

# Kimberly Akimbo

Book and Lyrics by David Lindsay-Abaire

Music by Jeanine Tesori

Based on the play by David Lindsay-Abaire



# Kimberly Akimbo

a musical



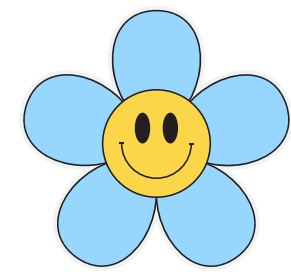
2025.2026 Season

Stanley **BFL CANADA** Stage

**April 2–May 3, 2026**

**This show is proudly sponsored by**





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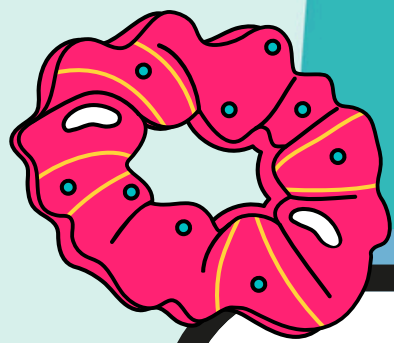
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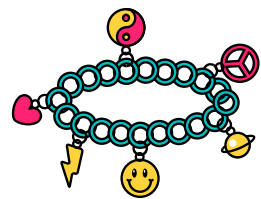
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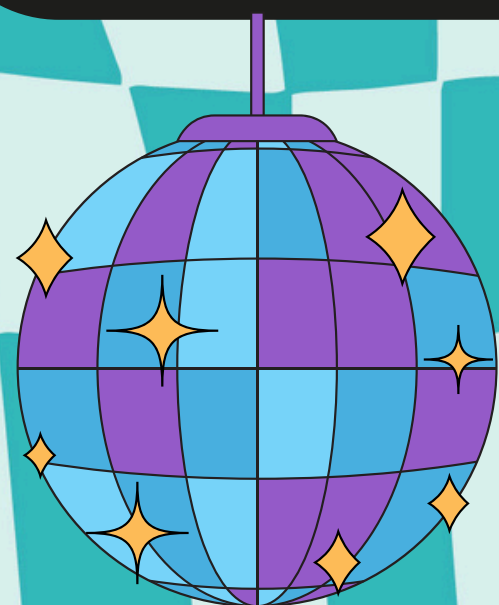
## WELCOME



This guide was created for teachers and students. It contains an overview of the musical's story as well as informative resources and activities for teachers and students. The guide aims to provide background knowledge and critical perspectives on the musical that will yield fruitful discussion and foster an understanding and appreciation of theatre arts.

If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions for the guide, please contact our Education & Community Engagement Coordinator, Mikenzie Page, [mpage@artsclub.com](mailto:mpage@artsclub.com).

This study guide was written by Amy Amantea, Craig Elliot, Heather Lytle, Heather Robbie, Kevan Ellis, and Mikenzie Page.



## ABOUT THE ARTS CLUB THEATRE COMPANY

The Arts Club of Vancouver was founded in 1958 as a private club for artists, musicians, and actors. It became the Arts Club Theatre in 1964 when the company opened its first stage in a converted gospel hall at Seymour and Davie Streets. Now in its 62<sup>nd</sup> season of producing professional live theatre in Vancouver, the Arts Club Theatre Company is a non-profit charitable organization that operates three theatres: the Lindsay Family Stage at Granville Island, the Stanley BFL CANADA Stage, and the Olympic Village Stage at the BMO Theatre Centre. Its popular productions range from musicals and contemporary comedies to new works and classics.

Learn more about the Arts Club Theatre Company at [artsclub.com](http://artsclub.com).



ćəsnaʔəm:

## The Story of this Land

The Stanley BFL CANADA Stage stands on the ancestral territory of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm Nation, and the former city of ćəsnaʔəm, which was located at the mouth of the Fraser River. The city of ćəsnaʔəm is an important historical site for xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam). It symbolizes the nation's resilience and its connection to the land. We honour the history of this land as a step towards recognition and respect to the Musqueam people. Just as Musqueam was named for the blooming flower məθkʷəy̓, we hope to grow our connection with the land and its people.

The Arts Club Theatre Company would like to acknowledge the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm, Skwxwú7mesh, and səlilwətał Nations, the original stewards of this land on which we operate. We would like to ask those visiting or living here to share their thanks by supporting local Indigenous artists and communities. Acknowledging is always a start to supporting; as we step forward, we wish to be better partners, healers, and helpers to our Indigenous neighbours.

For further reading, click below to read more about Musqueam's Story from the Musqueam Indian Band website:

Musqueam's Story

<https://www.musqueam.bc.ca/our-story/>

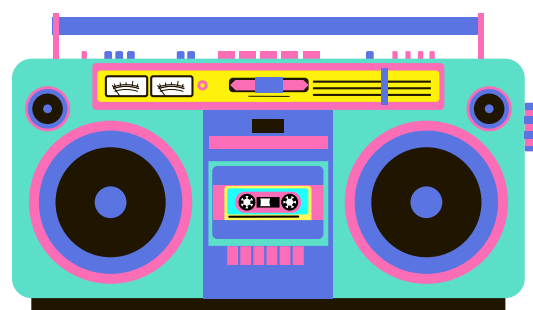
# Attending the Show

## Arriving at the Theatre



Please arrive at the theatre with 30 minutes before the show to pick up and distribute tickets. Buses may unload passengers in the loading zone in front of the theatre, but engines must be turned off while doing so. They will have to find alternate parking for the duration of the show.

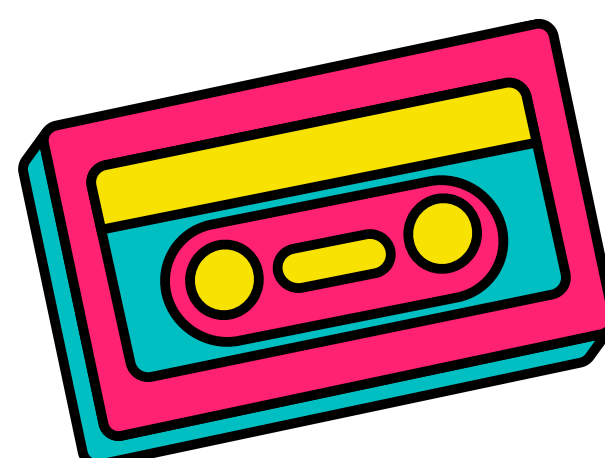
## Theatre Etiquette



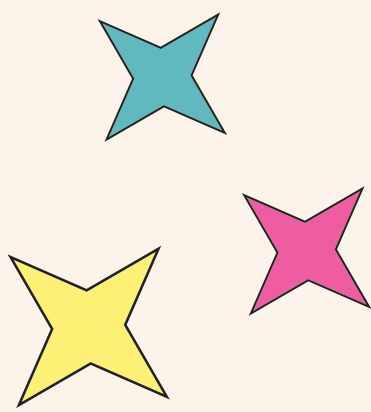
In order to ensure an enjoyable show for all audience members, please share these general theatre etiquette guidelines with students.

• Please turn off mobile phones and other electronic devices for the duration of the show. If you are concerned about missing an emergency call, please leave your name or device and seat location with an usher and they will alert you.

- No outside food or drink is allowed in the theatre.
- Please be modest with your use of fragrances so that audience members with allergies can also enjoy the performance.
- If you need to leave the theatre during the performance, you will be seated again at the intermission or another appropriate interval.
- Reactions are welcome and the best part of live theatre! We do ask that you please respect your fellow audience members and the performers by refraining from talking during the performance.
- If you have a complaint about another guest, please tell a front of house attendant or the Front of House Manager rather than approaching the person yourself. They will be happy to address your concerns.



