



LESSON PLAN: **King Arthur's Camelot**
 *“ A Beautiful (Almost Perfect) Place,
 inhabited by Knights who practice Chivalry and lovely Ladies:
 Destroyed by, Betrayal and Forbidden Love.”*

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Arts Consultant

Choreography: Victoria Morgan | **Original Musical Composition:**
John Estacio | **Dramaturge:** Eda Holmes
Costumes: Sandra Woodall | **Set Design:** Joe Tilford | **Puppet**
Design: Erik Van Wyk | **Projection Design:** John Boesche |
Lighting Design: Trad A Burns
Live music performed by the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra,
conducted by Carmon DeLeone

(NOTE: It would be helpful to view the Home Page of the Cincinnati Ballet on line and view the KING ARTHUR'S CAMELOT section and watch the videos on some of the people listed above.)

CONTENTS

I. The Lesson at a Glance Grade Band, Instructional Objectives, Lesson Plan Overview	2-3
II. General Discussion	3
III. King Arthur’s Camelot-The Ballet Synopsis	3-4
IV. Man of La Mancha - The Musical Synopsis	4-6
V. The Activities/Questions Dance, Art, Language Arts, Music	6-8
VI. Ohio State Academic Content Standards Kentucky Program Standards	8-9

I. Lesson at a Glance:

Grade Band: 7-12

Note: These plans are designed for middle school through high school students. The subject area does not seem suitable for younger students.

Integrated Subjects:

Dance, Theatre, English Language Arts

Instructional Objectives

1. Develop skills in comparing and contrasting (literature, music, dance, art, etc.)
2. Develop skills in communicating through physical movement (dance and pantomime.)
3. Understand how a story can be told through dance/movement.
4. Connect different events in the same time period.

Lesson Plan Overview

The lesson introduces the student to the myth surrounding King Arthur’s Round Table and the Knights of Camelot. The legend of King Arthur and Camelot has been around since about 500 A.D. The most familiar of the legends was written in the 15th Century by Thomas Malory in 1485. The Ballet is based on this version and was written by Eda Holmes.(A story written or revised for a ballet is called a “Dramaturge.” Eda’s version will help us understand the story with words, while the ballet will tell the story in dance and pantomime.) Malory’s version was one of the first published books and consists of

eight stories. (A Timeline in the Lesson Plan traces the legend through the Centuries.) Another famous version was written by Alfred Lord Tennyson in 1885 and called “Idylls of the King.” This version has 12 poems written in blank verse. A Comparison to the musical “Man of La Mancha” will be made, and the students will have an opportunity to create their own movements for the stories.

II. General Discussion

1. Both *King Arthur’s Camelot* and *Man of La Mancha* take place in the middle ages. While *King Arthur’s Camelot* is based loosely on truth there is little historical proof that it ever existed. It appears to be a mythical kingdom and the story is often referred to as a Myth. *Man of La Mancha* is fiction but tells the story of a man who thought he was a knight. What is the difference between myth and fiction? Is there anything in either of the stories that you would find close to reality?

You may wish to read the Synopses of both *King Arthur’s Camelot* and *Man of La Mancha*, before proceeding.

III. *King Arthur’s Camelot* **The Story** (A Synopsis)

ACT I

The story begins in a land torn apart by the chaos of war. The only survivor is a boy named Arthur. The passionate powers of chaos embodied by the swirling Ladies of the Lake try to destroy Arthur but the Sorcerer Merlin emerges from the stone to adopt him. He teaches him to lead men with honor and brotherhood and when the fighting begins to re-ignite, young Arthur pulls the sword from the stone and is proclaimed king.

Once Arthur is crowned, Merlin helps him to win the affection of the girl who has been chosen as his Queen, the young princess Guinevere. Their youthful infatuation blooms and they are married in a joyous celebration uniting all the people of the land. The King and the knights perform the Dance of Honor and inaugurate the legendary peace of the kingdom of Camelot.

The Ladies of the Lake know that deep in the souls of men lurk passions that are not so easily tamed by marriage and honor. They create an ambitious and devious mortal named Mordred to infiltrate the kingdom and help them undo the peace and honor that King Arthur has brought to the land.

