

# Alliance Theatre

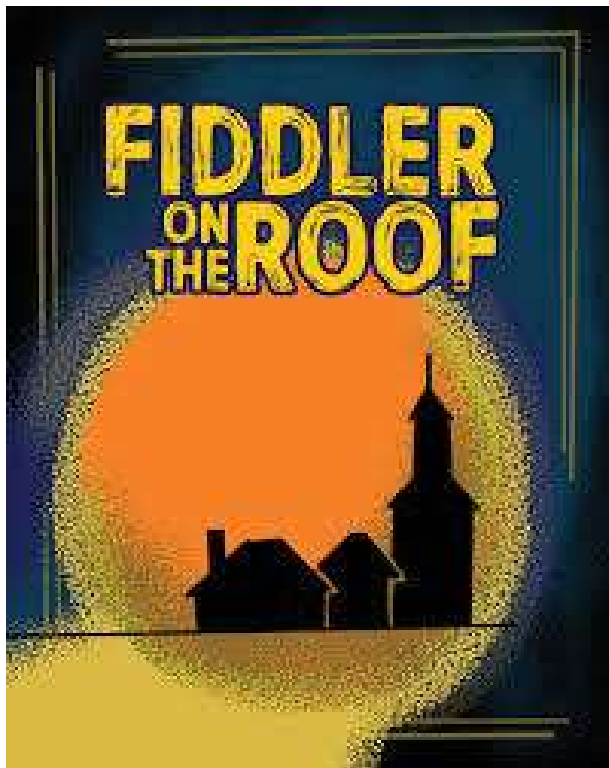
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## *institute*

Dramaturgy Guide

***Fiddler on the Roof***

by Courtney Moors-Hornick, Teaching Artist



Book by Joseph Stein

Music by Jerry Bock

Lyrics by Sheldon Harnick

Directed by Tomer Zvulun

September 4 – October 5, 2025

Coca-Cola Stage

Recommended for Grades 5-12

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### **Considerations for Application:**

**Accessibility:** Incorporate accommodations and/or adjustments to physical directions, including language regarding seating, standing, and/or moving, as needed.

**Social / Emotional:** Be mindful of the sensitivity of content/prompts related to personal experiences; avoid required sharing, as needed.

**Timing:** Lesson plans are written as 1 hour; educators may modify the timing for activities, as needed.

## Intro to the Text

GSE – English Language Arts	9.T.CI. Students investigate the relationships between authors, purposes, and audiences of texts, and analyze the influence of contextual factors.
	9.T.C.2 Evaluate how authors' and/or speakers' perspectives influence texts and how circumstances shape their creation.

## Synopsis

Alliance Theatre and The Atlanta Opera proudly present *Fiddler on the Roof*. The beloved musical classic that has captivated generations of audiences for its heart, humor, and timeless melodies comes to life in a bold new staging that blends dramatic flair with theatrical intimacy. A story of resilience and hope, *Fiddler* weaves together family tradition challenged by the winds of change through one of Broadway's most unforgettable scores. This richly imagined production promises to be a stirring and deeply moving experience.

**Learn more:** <https://www.alliancetheatre.org/production/2025-26/fiddler-the-roof>

**Full synopsis:** <https://www.atlantaopera.org/production/fiddler-on-the-roof-2025/>

## Creators



**Joseph Stein (Playwright/Book Writer)** (1912-2010) was an American playwright born in New York City and raised in the Bronx. He is best known for writing the books for the Tony Award-winning Broadway musicals *Fiddler on the Roof* (1964) and *Zorba* (1968). He earned a master's degree in social work from Columbia University in 1937. After working for more than a decade as a psychiatric social worker who wrote comedy sketches on the side, Stein co-authored a book with Will Glickman that offered one of the first depictions of an Amish community; the book became the Broadway musical *Plain and Fancy* (1955). Other Broadway credits include *Mr. Wonderful* (1956), *Juno* (1959) and *Rags* (1986). Stein has been honored with lifetime achievement awards by The Dramatists Guild of America and the York Theatre Company, and he was inducted into the Theater

Hall of Fame in 2008.

