Amelia Earhart
by Kathryn Schultz Miller
*Especially for Grades 4-12

Barter ENCORE Players – March, 2017

(Note: standards included for seeing a performance of Amelia Earhart as well as completing the study guide.)

Virginia SOLs

English – 4.1, 4.2, 4.4, 4.7, 4.9, 5.1, 5.2, 5.4, 5.7, 5.9, 6.1, 6.2, 6.7, 6.9, 7.1, 7.7, 7.9, 8.2, 8.7, 8.9, 9.1, 9.6, 9.8, 10.1, 10.6, 10.8, 11.1, 11.6, 11.8, 12.1, 12.6

History & Social Science – USII.1, USII.6, VUS.10

Theatre Arts – 6.5, 6.17, 6.18, 6.20, 7.6, 7.20, 8.5, 8.18, 8.22, TI.10, TI.11, TI.13, TI.17, TII.9, TII.12, TII.15, TIII.12, TIV.12, TIV.13

Tennessee/North Carolina Common Core State Standards


Tennessee State Standards

Social Studies – 5.47, US.32, US.42, US.43

Theatre – 4.6, 4.7, 5.6, 5.7  Theatre 6-8 – 6.2, 7.1  Theatre 9-12 – 7.1, 7.2

North Carolina Essential Standards

Social Studies – 5.G.1, AH2.8.3, 12.H.1,

Theatre Arts – 4.A.1, 5.A.1, 5.CU.2, 6.A.1, 6.CU.2, 7.A.1, 7.CU.2, 8.A.1, 8.CU.2, B.A.1, B.CU.2, I.A.1, I.CU.2, P.A.1, A.A.1

Setting

Various locations in the life of pilot Amelia Earhart. Time: April 1928 – July, 1939 as well as present day.
Characters

Amelia Earhart – a groundbreaking pilot/adventurer
George Putnam – explorer, publisher, businessman – later her husband
Reporter – present day newspaperman researching Earhart
Paul Mantz – Hollywood stuntman and pilot instructor
Commander Thompson – commander of the Coast Guard warship Itasca
Others

Note: Doubling of Actors
In this production of *Amelia Earhart* some actors will be playing more than one role. Doubling of actors requires distinction between characters. In this production, characters will be distinguished by costume, voice and other physical character traits.
Synopsis
As a curious reporter struggles to uncover the story of Amelia Earhart’s mysterious disappearance, we travel back in time to the roaring twenties, when flappers danced the Charleston in the era of Prohibition. A publisher and astute businessman named George Putnam discovers a young social worker/pilot named Amelia Earhart and is determined to make her famous—and in the process, get rich himself. What he doesn’t count on is falling in love with her. After Amelia becomes the first female to cross the Atlantic (as a passenger), George finally convinces her to marry him. But Amelia is not content with being a housewife. She wants to prove she can do it all, and she makes headlines again when she pilots her own transatlantic flight, eventually touching down in Gallagher’s pasture, a cow pasture located in Northern Ireland. And that’s just the beginning; as her popularity continues to grow throughout the 1930’s, “Lady Lindy” takes on one ambitious project after another until she faces the challenge of a lifetime—a flight around the world. Amelia Earhart, along with navigator Fred Noonan, accepts the challenge, and in doing so, earns her place in history.

Biography of the Playwright – Kathryn Schultz Miller
Kathryn Schultz Miller has written plays for young audiences since 1976. She served for 20 years as co-founder and artistic director of ArtReach Touring Theatre, a professional touring theatre based in Cincinnati. Miller is the recipient of three playwriting fellowships and one fiction fellowship from the Ohio Arts Council as well as a playwriting fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts. Fourteen of her scripts have been produced nationwide. Her published plays include Island Son, Amelia Earhart, The Legend of Sleepy Hollow, A Thousand Cranes, Haunted Houses, You Don’t See Me and Blue Horses (Dramatic Publishing); Red Badge of Courage and The Shining Moment (Anchorage Press); Poe, Poe! (IE Clark Publishing); and Choosing Sides for Basketball (Baker’s Plays). A Thousand Cranes is included in Twenty Great Plays for Children, an anthology edited by Coleman A. Jennings, published by St. Martin’s Press. Miller is the winner of the 1985 Post-Corbett Award “for literary excellence in playwriting.”
Vocabulary Words

beckoning  solo  aviation
droning  feat  preposterous
acknowledge  contraption  tolerate
maintain  autogiro  jockey
flamboyant  galling  throttle
Prohibition  exhilarated  rudder
suffrage  altimeter  telegraphy
flapper  tachometer  navigator
veneer  prosperous  impeccable
port  drought  publicity
drivel  hospitable  antenna