## Learning Objectives:



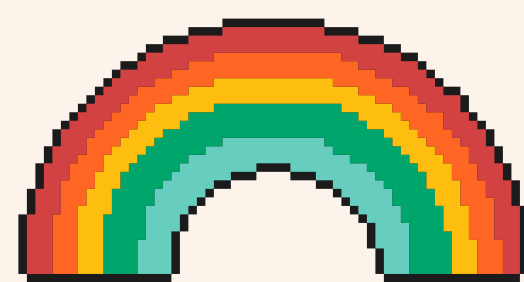
After viewing *Kimberly Akimbo* and working through the following activities, students will:

- Engage critically with theatre performance, including acting choices, direction, sound, stage and lighting design.
- Explore the concept of finding oneself and coming into one's own identity.
- Reflect on choices made in life and how/who it may impact one's own self, and others around them.



## Connections to BC Curriculum:

### Arts Education 8



#### *Big Ideas*

- Creative growth requires patience, readiness to take risks, and willingness to try new approaches
- Individual and collective expression can be achieved through the arts
- Dance, drama, music and visual arts are each unique language for creating and communicating

#### *Curriculum Competencies*

- Explore relationships between identity, place, culture, society, and belonging through arts activities and experiences
- Reflect on works of art and creative processes to understand artists motivations and meanings
- Adapt learned skills, understandings, and processes for use in new contexts and for different purposes and audiences



## **Drama 11/12**

### *Big Ideas*

- Drama offers dynamic ways to express our identity and sense of belonging
- Growth as an artist requires perseverance, resilience, and reflection
- Aesthetic experiences have the power to transform our perspective

### *Curriculum Competencies*

#### *-Reason and Reflect*

- Describe, analyse, and evaluate ways in which props, technologies, and environments are used in drama, using discipline-specific language
- Reflect on dramatic works and make connections with personal experiences

#### *-Connect and Expand*

- Demonstrate respect for self, others and audience
- Explore educational, personal, and professional opportunities in the performing arts
- Examine the impacts of dramatic works on culture and society
- Make connections through drama with family and community on local, national, and global scales

## **New Media 11/12**

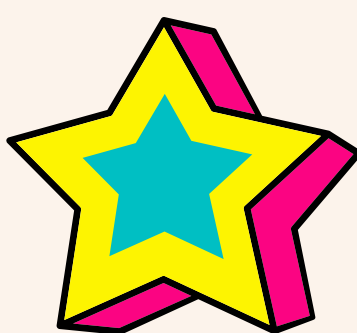
### *Big Ideas*

- The exploration of text and story deepens our understanding of diverse, complex ideas about identity, others and the world
- People understand text differently depending on their worldviews and perspectives
- Language shapes ideas and influences others

### *Curriculum Competencies*

- Select and apply appropriate strategies in a variety of contexts to comprehend written, oral, visual and multimodal texts, to guide inquiry and to transform thinking
- Identify and understand the role of personal, social, and cultural contexts, values and perspectives in text
- Evaluate how literary elements as well as specific new media techniques and devices enhance and shape meaning and impact

## Spoken Language 11/12



### Big Ideas

- The exploration of text and story deepens our understanding of diverse, complex ideas about identity, others, and the world
- People understand text differently depending on their worldviews and perspectives
- Language shapes ideas and influences others
- Voice is powerful and evocative

### Curriculum Competencies

- Understand and appreciate how different forms, formats, structures, and features of texts reflect a variety of purposes, audiences, and messages
- Think critically, creatively, and reflectively to analyse ideas within, between, and beyond texts
- Appreciate and understand how language constructs personal, social, and cultural identities
- Evaluate how techniques and devices enhance and shape meaning and impact

## Show Content:

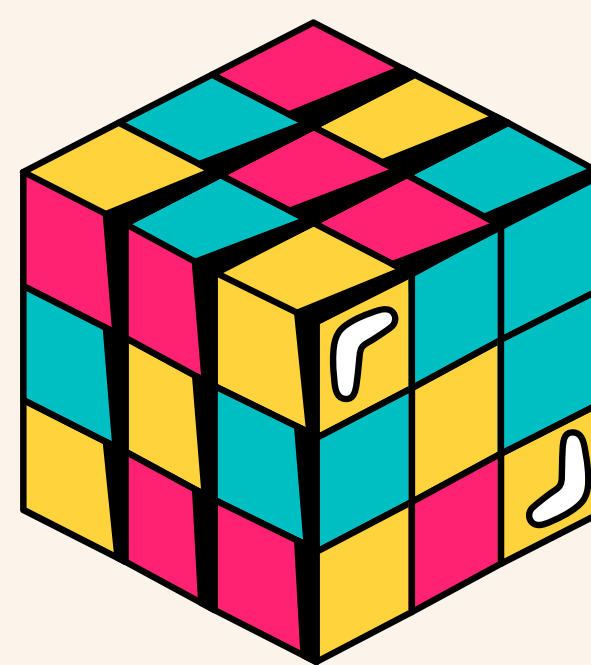


**Genre:** Musical

**Show Dates:** April 2–May 3, 2026

**Age Range:** Grades 10–12

**Venue:** Stanley BFL CANADA Stage, 2750 Granville St,  
Vancouver, BC V6H 3J3





## Content Advisory:

This production may contain flashing lights and water-based haze and fog. Please contact our box office for more information (604) 687-1644

### Alcohol/Drugs:



Several depictions of onstage drinking and characters being overly intoxicated. Kimberly's father, Buddy, is an alcoholic and his disease is a major theme in the story.

### Strong Language:



There is a significant amount of foul language in this musical. The 'S' word in particular is featured in a song, and the intention of the use is to authentically mimic the vernacular of late 90s New Jersey teenagers.

### Sexual Content:



Some suggestive and flirty language is used but there are no explicit or implied sexual interactions. However, there is a rather explicit exchange between an adult and a minor in which sexual acts are proposed.

### Death:



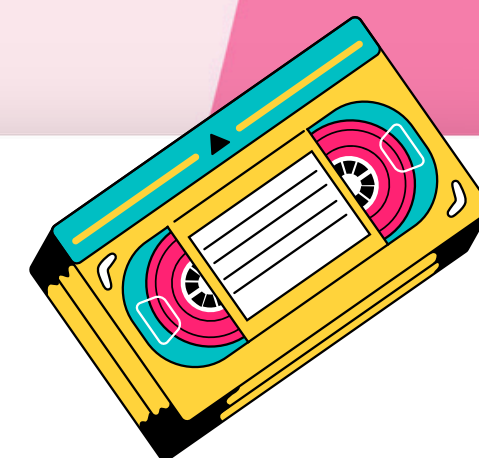
The protagonist, Kimberly Levaco, has a terminal illness, and this is a central plot to the story. Death is frequently discussed and is a consistent theme throughout the show.

### Abuse:



There are some instances of heated exchanges and cruel words passing between characters which could be considered emotional or verbal abuse.

# BRIEF SYNOPSIS



## A MUSICAL COMEDY ABOUT GROWING UP

About to turn 16, Kimberly has the anxieties of a typical teenager: school projects, new friends, and first crushes. She just also happens to look like she's 72 years old. Oh, and she might face felony charges thanks to a rogue aunt. But Kimberly won't let her rare genetic condition or dysfunctional family get her down—she is determined to find happiness and embark on a great adventure



## DETAILED SYNOPSIS

### Act One

The musical begins at an ice-skating rink where the skaters are exiting the ice so it can be resurfaced. Our protagonist, Kimberly Levaco, is sitting alone watching as the “Teen Quartet” (Aaron, Delia, Teresa and Martin), who are very self-involved, make their way to the counter enjoying each others company. Seth is working behind the counter, stocking shoes and selling snacks. Kimberly has just moved to the town and doesn't know anyone.

As the Teen Quartet prepare to go back on the resurfaced ice, they break into song (**Skater Planet**) and sing about how there isn't much going on in their town, how they don't get invited to parties, and how they are all mixed up in a love quadrangle.

Kimberly joins in the song sharing how she feels about being in a new town and the challenges of meeting new friends. Kimberly exits and the Teen Quartet and Seth sing the final verse, each detailing the reason they feel they are unpopular.

