

Costuming Wizardry: Past and Present

A WebQuest for

Grades 11-12 English

Linda L. Lee

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Ruby slippers. Original costume from *The Wizard of Oz*, 1939. Silk, leather, sequins, and rhinestones. Courtesy of Philip Samuels, St. Louis, Missouri (46) <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/oz/images/uc46.jpg>

How have costuming techniques today become more symbolic compared to stage productions of the last century?

Introduction

Imagine the thrill that the costuming artists felt when they were asked to design Dorothy's ruby slippers in *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. Little did they know that their creativity and those slippers would become such an icon of today's most popular movie of the Twentieth Century [from a 2012 *People Magazine* poll].

Costuming today is certainly an entirely different arena than it was when the *Wizard of Oz* was first produced into a movie in 1939. With new technological advances also come new materials and techniques with which to design thought-provoking costumes and make-up. We will be looking at Frank Baum's 1939 movie adaptation of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* and comparing it with the Walt Disney's 1994 stage production of *The Lion King*. We will be analyzing the symbolism behind the costuming in each to assess how and why designers have come to incorporate more symbolism in their designs than those of the past. Where did the idea of using ruby slippers originate and what does Simba's costume really symbolize? In what ways are Simba's costume different than that of the Cowardly Lion?

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Task

Your task will be threefold: first, you will identify the changes from Frank Baum's original 1900 book entitled *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* with the script of the movie by the same name which was produced in 1939 spearheaded by studio-great Leo B. Mayer, Jr. The specific changes will be regarding costuming. You will identify the changes and then propose reasons for the changes from text to screen. Do these changes help to

better convey important symbolism needed to make the movie version more appealing to the audience?

Secondly, you will research and analyze how the costuming for two (2) characters in *The Lion King* were designed and the symbolism behind each. In a PPT presentation, you will offer support to your position that new costuming techniques have become more or less symbolic in this last century. Reasons why this production has become the highest grossing musical of all time may also be explored.

Finally, you will present this PowerPoint Presentation formulating ideas as to why the changes in *The Wizard of Oz* movie script (compared to the original text) were necessary in order to ensure the movie's popularity with its audience. Is the costuming "flat" or "static" vs. costuming today which may be more symbolic? You will use *The Lion King* as a present-day example. In this PPT, you will proffer reasons why each production became wildly popular. Why has the *Wizard of Oz* maintained its popularity well into this century? By the end of the PPT presentation,, you will have addressed the overarching question: How have costuming techniques today become more symbolic compared to stage productions of the last century?

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Process

In order to realize the final product [a PPT presentation], you will be divided into teams of 3 as outlined below. Once you have selected a role, you will be responsible for:

- 1) Researchers #1 Wizard of Oz [one in group will be recorder to use the [Observe, Reflect, Question](#) chart to analyze the primary sources.]
- 2) Researchers #2 Lion King [One in group will be recorder use the [Observe, Reflect, Question](#) chart analyze the primary sources.]
- 3) PPT Creators [To take group's information and create a PPT proposing an answer and support to the Overarching Question]
- 4) Presenters of PPT final product [present to the class an organized, well-rehearsed PPT that utilizes sound oral communication techniques in conjunction with the PPT product.]

RESOURCES:

Researchers Group 1 will investigate the appearance, use and design of Ruby slippers; the change in character and costume of Witch of the North; and compare the costuming of Simba (Lion King) with the Cowardly Lion of Wizard of Oz.

- 1) Image: Dorothy's slippers <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/oz/images/uc46.jpg>
- 2) Passage from Baum's original book describing the slippers http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=rbc3&fileName=rbc0001_2006gen32405page.db&recNum=30
- 3) Passage from Baum's book describing the kiss from Witch of the North: http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=rbc3&fileName=rbc0001_2006gen32405page.db&recNum=32
- 4) Script of movie describing magical qualities of the ruby slippers: <http://wendyswizardofoz.com/script4.htm> [read Page 4 and 5 of script]
- 5) Video. Ruby slippers auction: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m-Kce-JdPSU>
- 6) Video: How the slippers were made: http://link.brightcove.com/services/player/bcpid693388156001?bkey=AQ~~,AAAAABZ1xXA~,BhTgkJ7K1mYr8ERVUqqtI5vER_1-mqk&bctid=645201790001
- 7) Video. Image of Glinda and the ruby slippers: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yc13WSaiRMM>
- 8) Image of Simba vs. Cowardly Lion:a) <http://www.broadway.com/buzz/170755/broadway-grosses-the-lion-king-rakes-in-23-million-audiences-give-soul-doctor-a-check-up/> b) <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/oz/ozsect2.html>