Define the words in the list above and then use each one correctly in a sentence.
A Brief History

Barter Theatre was founded during the Great Depression by Robert Porterfield, an enterprising young actor. He and his fellow actors found themselves out of work and hungry in New York City. Porterfield contrasted that to the abundance of food, but lack of live theatre, around his home region in Southwest Virginia. He returned to Washington County with an extraordinary proposition: bartering produce from the farms and gardens of the area to gain admission to see a play.

Barter Theatre opened its doors on June 10, 1933 proclaiming, “With vegetables you cannot sell, you can buy a good laugh.” The price of admission was 40 cents or the equivalent in produce, the concept of trading “ham for Hamlet” caught on quickly. At the end of the first season, the Barter Company cleared $4.35 in cash, two barrels of jelly and enjoyed a collective weight gain of over 300 pounds.

Playwrights including Noel Coward, Tennessee Williams and Thornton Wilder accepted Virginia ham as payment for royalties. An exception was George Bernard Shaw, a vegetarian, who bartered the rights to his plays for spinach.

Today, Barter Theatre has a reputation as a theatre where many actors performed before going on to achieve fame and fortune. The most recognized of these alumni include Gregory Peck, Patricia Neal, Ernest Borgnine, Hume Cronyn, Ned Beatty, Gary Collins, Larry Linville and Frances Fisher. The list also included James Burrows, creator of Cheers, Barry Corbin, and the late Jim Varney.

Robert Porterfield passed away in 1971. His successor, Rex Partington, had been at Barter in the 1950s as an actor and in the 1970s as stage manager. Rex returned as chief administrator from 1972 until his retirement in 1992. In March 2006, he passed away.

Richard Rose was named the producing artistic director in October 1992. In that time, attendance has grown from 42,000 annual patrons to more than 163,000 annual patrons. Significant capital improvements have also been made. Including maintenance to both theatres, and in 2006, the addition of The Barter Café at Stage II and dramatic improvements to Porterfield Square.

Barter represents three distinct venues of live theatre: Barter Theatre Main Stage, Barter Theatre Stage II and The Barter Players. Barter Theatre, with over 500 seats, features traditional theatre in a luxurious setting. Barter Stage II, across the street from Barter Main Stage and beyond Porterfield Square, offers seating for 167 around a thrust stage in an intimate setting and is perfect for more adventurous productions. The Barter Players is a talented ensemble of actors, producing plays for young audiences throughout the year.

History is always in the making at Barter Theatre, building on legends of the past; Barter looks forward to the challenge of growth in the future.
Questions/Activities

1. In this play, Amelia Earhart is constantly compared with another groundbreaking American pilot, Charles Lindbergh…

   Research the lives of Amelia Earhart and Charles Lindberg, then write a paper comparing and contrasting their childhoods, careers, politics, and place in American history!

2. What is an altimeter? A tachometer? How are they used in aviation? Why are they important? What other instruments are necessary for safe flight? How many of these instruments did Amelia Earhart have available for her use in 1937? Present your findings to the class.

3. At one point in her career, Amelia Earhart became fascinated with a new invention, the autogiro. What is an autogiro? How does it differ from an airplane? A helicopter? Present your findings to the class.
4. There are several theories as to what happened to Amelia Earhart, some of which are suggested at the end of this play. What do you think happened to Amelia Earhart? Discuss.

5. Discuss the existence of gender inequalities in Earhart’s time, and how these compare to those that exist in the world today. Earhart once said, “There are a great many boys who would be better off making pies, and a great many girls who would be better off as mechanics.” Do you agree with this statement? Discuss the concept of gender roles and how this comment might have been received in 1935. Why was this a bold statement to make for the time? How would a statement like that be received today, at your school? Discuss.

Write it!

Select your favorite character from the play, pick an important day in their life that influences this play then write a journal entry about that day as that character. For example, you might pick the character of Eleanor Roosevelt and write about the night Amelia Earhart took you up in her plane, or you might pick the character of Commander Thompson and write about the day Amelia disappeared. Be as specific as possible and write as that character would.
Write a critique of The ENCORE Players’ production of *Amelia Earhart*. Be sure to include what you liked, didn’t like and what you would have done differently.

