

# BACK TO FUTURE THE MUSICAL



## EDUCATION PACK

SECTION 2: SCREEN TO STAGE  
(POST-SHOW MATERIALS)

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# TURNING A FILM INTO A THEATRICAL MUSICAL

BY BOB GALE



***“We didn’t want everything in the movie to be there, because otherwise you could just stay home and watch the movie. We wanted it to be completely a theatre experience, so that you say, ‘Yeah, I’ve seen the movie, but, wait, you got to go see it on stage because they do some things that are just going to blow your mind...’”***

Throughout history, the theatrical stage has turned to source material of many types. With **Back to the Future**, we knew that many people would see the musical without having seen the movie, so it was very important that they could still fully understand the show. There are things in the musical that are especially enjoyable for those who have seen the movie, but it was important to us that EVERYONE have a fully entertaining and understandable experience no matter what. In writing the book and creating the show, we always kept that in mind.

But these are two very different mediums. A movie has an almost unlimited scope. Thanks to visual effects, almost anything that can be imagined can be put on screen. In theatre, we are limited by what can practically and safely be done on a stage with live performers. We can’t do a car chase on stage. We can’t even splash water on someone because the puddle it makes could cause someone to slip and get hurt. Scenery and props must be stored in the wings of the theatre between scenes, so those items have to be designed with limited storage space in mind. Actors need time to change their wardrobe between scenes, so the show must be written to allow for this. And in both movies and theatre, there never seems to be enough money in the budget to do everything we want.

***“The process of translating any story to the stage or the screen always becomes an exercise in creative problem solving.”***

A good analogy is creating a painting. In a movie, we can choose from a vast array of colours. Our ‘paint box’ includes wide angle exterior scenes, close-ups, the ability to immediately cut from one scene to another, and to intercut two or three scenes that are taking place simultaneously. In musical theatre, we don’t have those ‘colours’, but we have others that are not available in a movie, such as song and dance, stage lighting, and live performers who can actually talk to the audience. So, the process is to understand what colours (tools) we have and how to use them to their best effect. If we were going to paint a landscape and had every colour except green, we might paint a desert or ocean scene, but we wouldn’t try to paint a jungle or a golf course. We shouldn’t remind people of the colours we don’t have. Instead, we want them to appreciate the colours that we do have. Simply put, it’s better to find a substitute for a particular element than to present that element poorly.



# TEACHER NOTES

## FAILURE BEFORE SUCCESS

### LEARNING TIME (1 HOUR)

LESSON OBJECTIVE: TO UNDERSTAND THE THEME OF 'FAILURE BEFORE SUCCESS' AND HOW THIS CAN BE APPLIED TO PRESENT DAY ROLE MODELS.



### RESOURCES

- ✓ Slide Deck 1 [DOWNLOAD SLIDE DECK](#)
- ✓ Student Worksheet 1 - Failure Before Success
- ✓ Post-it Notes

### INTRODUCTION (10 MINS)

Project the following question (**Slide 2**):



**In the production, Doc Brown says:**

**"YOU KNOW HOW MANY TRIES IT TOOK EDISON TO GET THE LIGHT BULB RIGHT?"  
How many do you think it was?**

When students have had time to guess and discuss how many times. Project **Slide 3**:

**"We have the scene in the show where Doc Brown says,**

**'YOU KNOW HOW MANY TRIES IT TOOK EDISON TO GET THE LIGHT BULB RIGHT?' IT WAS LIKE 10,000, I BELIEVE, 10,000 EXPERIMENTS WITH DIFFERENT FILAMENTS UNTIL HE FOUND THE RIGHT ONE THAT WORKED. FAILURE IS REALLY IMPORTANT TO GET TO SUCCESS, AND I THINK THAT'S A LESSON THAT ISN'T TAUGHT WELL ENOUGH."**

**BOB GALE, WRITER**

### DISCUSSION:

Are you surprised by this? If not, why? Do you agree that failure is important to succeed?