During the picnic to celebrate the peace, Guinevere becomes frustrated that King Arthur spends the afternoon deep in conversation with his newest knight Lancelot. To get some attention and to punish Arthur, she proposes a tournament of jousting between the knights. Lancelot and Gawain are the first combatants. What is meant to be in good fun turns deadly. Tragedy is averted by Merlin but not before the Ladies of the Lake, with the help of Mordred, instill a desperate seed of passion in the hearts of Guinevere and Lancelot. Before Merlin can intercede, he is blinded and captured by the Ladies of the Lake leaving King Arthur alone to deal with Mordred and his dark plans.

ACT II

Alone with his thoughts, Arthur is haunted by a nightmare in which the Ladies of the Lake torment him with his worst fears. He wakes from it troubled by the presence of Mordred in the kingdom.

With faith in the bond of brotherhood, King Arthur plans to knight Mordred and prepares to initiate him in the Dance of Honor. Mordred has no interest in honor and mocks the solemnity of the ceremony angering everyone – especially King Arthur who rips the crest of Camelot from his chest.

Lingering near the throne, Mordred hears people coming and hides to spy. Drawn by their newly kindled passion, Lancelot and Guinevere find each other in the hallway and dance but do not touch. Arthur enters not realizing what is happening and joins the dance. Lancelot is unable to participate and leaves as Guinevere takes her leave in the opposite direction. Mordred seizes the opportunity to plant a seed of doubt in King Arthur's ear about Lancelot and Guinevere. Angry, Arthur sends Mordred away. The doubt haunts him and he dances a tortured solo longing for the guidance of Merlin.

In the forest, the knights are hunting game and Lancelot has not shown up. Mordred joins them to spread the rumor of Lancelot and Guinevere. Someone is heard approaching and all hide to spy.

Guinevere enters – she and Lancelot plan to meet in the forest one last time before Lancelot leaves forever so that their love will not be discovered. They try to remain chaste with one another but their passion overwhelms them. Infuriated by the betrayal, Gawain and the knights confront Lancelot. Arthur has been watching at a distance and, blinded by passion, he goes to kill Lancelot but Guinevere comes between them. The scene descends into confusion and Lancelot escapes. Guinevere is seized and Mordred insists that Arthur condemn her to death.

In despair Arthur finds Merlin but the Ladies of the Lake have rendered him powerless with blindness. A pyre is erected and Guinevere is bound to it. As it begins to burn Arthur finds it unbearable and braves the flames freeing Guinevere. Lancelot charges in with a small group of loyal knights and helps her escape. The curse of chaos takes hold as Mordred pits King Arthur's knights against Lancelot's men and a fight to the death ensues. Mordred delivers a mortal blow to Arthur just as Lancelot, coming to Arthur's aid, is slain by Mordred. Barely alive, Arthur kills Mordred.

A young boy wanders among the carnage. He picks up a sword and wields it playfully. Arthur, with his last bit of strength, grabs the sword from the boy and hurls it into the stars. He wants the child to find a way without the sword. He teaches the boy about the dance of honor and then sends him into the world to tell the story.

IV. *Man of La Mancha* Synopsis of the Musical

It is the late sixteenth century. Failed author-soldier-actor and tax collector Miguel de Cervantes has been thrown into a dungeon by the Spanish Inquisition, along with his manservant. They have been charged with foreclosing on a monastery. The two have brought all their possessions with them into the dungeon. There, they are attacked by their fellow prisoners, who instantly set up a mock trial. If Cervantes is found guilty, he will have to hand over all his possessions. Cervantes agrees to do so, except for a precious manuscript which the prisoners are all too eager to burn. He asks to be allowed to offer a defense, and the defense will be a play, acted out by him and all the prisoners. The "judge", a sympathetic criminal called "the Governor", agrees.

Cervantes takes out a makeup kit from his trunk, and the manservant helps him get into a costume. In a few short moments, Cervantes has transformed himself into Alonso Quijana, an old gentleman who has read so many books of chivalry and thought so much about injustice that he has lost his mind and now believes that he should go forth as a knight-errant. Quijana renames himself Don Quixote de La Mancha, and sets out to find adventures with his "squire", Sancho Panza. They both sing the title song *Man of La Mancha (I, Don Quixote)*.

Don Quixote warns Sancho that the pair are always in danger of being attacked by Quixote's mortal enemy, an evil magician known as the Enchanter. Suddenly he spots a windmill. Seeing its sails whirling, he mistakes it for a four-armed giant, attacks it, and receives a beating from the encounter. He thinks he knows why he has been defeated - it is because he has not been properly dubbed a knight. Looking off, he imagines he sees a castle (it is really a rundown roadside inn). He orders Sancho to announce their arrival by blowing his bugle, and the two proceed to the inn.