Researchers Group # 2 will investigate and analyze the symbolism behind Simba and one other character's of *The Lion King* costuming:

- 1) Simba costume: <http://www.exploringthelionking.co.uk/> [select Characters; then Simba]
- 2) Video: Julie Taymor, costume designer/director explains her approach to Lion's costume: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mq_haDWFcBM
- 3) Video: "The Lion King: Discover the Costumes": <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rhFUmO5aDNY&list=SP0916B41C87D5BE87>
- 4) "Secrets behind the Success of The Lion King" *CBS News Nightline* article: <http://abcnews.go.com/Entertainment/secrets-lion-king-musicals-enormous-success/story?id=17770066>
- 5) Video: "Behind the Scenes at Disney's *The Lion King*" – costuming: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u1kCkLYLK0o>
- 6) Video: "Masks and Puppets": <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hTOOS6ggKPY&list=SP0916B41C87D5BE87>

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Evaluation

Your performance on this WebQuest will be evaluated using the follow rubric:

Point system		Individual Work (Grade)	Group Work (Grade)
4	<i>Exceptional</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Your oral work includes 5 or more facts/ideas to support your proposed argument answering the Overarching Question. Your support given shows meaningful synthesis of ideas; and has insightful context & shows that you have rehearsed well the PPT presentation. <input type="checkbox"/> Your written work demonstrates a drafting process, is organized, is on-time, is free of all grammatical/spelling errors, and consistently refers to and returns to the Overarching Question. Evidence of focused research outside the supplied sources is shown.	<input type="checkbox"/> Your group is focused, on-task, rehearses effectively, and produces a high-quality PPT that includes at least 5 facts/ideas to support your proposed argument answering the Overarching Question. The group has incorporated research beyond the supplied sources.
3	<i>Meeting expectations</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Your oral work includes fewer than 4 facts/ideas to support your proposed argument answering the Overarching Question. Your support given shows some synthesis of ideas, has good context & shows that you some rehearsal of the PPT presentation has occurred. <input type="checkbox"/> Your written work demonstrates at least one drafting process, is organized, on-time, contains minimal grammatical/spelling errors, and occasionally refers to the Overarching Question. Evidence of focused research outside the supplied sources is shown.	<input type="checkbox"/> Your group is focused, somewhat on-task (need reminders to focus), rehearses, and produces a good-quality PPT that includes at least 3 facts/ideas to support your proposed argument answering the Overarching Question. The group has incorporated minimal research beyond the supplied sources.

2	<i>Meeting basic requirements</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Your oral work includes fewer than 3 facts/ideas to support your proposed argument answering the Overarching Question. Your support given shows little synthesis of ideas, has little context (which confuses viewers) & shows that you have not rehearsed the PPT presentation. <input type="checkbox"/> Your written work demonstrates one draft, is unorganized or missing parts, is late, and contains several grammatical/spelling errors, and occasionally refers to the Overarching Question. No evidence of research conducted outside the supplied sources is shown.	<input type="checkbox"/> Your group is unfocused, minimally on-task (need several reminders to focus), and produces an PPT presentation that includes fewer than 3 facts/ideas to support your proposed argument answering the Overarching Question.
1.5	<i>Making minimal progress towards basic requirements</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Some or all parts of the project are incomplete	<input type="checkbox"/> Your group is unfocused, rarely on-task (need consistent reminders to focus), and produces a PPT that includes fewer than 2 facts/ideas to support your proposed argument answering the Overarching Question.
1	<i>Failed to meet basic requirements</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Assignment not submitted	<input type="checkbox"/> Assignment not submitted

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Conclusion

As you consider the changes in approach that costume designers have made in recent decades, pay close attention to how stories are made to come to life, either on stage or in movies. Is the audience more sophisticated and expected to understand the symbolism built into costuming today? Is this symbolism part of what make stage productions great today? As you watch productions, think of the global influences that have shaped the costuming. What costuming works or does not work for you. Best of all, enjoy the show!

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| [Link to Teacher Page](#) |

Credits and References

Designed by Linda L. Lee 2013, ilee@ccsnh.edu as part of the *WebQuesting at the Library of Congress* professional development course offered through [Teaching with Primary Sources at Waynesburg University](#).