### MAIN ACTIVITY 1 - THE DREAMERS (20 MINS)

Hand out Student Worksheet 1 - Failure Before Success and project Slide 5. Give students five minutes to complete Tasks 1 & 2: Highlight the challenges and moments of failure in their lives, which ultimately led to success and a favourite quote from a modern 'hero'. Take five minutes to share ideas.



## DISCUSSION

Discuss the following questions on **Slide 5**:

- 1) Why are the scientists important role models for Doc?
- 2) How is Doc viewed by society, as someone who is trying to create something innovative, new or deemed 'impossible'?
- 3) Have you ever failed before finally succeeding? Share ideas.
- 4) Is it failure or is it just problem solving?

## MAIN ACTIVITY 2 - CREATIVE PROBLEM-SOLVING (20 MINS)



Share **Slide 6**. Ask students to brainstorm ideas about how translating the film, **Back to the Future**, onto the stage would have involved 'failing' and overcoming challenges:

**Slide 6:** All the creatives involved with the show loved how challenging **Back to the Future** was, and how much problem-solving was involved. How do you think they had to work, to overcome these challenges? What qualities and skills do they need?

Divide your class into groups and allocate one of the following moments in the production to each group:

- The DeLorean driving to 88mph
- Time-travel sequences
- The DeLorean flying
- Doc climbing up the clock tower
- Biff chasing Marty through the school (end of Act 1)

Feedback and discuss ideas.

Share **Slide 7: Qualities**. Why are the following qualities important when creating theatre:

- Resilience
- Perseverance
- Self-belief
- Determination
- Aspiration

Share **Slide 8**: What the creatives said about working on the show.

## FINISHER (10 MINS)



Share **Slide 9**: Your Future Self. The final task is for students to focus on something they want to achieve in the future and picture themselves achieving it. As their future self, looking back, what advice would they give to your younger self about 'failure before success'?

Post ideas as 'exit tickets' or create a collage on the wall to share final thoughts and reflections.

# STUDENT WORKSHEET 1

## FAILURE BEFORE SUCCESS

“THESE VISIONARIES, MY HEROES, ALL HAD DREAMS AND THEY NEVER STOPPED BELIEVING IN THEM.”

**DOC BROWN**

### TASK 1

Read through the following information and highlight the challenges and moments of failure in their lives, which ultimately led to success.

#### ALBERT EINSTEIN (1879-1955)

Einstein was an extraordinary physicist, whose ideas about space and time changed the world. He left school at the age of 15, as he struggled with the discipline but still wrote his first scholarly paper at the age of 16, in which he discussed the force of magnetism. He failed to find work as a maths and physics teacher so decided to pursue a PHD instead. He then went on to develop his ‘theory of relativity’, which he developed over ten years, and was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1921, an award for major scientific accomplishments.

#### MARIE CURIE

Maria Skłodowska was born in Warsaw, Poland in 1867, as the youngest of five children. Her family was poor, and she lost her mother at a young age but was undeterred in terms of her focus and determination to study and learn. She studied physics and mathematics at university and then met Pierre Curie, whom she married in 1895. Her research work was physically demanding and often dangerous, but she persevered over many years and is now remembered for her discovery of radium and polonium, and her huge contribution to finding treatments for cancer. In 1903 she was awarded the Nobel Prize for Physics.

#### STEPHEN HAWKING

Stephen Hawking is one of the most influential scientists of our time. He went to study at Oxford University aged 17. At the age of 21, he was diagnosed with motor neurone disease (MND) and told that he only had two years to live. He defied doctors and lived to the age of 76. He developed theories about how the world began and wrote the book ‘A Brief History of Time’ selling over 10 million copies!

### TASK 2

Highlight your favourite quote from a modern hero about the importance of failure. Share it with the class and talk about why you chose it.

“THE REAL TEST IS NOT WHETHER YOU AVOID THIS FAILURE, BECAUSE YOU WON’T. IT’S WHETHER YOU LET IT HARDEN OR SHAME YOU INTO INACTION, OR WHETHER YOU LEARN FROM IT: WHETHER YOU CHOOSE TO PERSEVERE.”