Cervantes talks some prisoners into assuming the roles of the inn's serving wench and part-time prostitute Aldonza and a group of muleteers, who are propositioning her. Fending them off sarcastically (*It's All The Same*), she eventually deigns to accept their leader, Pedro, who pays in advance.

Don Quixote enters with Sancho, upset at not having been "announced" by a "dwarf". The Innkeeper (played by The Governor) treats them sympathetically and humors Don Quixote, but when Quixote catches sight of Aldonza, he believes her to be the lady Dulcinea, to whom he has sworn eternal loyalty. He sings *Dulcinea*. Aldonza, used to being roughly handled, is flabbergasted, then annoyed, at Quixote's strange and kind treatment of her. (There is another serving girl, Fermina, but she has almost no dialogue and very little to do in the play.)

Meanwhile, Antonia, Don Quixote's niece, has gone with Quixote's housekeeper to seek advice from the local priest. But the priest wisely realizes that the two women are more concerned with the embarrassment the knight's madness may bring than with his welfare. The three sing *I'm Only Thinking of Him*.

The mock-trial's prosecutor, a cynic called "The Duke", is chosen by Cervantes to play Dr. Sanson Carrasco, Antonia's fiancé, a man just as cynical and self-centered as the prisoner who is playing him. Carrasco is upset at the idea of having a madman in his prospective new family but the padre cleverly convinces him that it would be a challenge worthy of his abilities to cure his prospective uncle-in-law, so he and the priest set out to bring Don Quixote back home (*I'm Only Thinking of Him [Reprise]*).

Back at the inn, Sancho delivers a missive from Don Quixote to Aldonza courting her favor and asking for a token. Instead, Aldonza tosses an old dishrag at Sancho, but to Don Quixote the dishrag is a silken scarf. When Aldonza asks Sancho why he follows Quixote, he sings *I Really Like Him*. Alone, later, Aldonza sings *What Do You Want of Me?* In the courtyard, the muleteers once again taunt her with the suggestive song *Little Bird, Little Bird*. Pedro makes arrangements with Aldonza for an assignation later.

The priest and Dr. Carrasco arrive, but cannot reason with Don Quixote, who suddenly spots a barber wearing his shaving basin on his head to ward off the sun's heat (*The Barber's Song*). Quixote immediately snatches the basin from the barber at sword's point, believing it to be the miraculous *Golden Helmet of Mambrino*, which will make him invulnerable. Dr. Carrasco and the priest leave, with the priest impressed by Don Quixote's view of life and wondering if curing him is really worthwhile (*To Each His Dulcinea*).

Meanwhile, Quixote asks the Innkeeper to dub him knight. The innkeeper agrees, but first Quixote must stand vigil all night over his armor. Quixote asks to be guided to the "chapel" for his vigil, and the Innkeeper hastily concocts an excuse: the "chapel" is "being repaired". Quixote decides to keep his vigil in the courtyard. As he does so, Aldonza, on her way to her rendezvous with Pedro, finally confronts him, but Quixote gently explains why he behaves the way he does (*The Impossible Dream*). Pedro enters, furious at being kept waiting, and slaps Aldonza. Enraged, Don Quixote takes him and all the other muleteers on in a huge fight, as the orchestra plays *The Combat*. Don Quixote has no martial skill, but by luck and determination - and with the help of Aldonza (who now sympathizes with Quixote) and Sancho - he prevails, and the muleteers are all knocked unconscious. But the noise has awakened the Innkeeper, who enters and kindly tells Quixote that he must leave. Quixote apologizes for the trouble, but reminds the Innkeeper of his promise to dub him knight. The Innkeeper does so (*Knight of the Woeful Countenance*).

Quixote then announces he must try to help the muleteers. Aldonza, whom Quixote still calls Dulcinea, is shocked, but after the knight explains that the laws of chivalry demand that he succor a fallen enemy, Aldonza agrees to help them. For her efforts, she is beaten, raped, and carried off by the muleteers, who leave the inn (*The Abduction*). Quixote, in his small room, is blissfully ruminating over his recent victory and the new title that the innkeeper has given him - and completely unaware of what has just happened to Aldonza (*The Impossible Dream* - first reprise).