<https://timelinetheatre.com/person/joseph-stein/>



**Jerry Bock (Music)** (1928-2010) was an American composer. He studied at the University of Wisconsin and then collaborated with Larry Holofcener on songs for television's *Your Show of Shows* and the musical *Mr. Wonderful* (1956). With the composer-lyricist Sheldon Harnick he had his greatest successes: *Fiorello!* (1959, Pulitzer Prize) and *Fiddler on the Roof* (1964). Bock and Harnick's other musicals included *The Body Beautiful* (1958), *Tenderloin* (1960), the admired *She Loves Me* (1963), *The Apple Tree* (1966), and *The Rothschilds* (1966).

<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Jerry-Bock>



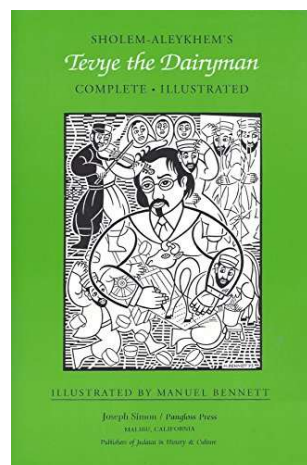
**Sheldon Harnick (Lyrics)** (1924-2023) Sheldon Harnick's career began in the 1950s with songs in revues (e.g., "The Boston Beguine," "The Merry Little Minuet"). With Jerry Bock he created a number of memorable musicals, including *Fiorello!* (Tony Award, Pulitzer Prize), *Tenderloin*, *She Loves Me* (Grammy), *Fiddler on the Roof* (Tony), *The Apple Tree*, and *The Rothschilds* (subsequently revised as *Rothschild*

& Sons). Other collaborations: *Rex* (Richard Rodgers), *A Christmas Carol* (Michel Legrand), *A Wonderful Life* (Joe Raposo), *The Phantom Tollbooth* (Arnold Black, Norton Juster), and *The Audition* (Marvin Hamlisch). He wrote three musicals himself: *Dragons*, *A Doctor in Spite of Himself*, and *Malpractice Makes Perfect*.

<https://mtishows.com/people/sheldon-harnick>

## History of Famous Past Productions

<b>GSE – English Language Arts</b>	<b>9.T.C.1 Analyze the impact of purpose and audience on a wide variety of texts.</b> a. Use knowledge of texts’ distinct disciplinary, personal, or technical purposes to aid comprehension. b. Assess the impact of context and language on a text’s reception by the audience.  <b>9.T.C.2 Evaluate how authors’ and/or speakers’ perspectives influence texts and how circumstances shape their creation.</b>
<b>GSE – Musical Theatre</b>	<b>TAHSFT.CN.2 Examine the role of theatre in a societal, cultural, and historical context.</b> Identify and analyze plays and dramas from a variety of historical periods and cultures. Explore the works of milestone playwrights and plays, and the relevance of historical theatre. Recognize historical events that have influenced the role of theatre and how theatrical events have impacted cultural development.



*Fiddler on the Roof* is arguably one of the most famous Broadway musicals of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and remains relevant today due to its enduring themes of family, traditions, the impact of prejudice and persecution, and the resilience of the human spirit.

*Fiddler* was born when longtime friends and collaborators composer Jerry Bock and lyricist Sheldon Harnick read Sholem Aleichem’s collection of short stories (image, left) about a charming, funny milkman named Tevye. Aleichem was a Yiddish author and playwright who lived both in the Russian Empire and in the United States and wrote extensively from 1894 and 1914. Aleichem’s character of Tevye provided Bock and Harnick with the central figure for their musical,

and they collaborated with Joseph Stein, who would write the show’s libretto (text or book of a musical). The title of the musical is thought to have come from a painting by Jewish artist Marc Chagall, *Le Violiniste* (“The Fiddler,” 1912–13), which depicts a fiddler on a roof. (image, right)

*Fiddler on the Roof* opened on Broadway at the Imperial Theater on September 22, 1964 (image of Playbill, page 6). It would go on to enjoy a record-breaking run of 3,242 performances. Produced by Harold Prince and directed and choreographed by Jerome Robbins, the original production starred Zero Mostel as Tevye (image of cast, page 6). The New York Times review called Mostel’s Tevye “one of the most glowing creations in the history of the musical theater”, and that the musical “touches honestly on the customs of the Jewish Community in such a Russian





village. Indeed, it goes beyond local color and lays bare in quick, moving strokes the sorrow of a people subject to sudden tempests of vandalism and, in the end, to eviction and exile from a place that had been home.”