**BARACK OBAMA**

“FAILURE IS ANOTHER STEPPING STONE TO GREATNESS.”

**OPRAH WINFREY**



“IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO LIVE WITHOUT FAILING AT SOMETHING, UNLESS YOU LIVE SO CAUTIOUSLY THAT YOU MIGHT AS WELL NOT HAVE LIVED AT ALL - IN WHICH CASE, YOU FAIL BY DEFAULT.”

**J.K. ROWLING**

“I’VE MISSED MORE THAN 9,000 SHOTS IN MY CAREER. I’VE LOST ALMOST 300 GAMES. 26 TIMES, I’VE BEEN TRUSTED TO TAKE THE GAME WINNING SHOT AND MISSED. I’VE FAILED OVER AND OVER AND OVER AGAIN IN MY LIFE. AND THAT IS WHY I SUCCEED.”

**MICHAEL JORDAN, BASKETBALL PLAYER**

## STUDENT WORKSHEET 2

# BIFF TANNEN

Biff Tannen plays a key role in both the film of **Back to the Future** and the stage musical. He bullies George, challenges Marty, and makes unwanted advances towards Lorraine.



### KEY VOCAB IN FOCUS - THE ANTAGONIST

The antagonist within a narrative or story actively opposes, or is hostile towards, the main character, known as the protagonist (Marty). This helps to create conflict within the story or play.

### DID YOU KNOW?

When the stage production of **Back to the Future** was being developed, a song was written all about Biff, which explored his upbringing and family. This was not used in the final production but helped to develop his backstory.

## TASK 1

In this exercise you are going to explore Biff's backstory and what led him to become the antagonist. In groups or pairs, draw an outline of Biff on a piece of paper, which represents him as a ten-year-old boy. On the inside, write ideas about how he is feeling and, on the outside, the external factors which impact on his life - for example, his family, how he is treated by his peers, his family, at school etc.

## EXTENSION ACTIVITY:

Can you create a timeline of the specific events in Biff's life, from childhood to adulthood?

## DISCUSSION:

To what extent does someone's 'backstory' affect them in later life?

Task 2: Biff is a complex role as he is not merely the stereotypical 'villain'. As the genre and style of the production is musical comedy, there are also lighter, funnier moments. If you were directing the actor playing Biff, how would you strike a balance between communicating both elements?

Here are some sentences to get you started:

- ✓ I would direct the actor playing Biff to...
- ✓ If I were directing Biff, I would...
- ✓ When directing the actor playing Biff, I would want to portray / communicate / convey to the audience....



# STUDENT WORKSHEET 3

## EXPLORE CONTEXT

ACT 1, SCENE 9 - 1955, THE CAFÉ

GOLDIE

YEAH, I'M - MAYOR! NOW THAT'S A GOOD IDEA...  
I COULD RUN FOR MAYOR..!

LOU

A COLORED MAYOR. THAT'LL BE THE DAY.

GOLDIE

YOU WAIT AND SEE, MISTER CARRUTHERS!  
I WILL BE MAYOR! I'LL BE THE MOST POWERFUL MAN IN  
HILL VALLEY AND I'M GONNA CLEAN UP THIS TOWN!

### MAYOR GOLDIE WILSON

We first meet Goldie Wilson in 1955, when he is only 25-years-old and working in the café where Marty meets George for the first time. He is an aspirational character, singing the song 'Gotta Start Somewhere', all about how he is going to work hard to achieve his dreams. When Marty returns to 1985, he has been elected as Mayor of Hill Valley!

### CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

The Civil Rights Movement started in the mid-fifties and was a political campaign to abolish racial segregation and discrimination in the United States. This involved sit-ins and marches which lasted for well over a decade. Rosa Parks became known as the 'Mother of the Civil Rights Movement', when she refused to give up her bus seat for a white passenger. This key event took place in December 1955.