At this point, the Don Quixote play is brutally interrupted when the Inquisition enters the dungeon and drags off an unwilling prisoner to be tried. The Duke taunts Cervantes for his look of fear, and accuses him of not facing reality. This prompts a passionate defense of idealism by Cervantes.

The Don Quixote play resumes (*Man of La Mancha* - first reprise). Quixote and Sancho have left the inn and encounter a band of Gypsies ("Moorish Dance") who take advantage of Quixote's naivete and proceed to steal everything they own, including Quixote's horse Rocinante and Sancho's donkey Dapple. The two are forced to return to the inn. The Innkeeper tries to keep them out, but finally cannot resist letting them back in out of pity.^[20] Aldonza shows up with several bruises. Quixote swears to avenge her, but she angrily tells him off, begging him to leave her alone (*Aldonza*). Suddenly, another knight enters. He announces himself as Don Quixote's mortal enemy, the Enchanter, this time appearing as the "Knight of the Mirrors". He insults Aldonza, and is promptly challenged to combat by Don Quixote. The Knight of the Mirrors and his attendants bear huge shields with mirrors on them, and as they swing them at Quixote (*Knight of the Mirrors*), the glare from the sunlight blinds him. The attacking Knight taunts him, forcing him to see himself as the world sees him - as a fool and a madman. Don Quixote collapses, weeping. The Knight of the Mirrors removes his own helmet - he is really Dr. Carrasco, returned with his latest plan to cure Quixote.

Cervantes announces that the story is finished at least as far as he has written it, but the prisoners are dissatisfied with the ending. They prepare to burn his manuscript, when he asks for the chance to present one last scene.

The Governor agrees, and we are now in Alonso Quijana's bedroom, where he has fallen into a coma. Antonia, Sancho, the Housekeeper, the priest, and Carrasco are all there. Sancho tries to cheer up Quijana (*A Little Gossip*). Alonso Quijana eventually awakens, and when questioned, reveals that he is now sane, remembering his knightly career as only a vague dream. He realizes that he is now dying, and asks the priest to help him make out his will. As Quijana begins to dictate, Aldonza forces her way in. She has come to visit Quixote because she has found that she can no longer bear to be anyone but Dulcinea. When he does not recognize her, she sings a reprise of *Dulcinea* to him and tries to help him remember the words of "The Impossible Dream". Suddenly, he remembers everything and rises from his bed, calling for his armor and sword so that he may set out again. (*Man of La Mancha* - second reprise) But it is too late - in mid-song, he suddenly cries out and falls dead. The priest sings *The Psalm* for the dead. However, Aldonza now believes in him so much that, to her, Don Quixote will always live: "A man died. He seemed a good man, but I did not know him ... Don Quixote is not dead. Believe, Sancho ... believe." When Sancho calls her by name, she replies, "My name is Dulcinea."

The Inquisition enters to take Cervantes to his trial, and the prisoners, finding him not guilty, return his manuscript. It is, of course, his (as yet) unfinished novel, *Don Quixote de la Mancha*. As Cervantes and his servant mount the drawbridge-like staircase to go to their impending trial yet gleaming with courage, the prisoners sing *The Impossible Dream* in chorus.

V. Activities/Questions: (May be used either before or after the Ballet Performance)

1. Compare and contrast the two stories. In what ways are they alike? In what ways are they different? One obvious difference is that "Man of la Mancha" is a play within a play. Another obvious difference is that in *Camelot*, Guinivere is the queen and loved and admired by the court. In *Man of La Mancha*, Aldonza is a bar maid, mistreated by men at the Inn but Don Quixote believe her to be a lovely lady in distress and feels he must protect her.

2. What different emotions might be expressed in attitudes toward the two women? How might you express these emotions in movement and facial expressions. In what ways are their responses the same? How are they different? Express the difference in how Don Quixote treats Aldonza and others treat her. Would this be similar to how Quinivere is treated in the Court? Practice these movements and expressions.

3. Can you think of other stories that have similar plots? Notice that in many stories you will find a villain such as Sir Modred or the wicked men who attack Don Quixote. Some believe that most stories were created to teach lessons in how we should behave. Can you think of any lessons *Camelot* teaches? How about *Man of La Mancha*?