The musical has enjoyed five Broadway revivals and countless other productions, both professional and amateur, around the globe. In 1971, a movie version of the musical won three Academy Awards. The musical has been translated into many other languages, including Yiddish.

Both the musical and movie version have made a significant cultural impact on audiences around the world. *Fiddler* was the first major and popular production to focus on an empathetic depiction of Jewish people and their culture and traditions, providing Jewish audience members a nostalgic view of their eastern European origins and non-Jewish audience members a positive perspective on the

Jewish experience.

*Fiddler on the Roof* has been staged across the world in different cultural contexts where its universal themes take on different local resonances. The musical is hugely popular in Japan, where audiences resonate with the theme of generational conflict, particularly the depiction of the complex relationship between fathers and daughters. Book writer Joseph Stein recalls traveling for the first production of *Fiddler* in Japan in 1967: “I got there just during the rehearsal period and the Japanese producer asked me, ‘Do they understand this show in America?’ And I said, ‘Yes, of course, we wrote it for America. Why do you ask?’ And he said, ‘Because it’s so Japanese.’”





*Fiddler on the Roof* is a timeless, compelling musical that explores the conflict between tradition and change, the importance of family and community, and the incredible, enduring resilience of the human spirit.



## Vocabulary

GSE – English Language Arts	<b>9.L.V II</b> Students engage in a wide range of written and spoken activities during which they expand and deepen their vocabularies, build word analysis skillsets (morphology), and determine or clarify the meanings of words and phrases.
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See below for a list of vocabulary words from *Fiddler on the Roof* that are derived from Hebrew, Yiddish, and Russian.

Word	Part of Speech	Used in Context	Definition
Kosher	adjective	<i>Who must know the way to make a proper home, a quiet home, and <b>kosher</b> home.</i> (page 1)	In Judaism, fit or allowed to be eaten or used, according to the dietary or ceremonial laws.
Sabbath 	noun	<i>It's almost <b>Sabbath</b> and he worries a lot when he'll be home!</i> (page 5)	In Judaism, the seventh day of the week observed from Friday evening to Saturday evening as a day of rest and worship.
Reb	noun	<i>If you please, <b>Reb</b> Tevye...</i> (page 14)	Yiddish or Hebrew honorific traditionally used for Orthodox Jewish men.
L'Chaim 	noun	<i>To life, to life, <b>l'chaim</b>.</i> (page 29)	Hebrew phrase meaning "to life". Often used as a toast to someone's health or well-being.
Pogrom	noun	<i>Constable: We have received orders that sometime soon this district is to have a little unofficial demonstration.</i>  <i>Tevye: A <b>pogrom</b>? Here?</i> (page 33)	Russian word for an organized massacre of helpless people.
Mazeltov	interjection	<i><b>Mazeltov</b>, Tzeitel.</i> (page 38)	Hebrew term used to express congratulations.

## Vocabulary Extension Activity – In Your Own Words

**Directions:** Use an online or print dictionary, as well as the context provided, to define the following vocabulary words (in order of appearance) from *Fiddler on the Roof* in your own words.

Word	Part of Speech	Used in Context	Definition (in your own words)
Tradition	noun	<i>Here in Anatevka we have <b>traditions</b> for everything...how to eat, how to sleep, how to wear clothes.</i> (page 1)	
Dowry	noun	<i>A poor girl without a <b>dowry</b> can't be so particular.</i> (page 6)	
Edict	noun	<i>It was an <b>edict</b> from the authorities.</i> (page 15)	
Radical	noun	<i>Perchik: Girls should learn too. Girls are people.</i>  <i>Mendel: A <b>radical</b>!</i> (page 18)	
Forbidden	adjective	<i>Dancing...well, it's not exactly <b>forbidden</b>, but...</i> (page 64)	
Revolutions	noun	<i>I know you're very busy, God, --wars and <b>revolutions</b>, floods and plagues...</i> (page 67)	
Philosophy	noun	<i>The relationship between a man and a woman known as marriage is based on mutual beliefs, a common attitude and <b>philosophy</b> towards society...</i> (page 68)	
Absurd	adjective	<i>They're going over my head. Unheard of...<b>absurd</b>.</i> (page 73)	
Pauper	noun	<i>Who is he? A <b>pauper</b>. He has nothing, absolutely nothing!</i> (page 74)	
Settlement	noun	<i>He is in a <b>settlement</b> in Siberia.</i> (page 79)	