The scene transitions to outside the skate-rink where Kimberly is waiting in the snow for her father to pick her up. Buddy pulls up. He makes some jokes about Kimberly being cold, and then she reveals he is more than 3 hours late picking her up. Buddy offers her a Gameboy as way of apology. While Kimberly and Buddy are talking, Seth re-enters, as he has forgotten his instrument in the rink. There is an exchange in which Buddy insults Seth, who takes it graciously. Seth offers to let Buddy and Kimberly warm up inside for a few minutes, but the duo decline.

While Seth is inside, Kimberly notices that her father is drunk, scolds him, and then offers Buddy coffee from a thermos. As the excuse is being finalised to hide Buddy's drinking from his wife and Kimberly's mom, Seth reemerges from the rink. He inquires if Kimberly will be his lab partner at school for a project on diseases and suggests they do the project on Kimberly's disease. Kimberly prefers to do a report on glaucoma and Buddy gets a bit aggressive defending his daughter.



The play transitions to the Levaco's home where we meet Kimberly's mother, Pattie. Pattie has a camera and bandaged hands. She is pregnant and recording a video for the baby, explaining her hands, her work history, her apparent terminal condition and the fact that Buddy and Kimberly disparage her, so she wants the baby to know the truth (**Hello, Darling**).

Kimberly and Buddy return. Buddy uses profanity, which means he must contribute to the swear jar. Kimberly calls out both her parents, then makes sure her mother eats by fetching Pattie some cereal. There are some passive aggressive remarks made by Pattie towards her daughter, which clearly hurt Kimberly. The family shifts to discussing what to do with the swear jar money, debating a family road trip, which then prompts Pattie to inquire why they were late returning. Kimberly doesn't give the agreed excuse and instead makes up a story about how she and Buddy helped an injured old lady. The story almost works, until Pattie smells alcohol on her husband. She calls out Kimberly for being a liar and then lets out a string of profanity before the scene wraps.

The story follows Kimberly to her room where she is looking at some sort of application form when her dad enters. Initially Buddy apologises, then complains about Kimberly not sticking to the agreed excuse. Once Buddy leaves, Kimberly goes back to completing the application. She says what she is writing out loud, and the audience learns that this is an application for the Make-A-Wish Foundation. Kimberly sings about her wishes (**Make a Wish**).

A school bell rings signalling a transition to a hallway full of lockers. Kimberly is now at school observing the activities of the other students. Through her eavesdropping, she learns that the choir teacher, Mr. Kettle, will be permitting the Teen Quartet to perform a medley from Dreamgirls. The Teen Quartet is very excited and starts making plans for the performance (**Skater Planet (reprise #1)**). Seth arrives and greets Kimberly in elvish from Lord of the Rings, before again inquiring with the quartet if any of them need a lab partner for science. The Teen Quartet all turn him down and leave him standing alone in the hallway. Kimberly approaches him and offers to be his lab partner after all, making plans to meet in the library that afternoon.

At the library Kimberly and Seth are planning their science project and bonding. Kimberly explains the particulars of her disease and Seth shares that his mother has passed away. They discuss their personal backgrounds and bond while working on the science presentation. During this time Seth mentions his love of word-play games and teaches Kimberly about anagrams. While Seth attempts to transform Kimberly's name into an anagram she launches into song and is joined by the Teen Quartet (**Anagram**).

As Kimberly and Seth marvel at the anagram he has created, cleverly akimbo, they are approached by a disheveled and suspicious looking woman who turns out to be Kimberly's Aunt Debra. Debra explains that she has been hiding out in the library for 10 days waiting for Kimberly to show up.

Debra introduces herself, propositions Seth, and reveals much of her shady past and some other way too personal information before Kimberly leads her away from Seth.

The next day, Kimberly is at school the next day where Aunt Debra is attempting to recruit her into some sort of illegal scheme. She tries to approach the Teen Quartet but Kimberly intercedes. Debra then breaks into song about opportunities and criminal schemes (**Better**).

Later, Kimberly is at home with her mother. They are discussing all manner of things when Debra shows up with a bunch of chemicals and, after a brief exchange with Pattie, heads into the basement. Right after, Buddy comes home drunk, excited that he won some passes to Six Flags amusement park, however they are expired. Debra comes up from the basement and a awkward exchange ensues. Buddy goes to sleep it off and Debra brings a stolen mailbox into the house. As the scene closes, it is revealed it is Kimberly's 16<sup>th</sup> birthday. This is also the average age of life expectancy for someone with Kimberly's disease. (**Father Time**)

The next morning, Buddy is driving Kimberly and Seth to school. There is an awkward exchange between Buddy and Seth, and it is revealed Buddy forgot Kimberly's birthday. As he's driving, Buddy internally reveals his opinion of Seth. The song shifts to Buddy lecturing Seth with responses from the confused teenage duo. As they arrive at school Kimberly loses it on her father and wishes him dead. (**Happy For Her**)

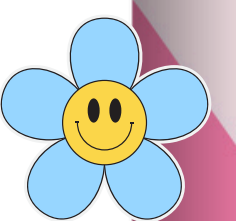
In the hall at school, Kimberly is talking with Teresa and Delia. Seth joins them and he and Kimberly have an incredibly awkward exchange about kissing, which is interrupted by the Teen Quartet planning their performance. (**Anagram reprise**)

The musical changes to Skater Planet and the Teen Quartet is upset that they can't afford the costumes they want for their performance, as Debra approaches them with a suspicious offer. Then Seth gives Kimberly a gift, her parents turn up, and the audience learns that Seth arranged a birthday party for Kimberly. After a discussion with her parents about disappointing birthday gifts, Kimberly decides she wants money for a road trip and agrees to participate in Debra's crazy scheme. (**This Time**)



## Act Two

The act opens in Kim's basement, where Debra is showing the teens how to wash cheques as part of her latest scam (**How to Wash a Check**). After much practice and scheming everyone exits to get some juice and Seth is left alone to ponder the moral implications of being part of this criminal conspiracy (**Good Kid**). Seth also discovers that Debra stole his tuba. Meanwhile Buddy and Pattie are trying to live up to their birthday promises to Kimberly. (**Hello Baby**)



Back at school, the teens are playing Uno while Seth is making anagrams of everyone's names. They are discussing the pending cheque fraud scheme and their plans for the future (**Skater Planet (reprise #2)**)



Later in science class, the teens all sing their way through the disease presentations. (**Our Disease**)

Kim returns home to find a serene domestic scene waiting for her. They settle in for a nice family dinner and for some time there is a calm and pleasant atmosphere, all the while, the family is singing their inner monologue, anticipating that things will take a turn for the worst (**The Inevitable Turn**). It is revealed that Pattie cheated on Buddy with the neighbour to ensure the baby wouldn't be born with the same genetic condition as Kimberly. When Buddy found out, he paid Debra to beat up the offending neighbour, but she accidentally killed him instead. All of this sets off an argument which ends with Kimberly collapsing from a "little" cardiac event.

The scene shifts to the hospital where Debra, Buddy and Pattie are having a somewhat unpleasant exchange. When Seth arrives, they leave the room, and Kimberly stops pretending to be asleep. Seth reveals that the cheque fraud is going ahead without Kimberly. Kim resolves to leave the hospital and fulfill her role in the scheme. (**Now**)

Things shift to Skater Planet where Debra is reviewing the scheme with the Teen Quartet. They are all very nervous, especially when they learn Debra won't be coming along to the banks. When Kimberly emerges dressed as a grandma, she insists on going alone to save her friends from any potential consequences. During this exchange, Debra outs all the teens' crushes. As they prepare to leave, Kimberly makes a snide comment to Debra that makes her aunt suspicious. (**How to Wash a Cheque (reprise)**)

Buddy and Pattie are preparing for the baby when Kimberly arrives home unexpectedly. She has a bag of stolen money. Kimberly tells her parents to prepare for the family road trip, only to discover they are converting her room to a nursery for the baby and that her dad is off the wagon. They have a huge argument, and Kimberly reveals she is leaving to see the world. (**Before I Go**)

Things wrap up with Seth and Kimberly in a car, driving through the safari park at Six Flags. They have stolen Buddy's car, Pattie's camera, and Debra's illicit funds. Kimberly is making a video for her sister and asks Seth to make sure she gets it. (**Hello, Sister**) She reminds the audience to live life to the fullest because "no one gets a second time around" (**Great Adventure**).