### WHAT IS THE AMERICAN DREAM?

"You can accomplish anything if you just put your mind to it" - George McFly

The American dream is the belief that anyone, regardless of where they were born or what class they were born into, can attain their own version of success in a society in which upward mobility is possible for everyone.

### CREATIVE PRESENTATION TASK

Imagine you are Goldie Wilson in 1955. Create a manifesto for your Mayoral campaign. What issues will you need to address? How might this differ from a manifesto in 1985 or 2022?

### DEBATING TASK

How do you feel about The American Dream today? Is it possible and realistic? What recent events have impacted on your opinions and ideas?

## STUDENT WORKSHEET 4

# CEDRIC NEAL - INTERVIEW



“PEOPLE WILL GET TO KNOW GOLDIE WILSON’S JOURNEY. BECAUSE IF YOU THINK ABOUT IT, GOLDIE WILSON’S CHARACTER IS THE EPITOME OF THE AMERICAN DREAM. THAT IF YOU WORK HARD ENOUGH, IF YOU PUT YOUR MIND TO IT, YOU CAN ACCOMPLISH ANYTHING.”

**CEDRIC NEAL**

Cedric Neal originated two key roles in **Back to the Future The Musical** - Goldie Wilson and Marvin Berry. The character of Goldie Wilson only appears briefly in the film, but he plays more of a central role in the stage musical. We interviewed him during his time working with the show about playing the role:

### Q. HOW DID GOLDIE WILSON’S CHARACTER DEVELOP?

The song that I do, ‘Gotta Start Somewhere’, is actually the first time that the George McFly character hears the term ‘If you put your mind to it, you can accomplish anything.’ But during the first workshop, that song ‘Gotta Start Somewhere’ was exactly 90 seconds long of a development of the workshop. Nick Finlow, our musical supervisor, and John Rando, our director, along with Colin Ingram in the workshop presentation, said that there’s something to this. There’s something to this song. There’s something to Cedric doing the song. So we need to expand it.

It’s now a five-minute production number with four key changes that involves everybody in Hill Valley. So that’s how that character came to grow. I just think it was Bob Gale’s way of saying the story of Martin McFly and George McFly and **Back to the Future** is the epitome of the American dream. There’s no other character in the show that epitomizes or manifests the American dream like Goldie Wilson does.

### Q. WHAT HAVE YOU ENJOYED MOST ABOUT PLAYING THE TWO CHARACTERS - GOLDIE WILSON & MARVIN BERRY?

The thing that I’ve enjoyed most about playing Goldie Wilson and Marvin Berry is that it’s representation of a black American man who’s not traumatized. Who’s not tokened. Who’s not, ‘Yes sir, master. No sir, master.’ The thing I’ve enjoyed about Goldie and Marvin Berry is both of those characters only bring joy when on stage. Joy in different ways. It’s just I cannot leave the stage when I’m in Act One being Goldie Wilson without a smile on my face, because I know, this may sound conceited, may sound puffed up, but I promise you, that’s not where it’s coming from: I know that when that Goldie Wilson character leaves that stage after ‘Gotta Start Somewhere’, somebody in the audience that wasn’t smiling before is smiling now.

And that I get to be the character to say, ‘Look, yeah, I’m working in a diner right now. Yeah. I have to go to night school, because I haven’t had the best education, but that’s not going to stop me.’ That’s almost identical to Cedric’s story in that I’m from the hood in Dallas, Texas. Where we vary is I had a very good education. I went to one of the top performing arts high schools in the United States. But being from the hood, I used to want to be a classical opera singer.

It was at an early age, my mother and my father taught me that I could be anything I wanted to be. Just because we were in the hood didn't mean that I had to stay there and that my dreams couldn't surpass being a basketball player or a rapper. So that's what I enjoy about Goldie and Marvin Berry. Marvin Berry is just the coolest ... I think Goldie Wilson is on 10 all the time. He's trying to make it happen, trying to fight the system and be that mayor. Whereas Marvin Berry is chill. He's a cool man. He's a ladies man.