## Themes

GSE- English Language Arts	<b>6.T.PM.1</b> <b>Demonstrate knowledge of dominant themes, genres, and verbal styles of literature from a particular time period.</b> Read and comprehend myths and stories (fictional or historical) that modern writers have adapted into their own works. Read and comprehend one genre of literature from a particular time period.
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**Themes** are the main ideas or underlying meanings a writer explores in a literary work. The theme of a story can be conveyed using characters, setting, dialogue, plot, or a combination of all of these elements.

Below are some central themes to reflect on from *Fiddler on the Roof*. Consider discussing each as a class, or split your class up to unpack them in small groups.

- **The Importance of Family and Community**
  - How does being part of a community make dealing with pressures and changes easier? Consider the pressures facing Tevye and his family specifically, as well as the villagers of Anatevka at large.
  - Many of the residents of Anatevka are considered poor. How might being part of a tight knit community positively or negatively impact one's social status or standing?
  - How might being part of a close family and community where everyone knows and understands their role positively contribute to a sense of identity and belonging? Negatively?
- **The Tension between Maintaining Traditions and Embracing Change**
  - In the play, we see the younger characters – notably, Tevye's daughters and their suitors - challenging the long-standing established order and embracing modernity (choosing romantic love over matchmaking, or arranged marriage). Why might the older generation be hesitant to embrace such change?
  - How do traditions provide comfort and a sense of routine? What are some examples of traditions helping to hold a community together?
  - In the play, Tevye believes that having defined roles to follow and set traditions to uphold is what keeps their community stable and balanced. In what ways does his perspective shift over the course of the play? In what ways does it remain?

- **The Impact of Prejudice and Persecution**

- How is Antisemitism (prejudiced towards Jewish people) depicted and discussed in the play?
- What are some examples of characters (both Jewish and non-Jewish) exhibiting a lack of tolerance and understanding toward others?
- How are the Jewish residents of Anatevka negatively impacted by the prejudice and persecution present in Tsarist Russia at the time?

- **The Resilience of the Human Spirit**

- In the play, we see the characters forced to adapt as they are forcibly displaced from their home (Jewish diaspora). Do you believe adaptation is essential for survival? In what way? Can you think of other examples when a culture or society had to adapt to survive?
- How do the characters illustrate their hope for the future?
- How did you feel in the final moments of the play? What were your hopes (or fears) for the characters?

**Consider:** Are any of the above themes reflected in other content you're currently studying? In what way?

### Extension – Symbolism

**Symbols** are objects, people, or images that represent something else.

- **The Fiddler**

- Who does the fiddler represent?
- What does the roof represent?
- The title of the play was inspired by Marc Chagall's dreamlike paintings of fiddlers on roofs. Examine one here: <https://www.marcchagall.net/the-fiddler.jsp> How is village life depicted in these paintings?
- Did you notice the Fiddler interacting with any characters other than Tevye? Is it possible only Tevye sees and interacts with the Fiddler? If so, what might this artistic choice suggest?

*A fiddler on the roof. Sounds crazy, no? But in our little village of Anatevka, you might say every one of us is a fiddler on the roof, trying to scratch out a pleasant, simple tune without breaking his neck. It isn't easy. You may ask, why do we stay up there if it's so dangerous? We stay because Anatevka is our home. – Tevya, Act 1 Prologue, "Tradition"*