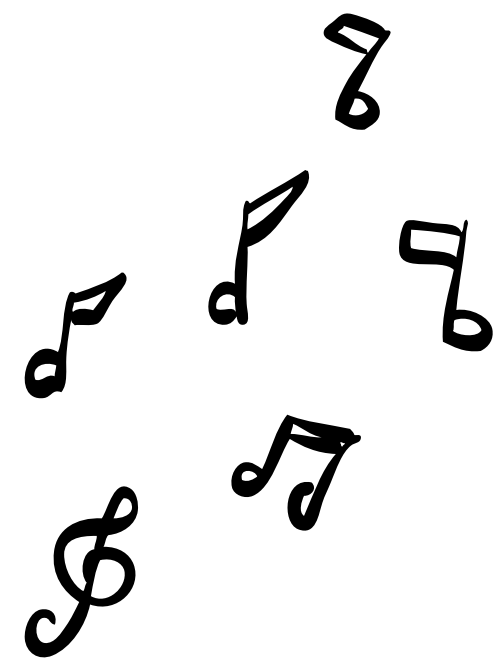
**END OF PLAY**



# Song List:

## Act I

- “Skater Planet”
- “Hello, Darling”
- “Make a Wish”
- “Skater Planet (reprise #1)”
- “Anagram”
- “Better”
- “Father Time”
- “Happy for Her”
- “Anagram (reprise)”
- “This Time”



## Act II

- “How to Wash a Check”
- “Good Kid”
- “Hello, Baby”
- “Skater Planet (reprise #2)”
- “Our Disease”
- “The Inevitable Turn”
- “Now”
- “How to Wash a Check (reprise)”
- “Before I Go”
- “Hello, Sister”
- “Great Adventure”



# ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHTS:

## David Lindsay-Abaire – Book & Lyrics

David Lindsay-Abaire is a Tony- and Pulitzer Prizewinning playwright, screenwriter, lyricist and librettist. His most recent show, the musical *Kimberly Akimbo*, written with composer Jeanine Tesori, premiered off Broadway at the Atlantic Theater Co., where it won the Lortel, NYDCC, OCC, and Drama Desk Awards for Best Musical, before it moved to Broadway and won five Tony Awards, including Best Musical, Best Book and Best Score as well as a Grammy nomination for Best Musical Theater Album. His play *Good People* premiered on Broadway at MTC, was awarded the New York Drama Critics Circle Award for Best Play, The Horton Foote Prize, The Edgerton Foundation New American Play Award, and two Tony nominations. His play *Rabbit Hole* also premiered on Broadway at MTC and received the Pulitzer Prize for Drama, five Tony nominations, and the Spirit of America Award.

David also wrote the book and lyrics for *Shrek the Musical* (Jeanine Tesori, composer), which was nominated for eight Tonys, four Oliviers, a Grammy, and earned David the Kleban Prize as America's most promising musical theatre lyricist. His newest play, *The Balusters*, premieres on Broadway at MTC in April 2026, directed by Kenny Leon. David's other plays include *Ripcord*, *Fuddy Meers*, *Kimberly Akimbo*, and *Wonder of the World*, which all premiered at MTC, as well as *A Devil Inside* at Soho Rep. In addition to his work in theatre, David's screen credits include his film adaptation of *Rabbit Hole* (starring Nicole Kidman, Oscar nomination), Dreamworks' *Rise of the Guardians*, and *The Family Fang*, among others. He is also, along with Tanya Barfield, Co-Director of the Lila Acheson Wallace American Playwrights Program at the Juilliard School.

## Jeanine Tesori—Music

Jeanine Tesori won the Tony Award for Best Original Score with Lisa Kron for the musical *Fun Home*. She has also written Tony-nominated scores for *Twelfth Night* at Lincoln Center; *Thoroughly Modern Millie* (lyrics, Dick Scanlan); *Caroline, or Change* (lyrics, Tony Kushner); and *Shrek The Musical* (lyrics, David Lindsay-Abaire). The production of *Caroline, or Change* at the National Theatre in London received the Olivier Award for Best New Musical. Her 1997 Off-Broadway musical *Violet* (lyrics, Brian Crawley) opened on Broadway in 2014 and garnered four Tony nominations, including Best Musical Revival. Opera: *A Blizzard on Marblehead Neck* (libretto, Tony Kushner; Glimmerglass) and *The Lion, The Unicorn, and Me* (libretto, J. D. McClatchy, Kennedy Center). Music for plays: *Mother Courage* (dir. George C. Wolfe, with Meryl Streep and Kevin Kline), *John Guare's A Free Man of Color* (Lincoln Center Theater, dir. George C. Wolfe), and *Romeo and Juliet* (Delacorte Gala). Film scores: *Nights in Rodanthe*, *Every Day*, and *You're Not You*.

Ms. Tesori is a member of the Dramatists Guild and was cited by the ASCAP as the first female composer to have two new musicals running concurrently on Broadway. She was the founding artistic director of Encores! Off-Center at New York City Center, and a lecturer in music at Yale University. Most of all, she is the proud parent of Siena Rafter.



## Setting:

The play takes place in three main locations, all set in rural late 90s New Jersey; a high school, the ramshackle house of the protagonist, and an ice rink.



## Characters:

**Kimberly Levaco:** The 16-year-old protagonist of the musical. Kimberly has a rare illness (that is never specified) that causes her to physically age much faster than the average human, meaning she appears to be 72 despite being a teenager.

**Buddy Levaco:** Kimberly's dad, struggling with alcoholism which often undermines his well-meaning attempts to parent Kim.

**Pattie Levaco:** The pregnant, hypochondriac mother of Kimberly.

**Aunt Debra:** Convicted felon aunt of Kimberly. Debra is currently on probation.

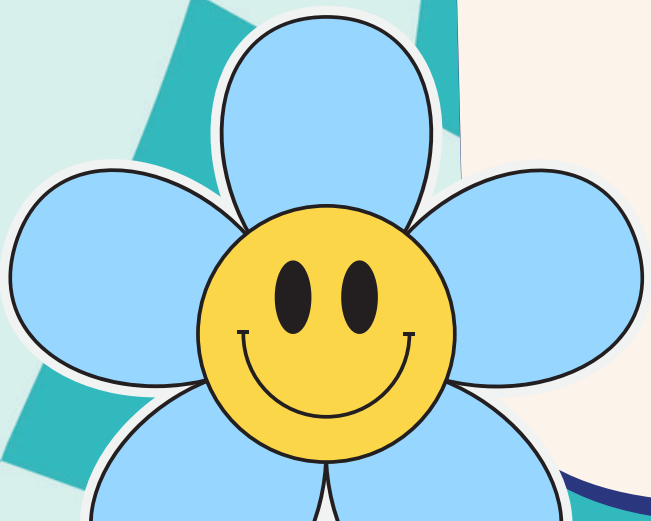
**Seth Weetis:** A high school "geek" who becomes a new friend of Kimberly's. Seth works at the local ice rink and enjoys anagrams. He also plays the tuba.

**Aaron Puckett:** One of the Teen Quartet, a group of choir kids who become Kimberly's new friends.

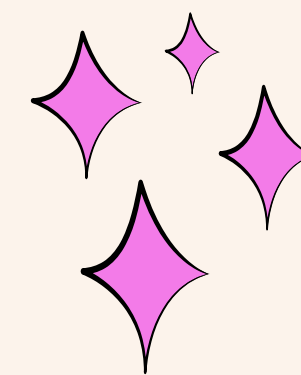
**Delia McDaniels:** One of the Teen Quartet, a group of choir kids who become Kimberly's new friends.

**Teresa Benton:** One of the Teen Quartet, a group of choir kids who become Kimberly's new friends.

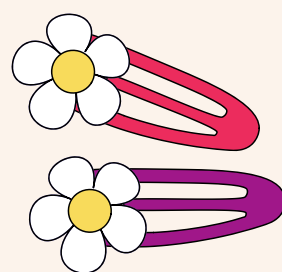
**Martin Doaty:** One of the Teen Quartet, a group of choir kids who become Kimberly's new friends.