**Comedy vs. Tragedy**

**comedy:** a dramatic work that is light and often humorous or satirical in tone and that usually contains a happy resolution of the thematic conflict.

**tragedy:** A drama or literary work in which the main character is brought to ruin or suffers extreme sorrow, especially as a consequence of a tragic flaw, moral weakness, or inability to cope with unfavorable circumstances.

Given these definitions, would you categorize *Amelia Earhart* as a comedy or a tragedy? **Cite three samples from the play to support your position.** Does a character’s point-of-view influence your findings? **Discuss.**

6. A pacifist, Amelia Earhart believed that if there was to be a military draft, then women should be drafted alongside the men for combat service. Can women be drafted into military service in the United States? Do you think this is fair? Why or why not? **Discuss.** How does the United States policy about drafting women into military service compare with the country of Israel? Do you think the United States should draft anyone, regardless of gender? **Discuss.**
On June 1, 1937, Amelia Earhart began her flight around the world – which would be her last flight.

Individually or in groups, research one of the locations on Amelia Earhart’s final flight then make an oral presentation about that location to the class!

Extra Credit - PERSUADE ME!
As Commander Thompson of the U.S. Coast Guard ship *Itasca*, write a letter persuading Amelia Earhart to abandon her idea of landing on Howland Island.
In regard to Amelia Earhart, a historian once remarked that “She was completely committed to the commercial property ‘Amelia Earhart,’ and was absolutely driven to make it a recognized name brand.” What is a name brand? Cite some examples of more popular name brands. How to people turn themselves into name brands? Make a list of people who have managed to do exactly that.

Using the internet, research the people who are leaders in the field that interests you most, then create a scrapbook about their lives and work. Present your scrapbook to the class.

DEBATE!
Have students form two groups to debate the benefits and pitfalls of turning oneself into a name brand. Students should consider both what people gain (wealth, fame, attention) as well as what they sacrifice (privacy, a “normal” life, personal identity).
Word Search

Find the following words in the puzzle below:
Amelia Earhart, George Putnam, flapper, Prohibition, Electra, Vega, transatlantic, aviation, Paul Mantz, circumnavigate, Roosevelt, throttle, antenna, flight, pilot, autogiro, Depression, Howland Island, Barter Theatre, Honolulu, tachometer, airplane
True and False

Write T if the statement is True and F if the statement is False.

1. ____ Amelia Earhart was married to Charles Lindbergh.
2. ____ The first time Amelia Earhart flew across the Atlantic, she was a passenger.
3. ____ Before she was a famous pilot, Amelia Earhart was a social worker.
4. ____ George Putnam was a Hollywood stuntman.
5. ____ The press referred to Amelia Earhart as “Lady Lindy.”
6. ____ Amelia Earhart eventually married George Putnam.
7. ____ Paul Mantz taught Amelia all about the Lockheed Model 10E Electra airplane.
8. ____ Barter Theatre was founded during the Great Depression.
9. ____ Commander Thompson’s ship was the U.S.S. Arizona.
10. ____ Amelia Earhart made her last flight alone.
11. ____ Amelia was trying to land on the island of Howland when she disappeared.
12. ____ Amelia Earhart disappeared on July 2, 1937.
13. ____ Robert Porterfield is the current Producing Artistic Director of Barter Theatre.
14. ____ Amelia once landed in a cow pasture owned by a farmer named Gallagher.
15. ____ There are many theories, but no one knows for sure what happened to Amelia.

Amelia Earhart and navigator Fred Noonan plot the course for their flight around the world.
Suggested Further Reading/Links:

Books about Amelia Earhart

*Amelia Earhart* by Doris L. Rich
*Amelia Lost: The Life and Disappearance of Amelia Earhart* by Candace Fleming
*Letters from Amelia 1901-1937* by Jean L. Backus
*Amelia Earhart (American Biographies)* by Robin S. Doak

Books about flight:

*Flight: 100 Years of Aviation* by R.G. Grant
*Flight: The Evolution of Aviation* by Stephen Woolford and Carl Warner
*Flight: 100 Greatest Aircraft Hardcover* by Mark Phelps

For more information about the life of Amelia Earhart, check out the link below:

http://www.ameliaearhart.com/