## Characters

GSE- English Language Arts	<b>5.T.T.1 Explain, analyze, and use narrative techniques to shape understandings.</b> b. Analyze how setting, events, conflict, and characterization contribute to the plot. Explain how a theme is demonstrated through a character's growth or conflict resolution.
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Character name and meaning	Description
<b>TEVYE</b> <i>From Hebrew, meaning "goodness", or "the goodness of God"</i>	A warmhearted but stubborn Jewish milkman, Tevye is deeply devoted to his faith and traditions but struggles to reconcile them with the changing world. He is both comedic and profound, often engaging in witty, philosophical conversations with God. Tevye is a natural storyteller and a commanding presence. He possesses charisma, humor, and emotional depth.
<b>GOLDE</b> <i>From Yiddish, meaning "gold"</i>	Tevye's strong-willed wife, Golde is the pragmatic matriarch of the household. She is dedicated to her family and upholds tradition but also demonstrates warmth and love in her own practical way. She is firm but caring, often the one to keep Tevye grounded in reality.
<b>TZEITEL</b> <i>From Yiddish, meaning "princess"</i>	The eldest daughter of Tevye and Golde, Tzeitel is strong-willed and deeply in love with Motel the tailor. She challenges tradition by choosing to marry for love rather than accepting an arranged marriage. She is mature, practical, and loving.
<b>HODEL</b> <i>From Hebrew, meaning "praise" or "glory", and derived from the word "hallelujah"</i>	The second daughter, Hodel is intelligent, independent, and willing to sacrifice everything for love. She falls in love with Perchik, a radical thinker, and ultimately leaves her home to follow him.
<b>CHAVA</b> <i>From Hebrew, meaning "life." It is the Hebrew form of Eve (from the bible) which itself means "living"</i>	The third daughter, Chava is introspective, bookish, and gentle. She shares a love of literature with Fyedka, a Russian soldier, and ultimately defies her family and faith by choosing to marry outside the Jewish community.
<b>MOTEL</b> <i>From Hebrew, meaning "one who is humble"</i>	A poor but hardworking tailor, Motel is deeply in love with Tzeitel and is initially too timid to stand up for himself, but he soon finds his inner strength.
<b>PERCHIK</b> <i>From Russian, meaning "little pepper"</i>	A radical young student, Perchik is an outsider in Anatevka. He challenges traditional views and introduces new ideas, particularly to Hodel, with whom he falls in love.
<b>FYEDKE</b> <i>From Russian, meaning "God's gift"</i>	A kind and open-minded Russian soldier, Fyedka stands apart from the other Russians in town. He is in love with Chava and respects her intelligence, but his relationship with her ultimately leads to her being disowned by her father.
<b>YENTE</b> <i>From Hebrew, meaning "talkative woman"</i>	The town's matchmaker, Yente is a comic character who meddles in everyone's business. She is talkative and nosy.
<b>LAZAR WOLF</b> <i>From Hebrew, meaning "God is my help"</i>	A wealthy butcher and the town's most eligible bachelor, Lazar Wolf seeks to marry Tzeitel. He is a blustery but ultimately kind-hearted man.
<b>THE FIDDLER</b>	A symbolic figure representing tradition and the balance of life, the Fiddler appears throughout the show playing the violin.
<b>SUPPORTING ROLES &amp; ENSEMBLE:</b> Shprintze, Beilke, Mordcha, Rabbi, Mendel, Avram, Nachum, The Constable, Shandel, Grandma Tzeitel, Fruma-Sarah, Villagers, Russians, and Dancers	

## Graphic Organizer: Character Analysis

**Directions:** *Fiddler on the Roof* is comprised of multiple complex characters, including: Tevye (the milkman), Golde (his wife), Tzeitel, Hodel, and Chava (their daughters), Motel, Perchik, and Fyedke (the daughter's suitors), and Yente (the matchmaker). Analyze one of those characters below.

**Character Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Sketch an image that represents the character below.</b>	<b>Motivation</b> <i>Describe the character's multiple or conflicting motivations – what do they want?</i>
	<b>Development</b> <i>How does the character grow or change throughout the play?</i>
	<b>Relationships</b> <i>How does the character interact with other characters?</i>
	<b>Plot or Theme</b> <i>How does the character advance the plot or develop a specific theme?</i>

## Culture & Religion

GSE – English Language Arts	<p><b>12.P.STII. Students develop and apply a multilayered understanding of context, author, audience, and purpose to ground and propel the interpretation and construction of texts.</b></p> <p>1. Develop and apply knowledge of key components of context such as background information, geographic location, cultural influences, time period, and contemporary events when interpreting and constructing texts.</p>
GSE - Theater	<p><b>TAHSFT.CN.2 Examine the role of theatre in a societal, cultural, and historical context.</b></p> <p>Identify and analyze plays and dramas from a variety of historical periods and cultures. Explore the works of milestone playwrights and plays, and the relevance of historical theatre.</p> <p>Recognize historical events that have influenced the role of theatre and how theatrical events have impacted cultural development.</p>