Teacher Web Page

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[| Link to Student Page |](#)

Introduction for Teachers

This project is meant for either an individual module on reading skills [English] or as part of an Intro to Drama course module. Students will explore how a scriptwriter adapts a piece of literature to the stage, employing creative aspects in the costuming. Costuming has become an integral part of a stage production's (or a movie's) ultimate success. Creativity is essential in making the costumes align with the overall theme of the story, and *The Lion King's* costuming is a perfect example of illustrating this. The *Lion King* website (see Researcher's Group 2 – Source 1) is thorough in explaining each part of Simba's costume. The students will easily identify the difference between *Wizard* and *Lion King* in this aspect. Comparison and contrast activities should follow naturally between the two.

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About the Learners

This WebQuest is designed for 11th and 12th grade English classes or to an Intro to Drama course. The PPT presentation will require students have good command of persuasive thinking and writing, which is a senior-junior-level high school competency.

Before assigning this WebQuest, students should have a good understanding of comparison/contrast. They will be asked to synthesize their research information and answer the overarching question.

Because this is a group activity, those with learning disabilities may be assisted by the teacher and/or classmates.

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Academic Standards/Learning Objectives

Students will...

>Utilize Library of Congress documents and other primary sources to formulate interview questions, answers, and a general base of knowledge about entertainment & politics ([CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.2](#)).

> Analyze multiple interpretations of a story, drama, or poem (e.g., recorded or live production of a play or recorded novel or poetry), evaluating how each version interprets the source text. (Include at least one play by Shakespeare and one play by an American dramatist.) [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.11-12.7](#)

>Introduce a topic; organize complex ideas, concepts, and information to make important connections and distinctions; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., figures, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension. [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.2a](#)

> Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas. [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.2](#)

Vocabulary Terms/Names

Symbolism, icon, pageantry, spirituality, puppetry, personification, metamorphose.

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Process for Teachers

This project is the introduction of how literature can be made into live theatre and how costuming has changed over the past century. Students will identify changes to the original text that were made in order to facilitate the story visually. They will examine primary sources in order to make decisions about why the writers decided on these changes and whether they were positive/negative. Most students have already seen the 1939 movie version of *Wizard of Oz*. For those who have not, class time should be spent viewing the movie.

Once the students have reviewed the sources for *Lion King*, they may now compare the two productions. Costuming will be very different for both. The argument about how present-day costuming is more symbolic should be a natural progression.

Teachers should plan to spend a couple of class days for students to share their research findings with each

other. Then the PowerPoint presentations work should follow with 3-4 class days allowed for this. A final day or two should be planned to allow student presenters to practice their PPT presentations. The teacher should monitor these activities and lend assistance when or if students have technical problems.

The teacher should be sure that the overarching question is answered in the PPT presentations. Specific reasons as to why the costuming is more symbolic should be developed in the PPT presentations. Whether the symbolism is necessary to a stage productions' success may also be debated in the PPT's. Teachers should be familiar with how to navigate and teach students to explore the Library of Congress' special exhibits.

Students will need to use computers and independent class time [with computer availability] will assure the students' success with this WebQuest.

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Resources for Teachers

- Access to *The Wizard of Oz* movie
- Internet access & school/personal computers
- Javascript for computers to access items from the LOC The Wizard of Oz: An American Fairytale exhibit (<http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/oz/ozsect2.html>)
- Student worksheets [by LOC] for exploring primary sources: <http://www.loc.gov/teachers/primary-source-analysis-tool/>

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Evaluation for Teachers

Both individual and group work will be evaluated. Those students earning a rating of "exceptional" will have strong arguments and a well-supported PPT. Thoughtfulness and synthesis between the primary and secondary sources will be evident.

The class audience should have questions or feedback to PPT's that are well done. The masks used in *Lion King* vs. the Cowardly Lion costume should be an easy comparison to include in the symbolism debate.

*See rubric on Students Page for more detailed information

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Conclusion for Teachers

Developing critical thinking skills is important for students at this level as they consider career choices and/or colleges to prepare for careers. Using both their observation skills with primary sources and their critical thinking skills, this WebQuest will ask them to identify changes from Baum's original text to the movie script as the story is brought to the stage (or movie screen). Costuming is an integral part of the success of these visual arts and using symbolism in costuming makes the production richer in meaning for audiences. The simplicity of the Cowardly Lion's costume will be apparent compared to Simba's, for example. Replacing the silver slippers with the ruby slippers is more visually appealing to the audience. Then attaching magical qualities to the ruby slippers instead of using the Witch of the North's kiss (to keep evil away) will be a source for comparison and discussion. As students examine the origins of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* and postulate how it became so successful in a movie format, they will hone their critical thinking skills. Comparing the *Wizard of Oz* costuming with *Lion King* should also give way to an animated discussion. This WebQuest will ultimately encourage students to watching future stage productions (or movies made from books) more critically.

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