Dance Activities

1. Provide adequate space for movement and invite students to create their own special movements to the first act. (The Study Guide for *Giselle* might help them pantomime the different ways dancers express emotions in the ballet.) They may choose one of the characters to dance or switch from one to another if they prefer. Remind them, it is not only the way you move the body, but your facial expressions as well that help tell the story. Notice how the dancers in *Camelot* express their emotions. Remember to vary space, time and energy based on the ideas you are trying to convey.

2. Instruct students to think of *Man of La Mancha*. Can you design special movements to tell this story without words? If you do not have the music to *Man of La Mancha*, perhaps there is special music that might help you tell the story? (Perhaps your music teacher can help find something that will do.) Listening to a few selections and choose the best might be helpful. Could some of the music from the Ballet be appropriate for *Man of la Mancha*? Would some of the *Man of la Mancha* music be appropriate for *Camelot*?

Miscellaneous Activities

1. Special Homework – Students might enjoy watching the Movie *Camelot* and also *Man of La Mancha*. This could be additional discussion and a “compare and contrast” activity.

2. The Home page shows sketches of costumes for *Camelot*. You might design your own costumes for one or more of the characters from *Camelot* or for *Man of La Mancha*.

3. Below is a Timeline beginning with the first account of King Arthur in 500 A.D. We have added a few important events during this period from then until Tennyson wrote his version in 1885. Fill in other important events in history during this period.

***Timeline of the Legend of King Arthur of Camelot**

(Note: More than 1300 years from Warrior King to Camelot of Tennyson.)

Other important historical events are listed. Can you add others?

***500 A.D. –First appearance of King Arthur in battle of Britons and Saxons.**

***830 A.D. – Listing of 12 battles fought by Arthur.**

***1133 – Geoffrey of Monmouth –Welsh Cleric (Foundation for the legend)**

***1155- French Poet, Maistre, adds the Round Table**

***1160-1180 – Chretien de Troyes, also French, added the theme of Courtly Romance and the Theme of Chivalry**

***1200- English Priest, Layamon wrote the story in English. (Here, Arthur did not die.)**

1348-50 – BLACK DEATH (Plague kills 30-60 % of European population.)

1450 – Gutenberg Printing Press invented

1452-Birth of Leonardo da Vinci

***1485-Thomas Malory writes *Le Morte D Arthur* One of first books printed – 8 stories brought together- This is the account best known today.**

1605/1615 – Miguel de Cervantes writes *Don Quixote* which was basis for *Man of La Mancha*

1620 – Mayflower lands at Plymouth Rock

1639 – Taj Mahal completed

1640 – First book printed in America

1664 – New Amsterdam becomes New York

1675 – LaSalle explores Great Lakes

1685 – Birth of J.S. Bach, Handel and Scarlatti

1692 – Salem Witch Trials

1709 – First piano built

1725 – Catherine the Great crowned Empress of Russia

1756 – French-Indian Wars

1756 – Mozart Born

1776 – Declaration of Independence

1789 -99 French Revolution

1803 – Louisiana Purchase –Ohio Statehood

1849 - California Gold Rush

***1859-1885 – Alford Lord Tennyson writes *Idylls of the King*. 12 narrative poems written in blank verse. The ending of the story is changed.**

1861-65 – Civil War

1876 – Bell invents telephone

1886 – Statue of Liberty unveiled

1891 – *Nutcracker* (Tchaikovsky)

VI. Ohio State Standards and Kentucky Program Studies

Ohio State Academic Content Standards

The Arts

Dance- Creative Expression and Communication

Benchmark A: Improvise, create and perform movement phrases with concentration and kinesthetic awareness.

Grade 4 #2: Generate ideas and express them through dance performance.

Benchmark C: Invent multiple Solutions to movement problems varying space, time and energy.

Dance-Connections, Relationships and Applications

Benchmark A: Relate ideas and concepts from the arts and other content areas to expressive movement

Theatre-Historical, Cultural and Social Contexts

Benchmark B: Identify and Compare similar characters and situations in stories/dramas from and about various cultures and time periods.

English Language Arts

Literary Text Standard

Benchmark A: (K-3) Compare and contrast plot across literary works.

Benchmark C: (4-7) Identify the elements of plot and establish a connection between an element and a future event.

Kentucky Program of Studies

Arts and Humanities-Dance Elements, Movements, and Forms

AH-P-Da-1: Students will express various ways of moving with attention given to the elements of dance (space, time, force)

Arts and Humanities-Elements of Drama

AH-P-Dr-4: Students will identify and use elements of drama in dramatic works.