In *Fiddler on the Roof*, the characters of Anatevka are primarily **Jewish**, meaning they practice Judaism. **Judaism** is a religion that was developed among the ancient Hebrews, and is characterized by a belief in one transcendent God. Judaism is the complex phenomenon of a total way of life for the Jewish people, comprising theology, law, and

innumerable cultural traditions. Specifically, the characters represented in the musical are Ashkenazi Jews. **Ashkenazi Jews** primarily lived in **Central and Eastern Europe** in regions like France, Germany, Poland, and, in the case of *Fiddler*, Russia.

Tevye and his family would have spoken **Yiddish**, a language that uses the Hebrew alphabet and dates back at least a thousand years (roughly as old as most European languages). Yiddish served as not just a means of communication for Jews, but as a connector for the Jewish people; because of the Jewish **diaspora** (dispersion of people from their homeland) from Eastern Europe during the second half of the 19th century, which we see represented in *Fiddler*, Yiddish allowed Jewish people from different regions a way to communicate with one another, regardless of where they originated from.

The characters reside in a **Shtetl**, a small town or village comprised of primarily Yiddish-speaking Jews that centered around a **synagogue** (Jewish place of worship) and a **marketplace**. Shtetls were tight-knit communities where residents often stayed for many generations. In the musical, we see the characters forced to leave their shtetl (the fictional “Anatevka”) and the residents disperse across Europe and to America, as a result of **pogroms** (Russian word for the organized removal or massacre of a group of people). In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, many Russians viewed Jewish people as outsiders; their religion, language, food,

clothing, and manners were mysterious and different, and therefore, fearful and threatening. Discrimination and prejudice were evident in the Russian government, led by emperor **Tsar Nicholas II**. In the musical, a character asks the town Rabbi, *"Is there a proper blessing for the Tsar?"*, to which the Rabbi responds: *"May God bless and keep the Tsar...far away from us!"*.

*Fiddler on the Roof* showcases many of the traditions and customs of the Ashkenazi Jewish culture at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. **Culture** is the language, beliefs, values, and practices that make up the way of life for a particular group of people. **Traditions** are behaviors that hold symbolic meaning and are passed down from generation to generation. In the musical, we see the residents of Anatevka engaging in a variety of customs and traditions.



**The Sabbath** is a day of rest observed every Friday evening until the following Saturday evening, a time to abstain from work and connect with God, family, and community. In *Fiddler*, we see Tevye and his family sit down to a **Shabbat dinner** (image, left). They light candles and say prayers, or blessings, as evidenced in the song *"Sabbath Prayer"*.

**Match-making** and arranged marriages were common in shtetls during this time. A **matchmaker** (the character of Yente in the musical) would help arrange a proper connection for a young man and woman, often with the approval and assistance of their parents. Daughters were expected to consent to the agreed upon match. In the musical, we see Tevye's daughters resist the matchmaking process, instead breaking tradition by choosing their own partners and prioritizing romantic love over longstanding custom.

**Societal Roles** were deeply engrained and strictly followed in the culture of the shtetls during this time. As displayed in the opening song *"Tradition"*, each member of the community had a proper place and role. Women and mothers were expected to keep a quiet, proper, kosher home. Men and fathers worked and worshiped (read the holy book, say daily prayers). Youth were expected to obey and respect elders, with boys and girls having separate experiences: boys were educated, girls stayed home and helped with housekeeping. In the musical, we see these roles challenged, an example of the tension between the longstanding traditions and the encroaching ways of the modern world.

*"Because of our traditions, we've kept our balance for many, many years. Here in Anatevka we have traditions for everything...how to eat, how to sleep, how to wear clothes. For instance, we always keep our heads covered and always wear a little prayer shawl...this shows our constant devotion to God...because of our traditions, everyone knows who he is and what God expects him to do."*  
-Tevye, Act 1, Prologue, *"Tradition"*

## Song Analysis

GSE – Musical Theater	TAHSMT.RE.2 Critique various aspects of theatre and other media using appropriate supporting evidence. Utilize constructive criticism, appropriate musical theatre terminology, and study of existing performance styles to modify and improve performance choices.
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The music of *Fiddler on the Roof* represents **traditional musical theatre** writing during what is considered the “**Golden Age of Musical Theatre**”. The music and lyrics contribute to the telling of the story and are filled with rich and evocative images, and the rhythms and tempos borrow from Russian and Jewish music. Some songs are humorous, some nostalgic, and some heartbreaking.

