNIE: PEOPLE BE TALKING ABOUT HOW YOU'RE THE BEST.

MANFORD: IN CHINATOWN.

CONNIE: IN ANY TOWN.

MANFORD: THAT IS SIMPLY NOT TRUE.

CONNIE: YOU CAN BE WHATEVER YOU WANT.

MANFORD: CONNIE, THAT IS ABSOLUTELY ONE HUNDRED PERCENT COMPLETELY UNTRUE.

CONNIE: SO LET'S SEE IT, LUM. LET'S GO. LET'S PLAY THE BALL.

MANFORD: BASKETBALL PLAYERS DON'T SAY THAT.

CONNIE: TOSS SOME BALLS. WIN SOME BASKETS.

MANFORD: CON, SHUT UP.

CONNIE: I'M TRYING TO CHEER YOU UP, MANFORD.

MANFORD: BY LETTING ME BEAT A GIRL AT BASKETBALL?

CONNIE: YOU THINK YOU'RE GONNA BEAT ME?
PRACTICAL AESTHETICS 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.
Here are your “tools” for understanding your character:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is my character literally doing?</th>
<th>IF YOU’RE PLAYING CONNIE...</th>
<th>IF YOU’RE PLAYING MANFORD...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Connie is literally talking about Manford's basketball skills.</td>
<td>Manford is literally talking to Connie about his basketball skills.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What does my character want?</th>
<th>IF YOU’RE PLAYING CONNIE...</th>
<th>IF YOU’RE PLAYING MANFORD...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Connie wants Manford to step up and show her what he's got.</td>
<td>Manford wants Connie to give him the chance to practice in peace.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is the action I’m going to play?</th>
<th>IF YOU’RE PLAYING CONNIE...</th>
<th>IF YOU’RE PLAYING MANFORD...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To Get Someone To Rise To The Challenge</td>
<td>To Get Someone To Wave The White Flag</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The As-If...</th>
<th>IF YOU’RE PLAYING CONNIE...</th>
<th>IF YOU’RE PLAYING MANFORD...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It's as if I am going on the Whole 30 diet and my best friend, Dani says she wants to try it too, but doesn't think she can do it. I have to get her to step up so I have a partner in crime!</td>
<td>It's as if my roommate Jimmy challenges me to Donkey Kong, claiming he can beat me and I, the Donkey Kong master, need to get him to admit defeat. I'm the best!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Section V: Your Students As Artists

Post Theater Creative Response Activity
Common Core & DOE Theater Blueprint
POST-THEATER CREATIVE RESPONSE ACTIVITIES

Teacher Objective
To help students develop critical thinking skills through examining a theme in The Great Leap and practice personal creative response to the theme.

Student Goal
To understand that a theme from The Great Leap portrays the truth and message of the play.

Materials
Pencils, pens, writing paper, chalkboard.

Step One
Have students select an important moment from The Great Leap involving more than one character (For example, the first meeting between Saul and Wen Chang or an exchange between Manford and Connie). For best results, students should work in pairs or small groups representative of the numbers of characters in the scene.

Step Two
Have the students pick one of the characters and write a journal entry from the character’s perspective about what is happening in the scene.

Step Three
From this writing, each student will then expand their writing into a short monologue.

Step Four
Within the pair or small group, have each student read his/her monologue aloud. Then, have them discuss the similarities and differences between their monologues. Was there general agreement of what happened in the moment or marked differences? How and why was the moment remembered in ways? Were their subtle or obvious variations on how the moment was recalled? Did everyone involved in the writing agree on what was important to include and why? If not, how did the elimination of some elements change the way the moment was understood or remembered by the character?

NAME: ________________________________________________________________
ENDURING UNDERSTANDING STRAND BENCHMARKS
Theater conveys the significance individuals place on their life choices. For example: Playing God, Innocence, Morality, Culpability, Good vs. Bad, and Mistrust.
Theater conveys the meaning behind an individual’s struggle to have his or her life choices validated by family, friends and community.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS
Do the direction and staging reinforce the theme of “bleak morality” which is prevalent in Hangmen?
Do you accept the concept put forward in Hangmen that “struggle between right and wrong” can be both empowering and destructive?

Strand Benchmarks
THEATER MAKING: ACTING
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.

THEATER MAKING: PLAYWRITING/PLAY MAKING
Benchmark: Students refine their ability as playwrights to express point of view and personal vision.

DEVELOPING THEATER LITERACY
Benchmark: Students develop skills as critics by analyzing the critical writings of others.

MAKING CONNECTIONS THROUGH THEATER
Benchmark: Students demonstrate a capacity for deep personal connection to theater and a realization of the meaning and messages of theater.

WORKING WITH COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL RESOURCES
Benchmark: Students invigorate and broaden their understanding of theater through collaborative partnerships with theater professionals.

SOURCES:
Huge thank you to the Denver Center for Performing Arts for letting us pull content from their study guide.
Chad Henry.........................................................Editor
Sally Gass .................................Contributing Writer
David Saphier ...................Education Contributor


http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/Nixon-announces-visit-to-communist-china
Inspired by the Group Theater, Stanislavsky, and a passion for ensemble acting, David Mamet and William H. Macy formed the Atlantic Theater Company with a select group of New York University Undergraduate drama students. Since its inception in 1985, Atlantic has produced more than 100 plays and garnered numerous awards, including: 12 Tony Awards, 15 Lucille Lortel Awards, 16 OBIE Awards, six Outer Critics Circle Awards, seven Drama Desk Awards, three Drama League Awards, three New York Drama Critics Circle Awards and the Pulitzer Prize for Drama. Noted productions include: Spring Awakening, Port Authority, The Lieutenant of Inishmore, The Beauty Queen of Leenane, Boy’s Life, and American Buffalo. The Atlantic Theater Company’s mission is to produce plays simply and truthfully, utilizing an artistic ensemble. Atlantic believes that the story of the play and the intent of its playwright are at the core of a successful theatrical production.

The Atlantic Acting School fosters new generations of actors by passing on the tools learned from Mamet and Macy and by preparing students for all aspects of a career in film, television and theater. The Atlantic offers studies through New York University, a full-time conservatory program, part-time programs and summer workshops. Atlantic for Kids offers acting classes in an after school setting as well as summer programs for children ages 4 to 18.

Linda Gross Theater
336 West 20th Street
New York, NY, 10011

Atlantic Stage 2
330 West 16th Street
New York, NY, 10011