***“Both those characters just bring me so much joy.”***

### **Q. HOW DO YOU DISTINGUISH BETWEEN THE CHARACTERS IN TERMS OF YOUR CHARACTERISATION?**

They're coming from two different backgrounds. They both had struggles in different manners. Goldie's struggles led him to be in the diner, dropping out of school with the aspirations of going back to school. So that's what drives Goldie. Goldie is soulful, determined. Whereas Marvin Berry has probably been playing music his entire life. It's in his bones. Chuck Berry's cousin. It's in their family. He doesn't get excited about much like Goldie Wilson.

***“Marvin Berry is just cool. He doesn't go above a seven. Goldie Wilson is a mover, animated when he talks, when he sings through song. Marvin Berry is just chilled. Goldie's heightened. Marvin is grounded.”***

### **Q. HOW DID THE FILM INFLUENCE YOU IN TERMS OF YOUR RESEARCH AND THE WAY IT'S INFORMED YOUR PERFORMANCES, DO YOU THINK?**

Greatly. Goldie is in the movie for, I think, 45 seconds. But having said that, whenever I say to anybody that I play Goldie Wilson in **Back to the Future**, they immediately quote all of Goldie's lines. The same inflections that Donny Fullilove does them in the movie. So I knew going into rehearsals that that diner scene, because the lines in the diner in the movie are the same lines in the diner in the show. So I have to deliver them exactly like Donald Fullilove in the movie. When we were in Manchester, I wore my diner hat on straight. Then I went back and looked at the movie after we closed, and I noticed in the movie that he has it tilted to the side. So for the London run, my hat is shifted now. I've developed a relationship with Donald Fullilove, who was the original Goldie. We're social media friends. He's handed the baton to me and told me how much people love this character. He's just been so supportive. Then with the Marvin Berry character, the only thing that I really took from the movie was that they were party-goers and that he was from a cool background. But you don't cross him.

### **Q. WHAT DO YOU THINK HAVE BEEN THE REAL CHALLENGES OF WORKING ON THE SHOW OR MAYBE PLAYING THE TWO CHARACTERS?**

The most challenging thing was back in the workshops. We did six workshops. I've hit on this a little bit, but making sure that there was a distinction between this one black man playing these two black characters. It still happens to this day. People give more attention to the Goldie Wilson character because he's in the show more, but less to Marvin Berry's. I'm offended when people say that I only play Goldie Wilson. I play Goldie Wilson and Marvin Berry. So I wanted to make sure that Marvin got as much notice as Goldie. Even though Goldie's numbers are flashier and his character's flashier; but they're flip sides of the same coin. I just wanted both characters to be distinct. So that was the main challenge.

***“I want to make sure that people know that black people did exist in 1955 and 1985 US. It was still a socially divisive place, and it still is to this day. But that there were black people in Hill Valley, California. I want both of those characters to be respectable, absent of trauma and clearly distinctly two different African American men.”***

# STUDENT WORKSHEET 5

## ROSANNA HYLAND - INTERVIEW



“GETTING TO SEE THESE CHARACTERS COME TO LIFE HAS JUST BEEN... I MEAN, THE WORK THAT THE OTHER ACTORS ARE DOING IS JUST INCREDIBLE. IT WAS SO EXCITING AND A TOTAL JOY AND A TOTAL PRIVILEGE TO JUST GET TO BE IN HILL VALLEY WITH THEM, TO GET TO PLAY WITH THEM ON STAGE. IT WAS LIKE BEING IN THE WORLD’S MOST EXCITING SANDPIT. IT’S JUST SO MUCH FUN!”

Rosanna Hyland originated the role of Lorraine Baines in **Back to the Future The Musical**. We asked her how she found playing the role in three different ways, at different ages. Here’s what she said:

### PLAYING LORRAINE AT THE START OF THE SHOW (1985)

So, for 1985 Lorraine, the first version you see of her, things haven’t gone so well for her. She’s had a harder life. She doesn’t take care of her health. She drinks a lot. She’s shuffling and heavy and tired and resigned and a little nostalgic, and it’s been more about bringing those qualities rather than an age.