The musical calls for a **diverse orchestra** that includes **strings** (violins, viola, cello, double bass), **woodwinds** (flute, clarinet, bass clarinet, oboe, English horn, bassoon), **brass** (trumpet, trombone, French horn), and **percussion** (including timpani, glockenspiel, chimes, tambourine, cymbals, and other instruments). An accordion and piano may also be featured.

**Listen:** Preview (4) songs from *Fiddler on the Roof* via YouTube at:  
[https://youtu.be/va0UBPt7Z1E?si=ChZ-dN\\_cWBY\\_2AV](https://youtu.be/va0UBPt7Z1E?si=ChZ-dN_cWBY_2AV)

As you listen, make note of the musical elements (e.g. rhythm, melody, harmony, dynamics), lyrics, and/or sounds that you find most interesting, striking, or effective in each song. What do these songs reveal about the character’s inner thoughts and hopes? Which song was your favorite, and why?

Song	Notes
<i>Prologue: Tradition</i>	
<i>To Life</i>	
<i>Sunrise, Sunset</i>	
<i>Far from the Home I Love</i>	



## Alliance Theatre Production Elements - Costumes

<b>GSE – Technical Theater</b>	<b>TAHSTT.CN.1 Connect technical elements of theatre.</b> Explore and understand the collaborations between designers and directors to develop design elements. Connect design themes with historical and social relevance using dramaturgical research and an understanding of historical and cultural artistic movements (e.g. expressionism, realism, Kabuki, Sanskrit Drama).
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In theatre, the **costume designer** designs and creates the clothing worn by the actors onstage. See below for a sample of designs created by **Vita Tzykun**, costume designer for the Alliance’s production of *Fiddler on the Roof*. Notice how the details of the costumes help tell each character’s story, giving insight into their personalities, social status, and the time period in which they lived. Costume designers engage in meticulous research and draw inspiration from the script to create their designs. They work closely with the director and the rest of the **production team** (including scenic designers, lighting designers, makeup and wig designers, and props designers) to ensure cohesive collaboration and storytelling.



*“Here in Anatevka, we have traditions for everything: how to sleep, how to eat, how to work, **how to wear clothes**. For instance, we always keep our heads covered and always wear a little prayer shawl. This shows our constant devotion to God.”-Tevye, Act 1 Prologue, “Tradition”*

Above, we see **Tevye** (left) and **Golde** (right) in their base costumes (meaning other pieces may be layered on when needed).

**As a class, consider:**

- What do you notice about the colors and textures of their clothing?
- What do these details suggest about the lives of these characters?

Left, **Tzeitel** is pictured in her **Sabbath clothing**. Right, we see her in her **wedding gown**.

- How is Tzeitel’s journey reflected in these costumes?





The characters of **Grandmother Tzeitel** and **Fruma Sarah** only appear once in the play, during **Tevye's dream** in Act 1. Tevye recounts a dream he claims to have had to his wife, Golde. In the dream, he says Golde's grandmother, Tzeitel, returned from the dead to bless their daughter Tzeitel's upcoming nuptials to Motel, the poor tailor. To further convince Tevye that Tzeitel should marry Motel, Fruma Sarah, the deceased wife of Lazar Wolf, appears. Fruma Sarah threatens physical violence against Tzeitel if Tevye allows her to wed Lazar Wolf.

**As a class, consider:**

- How did the costume designer choose to depict the ghostly, ethereal nature of these characters?
- What does the color palate suggest for each character?
- Examine their headpieces. What details do you notice? What might they represent?
- Compare and contrast the two ghosts. How are they similar? How are they different?

**Tevye**

In the middle of the dream, in walks your grandmother Tzeitel, may she rest in peace.

**Golde**

(Alarmed)

Grandmother Tzeitel? How did she look?

**Tevye**

For a woman who is dead for thirty years, she looked very good.

## Works Cited

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