# PRE SHOW DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

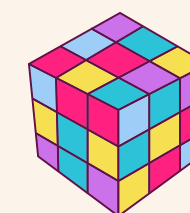


All these questions can be used for any class, but we have separated them by subject for your convenience!



## General Discussion Questions:

- How often do you think of your own aging process or mortality? What prompts you to think about it?
- Have you ever struggled to make friends in a new environment or community?
  - How did that feel? What was your approach?
- Can you name moral dilemmas that characters have faced in other stories (plays, movies, books, comics etc...) you know and explain how they handled them?



## Drama:

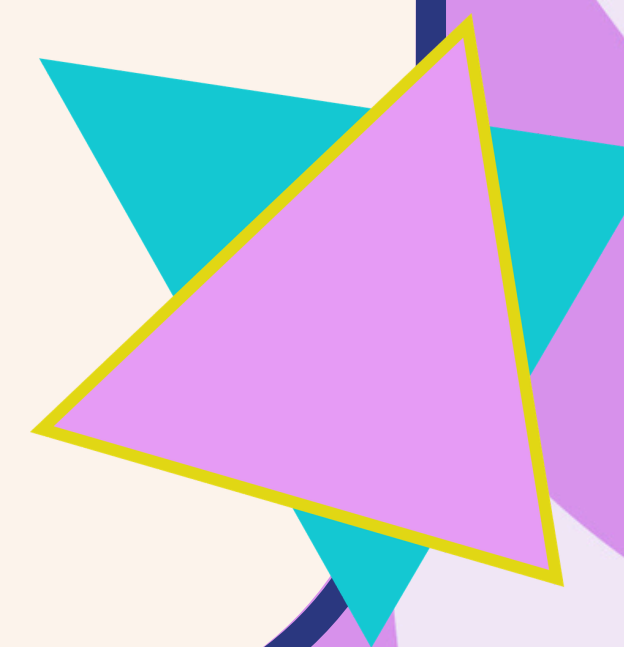
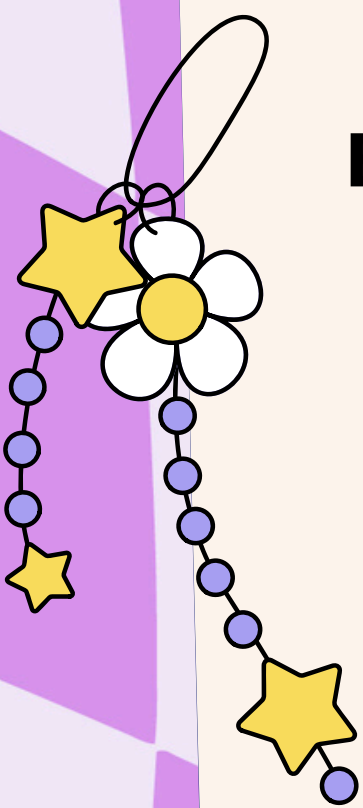
- What advice would you give a septuagenarian (person in their 70s) if they were going to act like a teenager today? What physicality should they embody?
- How do you prepare to play characters of other ages not your own? How do you create characters that are based in truth and not caricature?
- How are teens in the 90s different from teens today? How would their actions/mannerisms be different or the same?

## English

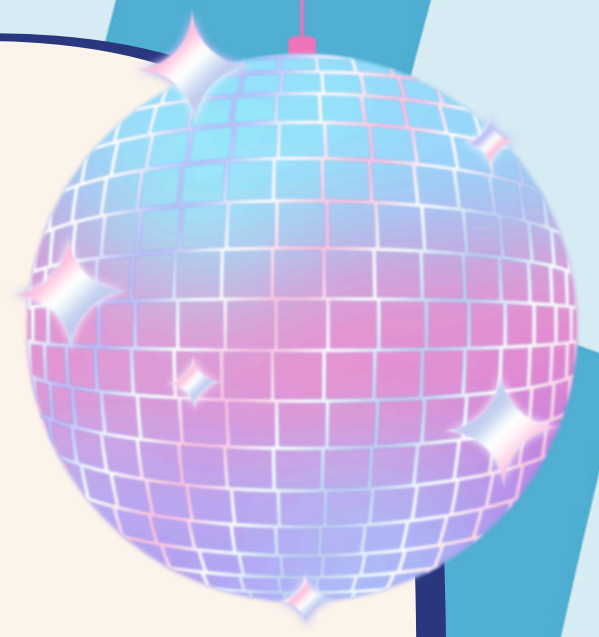
- Why do you think some texts remain timeless despite era specific subject matter, while other texts start to seem antiquated as society moves further from the era in which they occur?
- How are writers, playwrights, and authors effected by the accepted social practices of their time? How does it affect their work?
- Can you think of other literature/media that has challenged the status quo? How does that work translate to today?
- When characters in a story feel trapped, what factors (environmental, physical or emotional) lead them into decision making?

## Social Studies:

- What do you know about the late 20<sup>th</sup> century?
- Can you give examples of how world events have influenced pop-culture today?



# POST SHOW DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



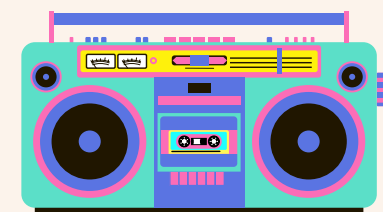
All these questions can be used for any class, but we have separated them by subject for your convenience!

## General Discussion Questions:

- How did the characters in this show learn to appreciate each other despite their differences?
- Did you anticipate that Kimberly would go along with Aunt Debra's scheme, why or why not?
- Kimberly's disease is never specified. Why do you think the playwrights made that choice?

## Drama:

- How did the actors physicalize their different ages? What specific mannerisms or choices did they make? (e.g. Kimberly's actor as a teenager or the adult actors playing teens!)
- How does the music move the story forward?
  - Did you have a favourite musical moment or motif?
  - Why do you think composers/lyricists create reoccurring musical themes? How does it support the storytelling?
- How do the production elements (e.g. lighting, sound design, set, and costumes) contribute to the piece?
  - What would you do differently?

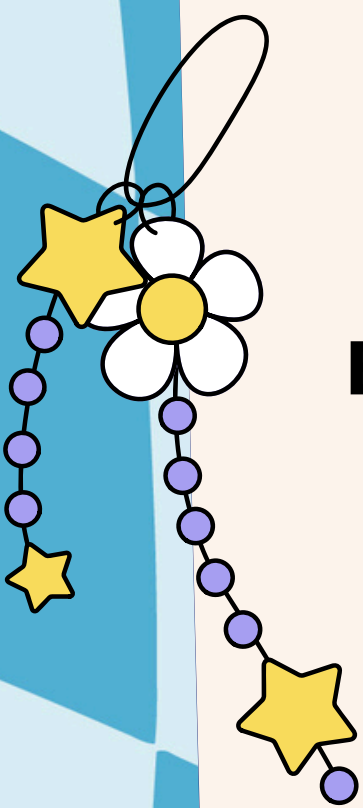


## English:

- What does autonomy and freedom mean to you? What did it mean to Kimberly by the end of the play?
- How do the characters change or stay the same throughout the musical?
  - What does this say about the broader state of humanity/society?
- Why do you think the creators never specify the exact name of Kimberly's disease?
  - How often do you see disability/chronic illness represented in teenagers in media?

## Social Studies:

- What do you know about Disability Justice?
  - How have views/discussions of chronic illness changed from the 90s to now?



# POST SHOW LEARNING ACTIVITIES

## Learning Activity #1

The story, *Kimberly Akimbo*, is set in rural New Jersey during the late 1990s and features a great deal of 90s pop culture. Ask student to select different eras of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and write a brief composition (2 to 3 paragraphs) explaining the locations, songs, styles, dances, and slang of their selected eras.

Alternatively, you could ask them to prepare a presentation, or an infographic.

Students can read more about the play's 90s pop-culture in this [\*New York Theatre Guide\*](#) article.

