

PYGMALION ADAPTATION PROJECT

ENGLISH IV HONORS

OVERVIEW: An adaptation is when an author/screenwriter/playwright copies the central plot, conflicts, characters, and themes of a classic work and modifies it slightly to create a new work. Usually this means changing the setting and the character's names and cultural identities, although it could also mean converting a work from one medium to another (a novel to a play, a film to a novel, etc.). The basic concept of this play, changing the way a person speaks, dresses and acts to help them move from one social group to another, has been copied in thousands of works in our culture.

DIRECTIONS: For this assignment, you will work as a team of screenwriters being asked by Steven Spielberg to create a screenplay for a modern film adaptation of *Pygmalion*. You will take the core elements of the plot and the major characters (in which a person from one social group is trained to fit into another social group) and reset them in a modern setting. In groups of 2-4, you will do the following:

THE SCRIPT

- Select a new setting for your story, outline the storyline and assign scenes to write.
- Identify five key scenes in the play that you want to focus on. You must include at least ONE scene for EACH act.
- Your script will include five scenes that parallel the storyline of *Pygmalion* (one for each act) and each scene should be at least 300 words long. Include a word count at the end of each scene.
- Although the scene selection and adapted vision must be collaborative, each group member must write **at least one scene on his or her own**. Make sure you write your name on the scene(s) you write. You will get an individual grade on your scene and your performance (in addition to the overall group grade for the project).
- You may include additional scenes (beyond the required 5) for extra credit, worth up to 5 points each.
- On the first page of each scene, in stage directions, explain where and when the story takes place. Describe what each of the characters look like and are wearing.
- Use the conventions of drama in writing your script. Write out what each character is saying, but include descriptions of **movements** and **tone of voice** in stage directions.

THE CASTING PAGE

- Rename each of the major characters and suggest a contemporary film star who you would like to see play the role.
- Include the *Pygmalion* character's name, the adaptation character's name, the film star playing the role, and a picture of the film star.
- Your casting page should include **all** named characters in the play, whether they are in your scene or not. You do not need to include unnamed characters on your casting page unless they are in your scenes. For example, you do not need to include the bystanders or first footman on your casting sheet, but you do need to include Freddy Eynsford-Hill and Nepommuck, whether they are in your scenes or not. If the first footman is in your scenes, you need to include him.
- See page 8 of *Pygmalion* for a full list of characters.

THE PORTFOLIO*

- Your project should be submitted in a portfolio (manila) folder. See mdlvingston.weebly.com for samples and formatting of portfolio pages.
- **Front Cover:** On the front cover create a **film poster** advertising the movie. Create a new title for your adaption.
- **Inside:** Inside, include
 - A **title page**
 - See example on my website, and use the subtitle "A Modern Adaptation of George Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion*."
 - The **casting page** with pictures (see above)
 - The **script**
 - typed, labeled appropriately with *Pygmalion* page numbers and Act number, writer's name, and word count, and use single-spaced in script format.
- **Back Cover:** On the back of the manila folder, include a picture and at least 5 quotes from critics ("This is the best adaptation of *Macbeth* I have ever read... truly tragic!" – *The New York Times*). See the back of any DVD case for a nice example.

THE PERFORMANCE

- You will act out two scenes from your script in class.
- Prior to your performance, you will briefly explain the context of your scenes.
- You may also videotape your scene in advance and show the video to the class in lieu of a live performance.
- You can earn extra credit for using appropriate props and scenery that add to your performance.

This is a mastery (test) grade due on _____.

*Rubrics and samples available at mdlivingston.weebly.com

PROJECT STEPS

PHASE I

1. Decide on a new setting
2. Decide on new character names and identities
3. Figure out how the central plot (training someone to fit into a new social group) will translate in this new setting.
4. Outline each scene and assign group members to write them
5. Assign additional tasks (casting page, cover, table of contents, props, etc.)
6. Write rough drafts of scripts
 - a. Every scene begins with stage directions describing the setting, the people, the time frame

PHASE II

7. Review rough drafts of scripts among your group for plot and character consistency, dramatic conventions and editing.
8. Write and type final drafts of scripts, and include word count.
9. Select scenes for performance
10. Assign roles for performance.
11. Rehearse scenes.
12. Perform scenes.
13. Turn in project portfolio and scenes.

NOTES ON STAGE DIRECTIONS AND SCENE WRITING

Stage directions are a way for the playwright or screenwriter to give information to the people putting on the play about how the scene should be created. These directions are not simply notes for the actors, but for the director and technical crew (lighting, costumes, makeup, scenery, etc.)

In a script, use stage directions for:

- Describing the setting
- Describing the people and what they are wearing
- Describing the tone of voice actors should be using
- Describing any non-verbal cues for the actors (coughing, gestures, mannerisms)
- Describing any movement on the stage (walking, fighting, looking at things or people, etc.)

EXAMPLE:

Act I- Pages 23-25

The scene: A high school cafeteria in a large suburban high school. Students are eating and talking and two students, Mac and Maisie, sit down at the table in the middle of the room. Mac is a tall, handsome, athletic senior with a football jacket on. Maisie is a cheerleader with blonde hair and a stuck-up air about her.

Mac: [begins eating his hamburger and asks casually while he chews] So, did you get my email about that crazy email I got, about being the captain of the team?

Maisie: [looking around, then leans towards him, quietly, secretly, obviously excited and intense] Oh, my, god. I would kill for you to be able to be captain!