Suggested eras include:

- The vaudeville era of the early 1900s
- The jazz age of the 1920s
- The Big Bands of the 1930s
- The post-war era of the 1950s Rock'n'Roll
- The Swingin' Sixties and the Hippie
- 70s Disco
- 80s MTV and Hip-Hop
- Early 90s Grunge



**Extension Activity:** As students to explore the social and political contexts which shaped the pop-culture of their selected era. For example, the Big Band era provided relief from the privations of the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War.

### Curriculum Connections:

#### Social Studies:

- Students are expected to know philosophical and cultural shifts.
- Use Social Studies inquiry processes and skills to ask, gather, interpret, and analyze ideas, and communicate findings and decisions.

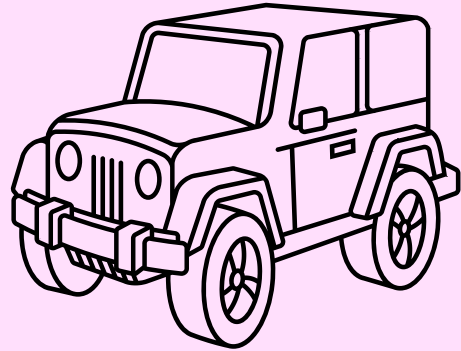
#### English Language Arts:

- Exploring stories and other texts helps us understand ourselves and make connections to others and to the world.
- Texts are socially, culturally, and historically constructed.
- Students are expected to be able to think critically, creatively, and reflectively to explore ideas within, between, and beyond texts

## Learning Activity #2

The performance ends with Kimberly and Seth on a faux safari sending a video message to Kimberly's unborn younger sister. The final song, *Great Adventure*, provides insights into all the exciting things Kimberly does or dreams of doing

Have students dream up their own great adventure and either create a story or some correspondence about their trip.



If you choose the story, it could be in the form of prose or a mini comic. If you choose the correspondence it could take the form of a letter, and email, or a video message. .

### Curriculum Connections:

#### English Language Arts:

- Exploring stories and other texts helps us understand ourselves and make connections to others and to the world.
- Students are expected to be able to think critically, creatively, and reflectively to explore ideas within, between, and beyond texts
- Students are expected to be able to respond to text in personal, creative, and critical ways

#### English Language Arts, Composition:

- Exploring stories and other texts helps us understand ourselves and make connections to others and to the world.
- Students are expected to be able to demonstrate speaking and listening skills in a variety of formal and informal contexts for a range of purposes
- Students are expected to be able to respond to text in personal, creative, and critical ways

### Learning Activity #3A Word Puzzles



Throughout the musical, Kimberly Akimbo, Seth references his fondness for and ability when it comes to word puzzles, specifically anagrams. Below is a description of a few different word puzzles along with an example of each. Add three more of your own samples beside each.

**Pangram** - "Pan" means "all" and this puzzle involves creating a sentence that uses all 26 letters in the alphabet.

For example: Jack's frozen lab themed party was quite extravagant.

**Anagram** - "Ana" means "back" and anagrams are a letter rearrangement puzzle, spelling new words using all of the letters in a given word.

For example: William Shakespeare = I'm a weakish speller

**Lipogram** - "lipo" means "to be lacking" and this is a puzzle challenge where you try to complete a full sentence without using a common letter, such as E. A very famous example is Earnest Vincent Wright's 1930s novel "Gadsby" which has over 50,000 words and no E in any of them!

For example: NO E - A man ran into a truck with his pumpkin.

**Pangram** - "Pan" means "all" and this puzzle involves creating a sentence that uses all 26 letters in the alphabet.

For example: Jack's frozen lab themed party was quite extravagant.



## Learning Activity #3A Word Puzzles

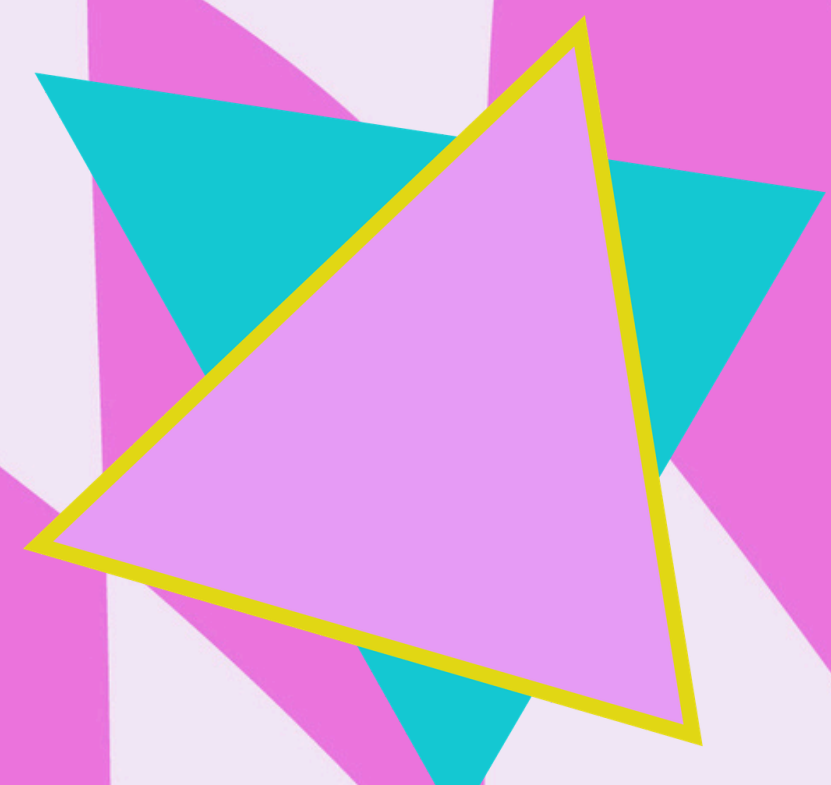
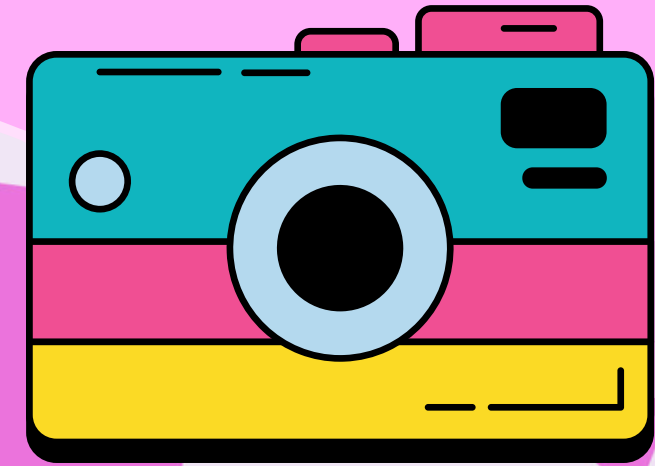
**Isogram** - "Iso" means "same" or "equal" so an isogram is a puzzle where you try to create a sentence or phrase that uses each letter the same number of times.  
For example: Lanna's deeds were written in red drool.

**Ambigram** - "Ambi" means "both sides". An ambigram is more of a visual puzzle that looks similar from both sides

Some examples:

Family  
Harry Potter

Try drawing an  
ambigram of your  
own!

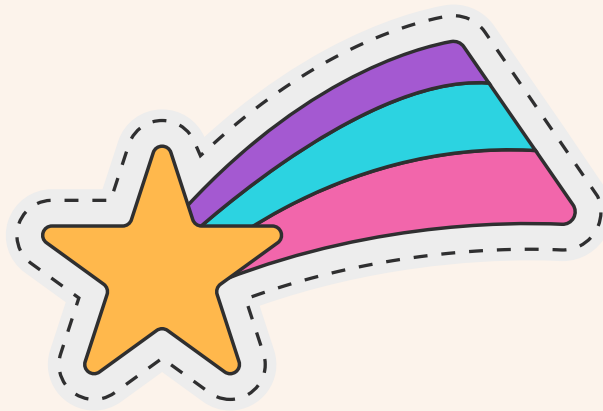


# Learning Activity #3B The Puzzle-istic Arts!

In scene 6, Seth introduces Kimberly (and by extension, the audience!) to the concept of anagrams as well as other playful devices like spoonerisms and palindromes. Use this as a jumping off point to have some fun with the English language.

Start by giving students the list of 10 anagrams which relate to school. Then challenge the students to create a palindrome out of their own names. If they need more letters, they can add a title like Mister or Misses. To extend the activity, have the students write down some things they like (foods, sports, hobbies etc...) and turn those into anagrams, then have them swap with each other and to try and solve the puzzles... or have them take turns sharing their anagrams with the entire class.

## Anagrams for students to solve:



asthmatics camels  
oily gob  
holy acidic peanuts  
he caters

Africa tee  
socialist dues  
mad rascals  
lets exit

raptor cred  
shy metrics

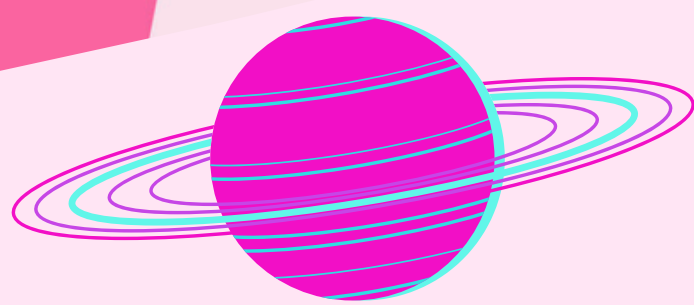


## Curriculum Connections *English Language Arts*

- Language and text can be a source of creativity and joy.
- Students are expected to know literary devices

## Answer Key:

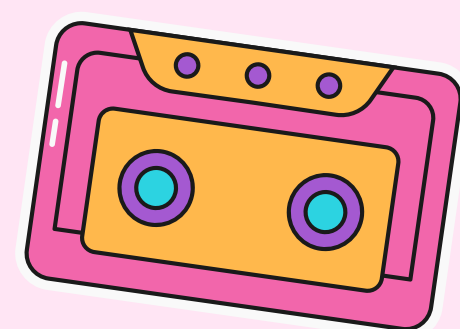
asthmatics camels = Mathematics Class  
oily gob = Biology  
holy acidic peanuts = Physical Education  
he caters = Teacher  
Africa tee = Cafeteria  
socialist dues = Social Studies  
mad rascals = Drama Class  
lets exit = Textiles  
raptor cred = Report Card  
shy metrics = chemistry



## Learning Activity #4: Make A Wish Letter

In the musical, *Kimberly Akimbo*, Kimberly writes a letter to the Make A Wish Foundation. Kimberly's letter lists three ideas that are interesting and unique to her. Imagine that you were able to have a wish fulfilled and write your own letter of request outlining a wish that you have.

Using a formal letter format including date, address and signature, and including as many details as possible, describe what your wish would be.

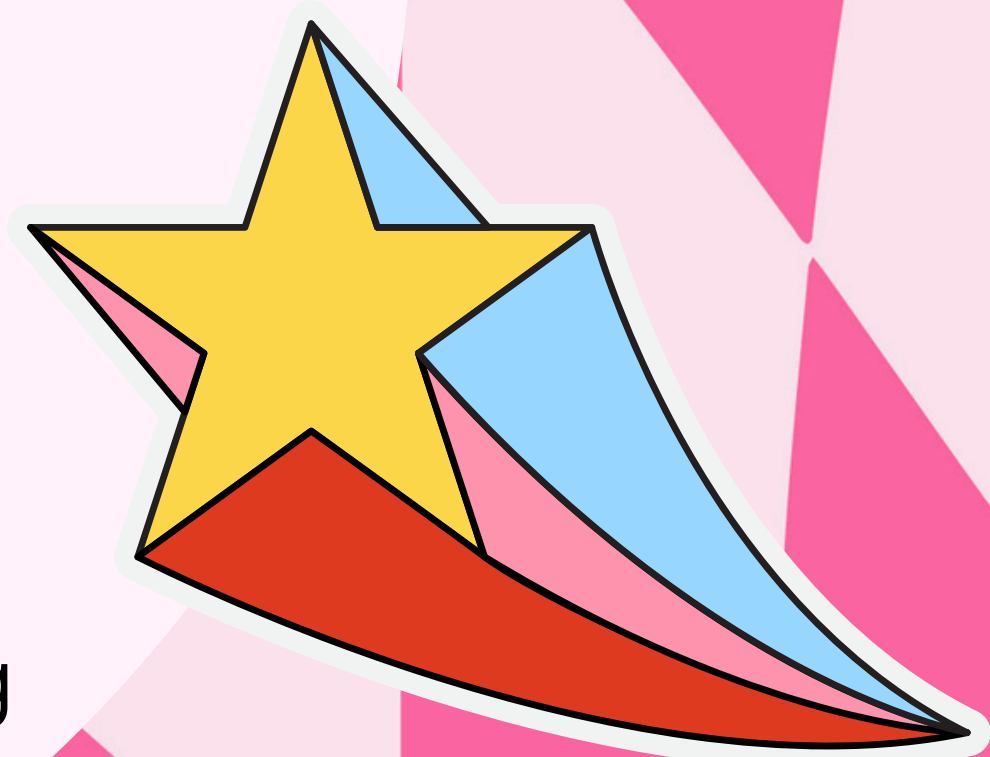


## Learning Activity #5: Show Choir Choreography

Throughout the show the characters Delia, Teresa, Martin and Aaron are desperately wanting to create a winning performance for show choir! There are generally many rules involved in a show choir performance. Today, you will create a show choir routine!

The rules for your show choir performance today are as follows:

1. Your piece can only be 30 seconds long (choose a song selection of your choice)
2. Your song choice must be appropriate for school use.
3. Your group can be between 3-6 people.
4. Your group must use one handheld prop of your choice.
5. Your group must create original choreography for your song selection.



## Learning Activity #6: Tableaus / Comic Strips

There are strong visual images created in the musical *Kimberly Akimbo*. We often refer to these as stage pictures. A director's job is to look for strong images and placement of people and props to help tell a story. What images stand out to you from the show?

Your turn! In groups of 4 - 6 people, create a series of 5 tableaus to tell the following stories. Or choose one you've been working on in class!

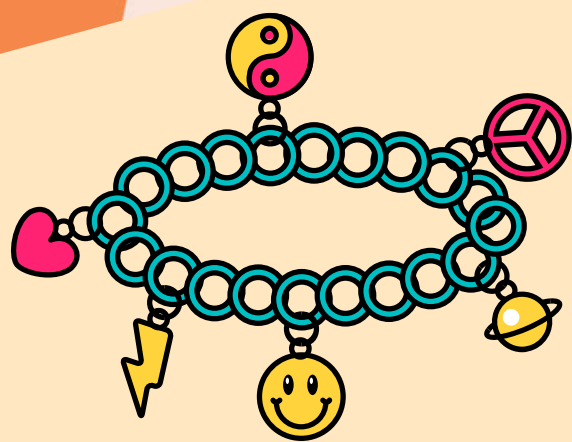
- **Red Riding Hood**
- **The Gingerbread Man**
- **Three Little Pigs**
- **Goldilocks and The Three Bears**
- **Humpty Dumpty**
- **Hansel and Gretel**
- **Snow White**
- **Cinderella**

A tableau is a 'frozen' picture that we create with our bodies.

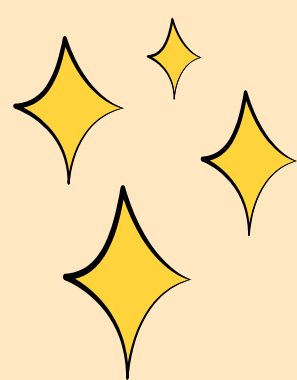
- Your group will be given a story to tell in only 5 tableaus or a "Comic Strip".
- Ensure that your story includes the beginning, middle and end of the story so the audience has a complete picture.
- Not everyone needs to be in every tableau.
- You may use your bodies to create the characters in the story or the environment (ie a tree or a table).
- Once your story is planned, rehearse your movements from one tableau to the next so that everyone knows where to be. Look at ways to enhance the story telling and clarity of each tableau in your rehearsal.
- Remember that facial expressions also tell story.
- When all groups are ready you can share. Have the audience close their eyes while you set up tableau one. The instructor can tell everyone to open their eyes when you are ready. Hold the tableau for several seconds.
- When the instructor calls for the audience to close their eyes quickly move to your next tableau.
- At the end of your 5 tableaus the teacher will call "end scene" and you can relax your bodies.

When your group's comic strip (all 5 tableaus) are done, discuss as a class:

1. What is the story the group was telling?
2. What images stood out as strong?
3. How did placement of bodies help to create strong images?
4. What would you have added if you could add a 6th tableau?
5. What would the group who created the tableaus change if they could? Why?



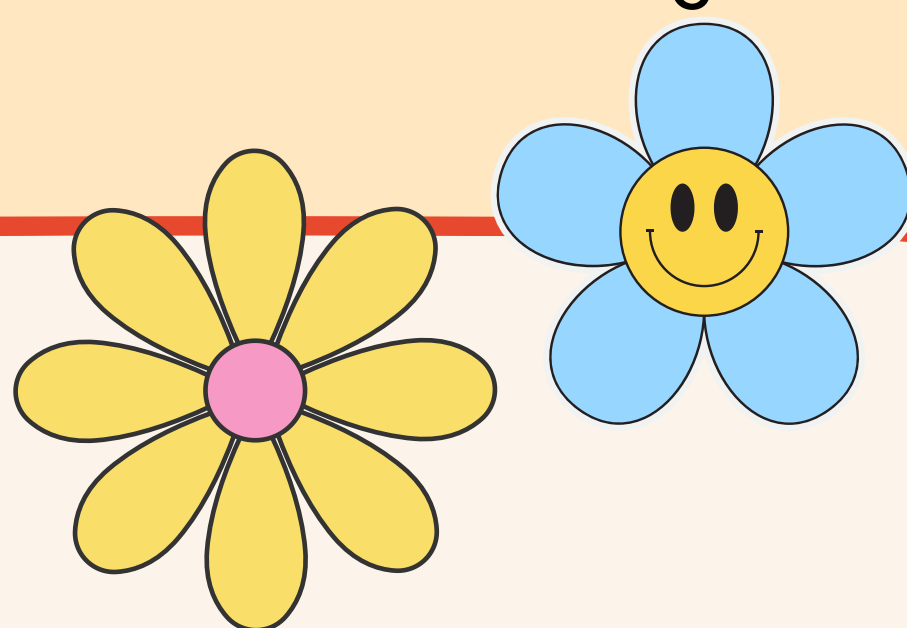
## Learning Activity #7: Headcases



Create a scenario in which you, a friend and one of your parents are involved in an awkward conversation. Think of the scene in the play where Kimberly, Seth, and Buddy are in the car. Set the scene and create the cringy dialogue, then figure out the inner monologue of each character involved.

If this is being done in drama class, have the students act it out, pausing to share the thoughts as monologues. If this is being done in a language arts class, a comic strip would be ideal, allowing students to use speech and thought bubbles. For students who are reluctant to draw, you could allow them to collage.

Alternatively, if the scene is being acted out, you could pause the performance and have other students call out what they think the characters are thinking.



### Curriculum Connections:

#### English Language Arts

- Language and text can be a source of creativity and joy.
- Students are expected to be able to think critically, creatively, and reflectively to explore ideas within, between, and beyond texts
- Students are expected to know the elements of visual/graphic texts

#### Drama

- Drama offers dynamic ways of exploring our identity and sense of belonging.
- Drama cultivates collaboration through critical reflection, creative co-operation, and the exchange of ideas.
- Students are expected to know character development

# Resources:

## CRISIS SUPPORT

If there is a life-threatening safety concern, please call 9-1-1 or go to the Emergency Department at your nearest hospital.

**Suicide prevention hotline: 1-800-784-2433**

**BC Crisis Line: 310-6789**

**Kids Help Phone: 1-800-668-6868**

**Harm reduction: Toward the Heart**

## INDIGENOUS CRISIS SUPPORTS

KUU-US Crisis Response Services Line, available 24/7 - **1-800-KUU-US17 (1-800-588-8717)**

Hope for Wellness, available 24/7- **Call 1-855-242-3310 or chat online at www.hopeforwellness.ca**

Métis Crisis Line, available 24/7- **1-833-MétisBC (1-833-638-4722)**

## BC Bereavement Helpline

The BC Bereavement helpline is committed to facilitating the provision of care and support to the bereaved, caregivers and service providers and to increase public understanding of grief as a life process through education, support, advocacy, networking and dissemination of information.

**Phone number: 604-738-9950 or toll free 1-877-779-2223**

**Website: BC Bereavement Helpline**

## SMART Recovery

The SMART Recovery 4-Point Program® helps people recover from all types of addiction and addictive behaviours, including: drug abuse, drug addiction, substance abuse, alcohol abuse, gambling addiction, prescription drug abuse, sexual addiction, and problem addiction to other substances and activities.

The 4-Point Program® offers specific tools and techniques for each of the program points:

1. building and maintaining motivation
2. coping with urges
3. managing thoughts, feelings and behaviours
4. living a balanced life

**No referral is necessary, everyone is eligible.**

**Website: <https://www.vch.ca/en/service/smart-recovery#overview>**

## BC Mental Health and Substance Use Services (BCMHSUS)

BC Mental Health and Substance Use Services (BCMHSUS), part of the Provincial Health Services Authority, provides specialized treatment to people with the most severe and complex mental health and substance use disorders in British Columbia, as well as health care services for people who are incarcerated in provincial correctional facilities.

**Website: <https://www.bcmhsus.ca/about-us/getting-help>**

## **KIMBERLY AKIMBO – Glossary of Terms (Grades 9–12)**

### **Progeria**

A rare genetic condition that causes a person to age much faster than normal. Kimberly has a condition similar to progeria, which affects her appearance and health.

### **Bergen County, New Jersey**

The setting of the musical. It is a suburban area in the United States, shaping the everyday, ordinary world of the characters.

### **Skater Planet**

A local roller-skating rink where teens hang out. It represents a social space for young people in the story.

### **Teen Quartet**

Four high school students who appear together often. They comment on events, sing as a group, and help show teenage social dynamics.

### **Make-A-Wish Foundation**

A real organization that grants wishes to children with serious medical conditions. Kimberly applies to it as part of the plot.

### **Anagram**

A word or phrase formed by rearranging the letters of another word or phrase. Seth enjoys making anagrams, and this becomes important to his relationship with Kimberly.

### **Wordsmith**

Someone who enjoys playing with language, words, and puzzles. Seth is described as a wordsmith.

### **Carpal Tunnel Syndrome**

A medical condition affecting the hands and wrists. Pattie, Kimberly's mother, has surgery for this condition.

### **Swear Jar**

A container where people put money after using swear words. In the play, it becomes a recurring household detail.

### **Show Choir**

A school music group that combines singing and choreography. The Teen Quartet is involved in show choir.

### **Loyalty**

Being faithful to someone or something. Characters in the play struggle with loyalty to family members and to themselves.

### **Juvenile**

Refers to someone who is under the legal adult age. This term comes up in relation to age, responsibility, and legality.

### **Fraud**

Illegal deception for personal gain. Debra is involved in schemes that involve fraud.

### **Mailbox Fraud**

A federal crime involving tampering with mail or mailboxes. This becomes part of Debra's plan.

### **Video Diary**

A recorded message meant to be watched later. Pattie records videos for her unborn child.

### **Life Expectancy**

The average number of years a person is expected to live. Kimberly is aware of her shortened life expectancy.

### **Suburban**

An area outside a major city, often residential. The play takes place in a suburban environment.

### **Awkward**

Socially uncomfortable or unsure. Many characters describe themselves or others as awkward.

### **Coming of Age**

A story type that focuses on growing up and becoming more independent. Kimberly Akimbo fits this category.

### **Teacher Use Notes**

This glossary supports:

- Reading and listening comprehension
- Vocabulary development
- Understanding context and plot
- Accessible learning for diverse classrooms