### PLAYING LORRAINE AT THE END OF THE SHOW (1985)

For Lorraine (at the end of the production) life has turned out better for her. Her family are thriving. She has a successful career. She takes care of her health. She’s looking forward to her future still. She’s more self-possessed and engaged and confident and there’s spring in her step. It’s more about those qualities for her. At the end of the production, even though she’s the same age as she was when the first time you see her, she feels younger. It’s actually an interesting exercise in you think playing a certain age is important, but actually it’s more about that character’s life journey because you can be a really youthful 47 or you can be a very old 47.

The first time you see her, it’s like life’s really taken a toll. And then, the second time you see her, she’s a bit more of like how you might see a 47-year-old today, a bit more millennial. She dresses more fashionably, and she’s taken better care of herself and she’s maintained a bit more youth. I hate to say it that way, but there’s a lightness to her.

### PLAYING LORRAINE IN 1955, WHEN SHE IS 17

And then, for 17-year-old Lorraine, I’ve tried to lighten up her voice a little and make her less grounded and a little bit more highly strung, but really just focusing on the qualities of her being very fixated on Marty McFly and just totally head over heels. She’s really keyed up and hot and bothered and really excited.

***“For me, it’s just been about trying to play the characters as a product of their circumstances, rather than getting hung up on an age.”***

### HOW THE COSTUMES HELPED HER TO DEVELOP HER CHARACTER:

A really good actor will probably try and get their shoes on as quick as they can. If you can get hold of your show shoes, what your character’s actual shoes, it can change your gait and the way you walk and your entire posture. And so, as much as costumes are important, shoes tend to be, for a lot of actors, really important.





## KEY VOCAB IN FOCUS - GAIT

A person or character's manner of walking. For example, 'he entered the stage with an awkward, heavy gait, which portrayed...'

### TASK 2

Write a paragraph about the actor's performance of Lorraine Baines, focusing on her movement and vocal choices. You must include:

- ✓ Key drama terms
- ✓ Evaluative, rather than descriptive language.

Here's an example:

***The actor's brilliant, nuanced performance effectively communicated the changing character of Lorraine Baines throughout the production. Her portrayal of the downtrodden, resigned, and tired version of Lorraine at the start of the production was convincingly communicated using a low centre of gravity, slightly slumped posture, and a weary facial expression. A clear contrast in her characterisation was evident during the '1955' scenes when she is 17. The actor used a much lighter, more excited, breathy vocal tone and a repeated gesture of clutching her school folder, which clearly conveyed her youthfulness and constant pining for Marty.***



# STUDENT WORKSHEET 7

## MUSICAL THEMES

“FOR ME, ONE OF THE MOST EXCITING THINGS HAS BEEN HEARING THE SCORE COME TO LIFE LIVE EVERY NIGHT. IF ONLY EVERYONE COULD HAVE BEEN IN THE ROOM THE FIRST TIME THE CAST GOT TO HEAR THE BAND, THE ORCHESTRA PLAYING, ALAN SILVESTRI’S SCORE. I’LL JUST NEVER FORGET IT.”

**ROSANNA HYLAND (LORRAINE BAINES - ORIGINAL LONDON CAST)**

**Back to the Future the Musical** has three distinct musical styles - **the fifties, the eighties** and the **film score** composed by Alan Silvestri. Let’s use our skills in listening, performing, and composing to explore and understand the music from the show in more detail, with the help of Musical Director Jim Henson.

### THE MAIN THEME

#### TASK 1

Look at the following notation of the Main Musical Theme, composed by Alan Silvestri and play it several times on the keyboard.

MAIN THEME

The musical notation for the Main Theme is as follows:

**Staff 1 (Melody):** Treble clef, 4/4 time. Notes: B $\flat$  (quarter), C (quarter), D (quarter), E (quarter), F (quarter), G (quarter), A (quarter), B (quarter). The interval from F to B is highlighted in red. There are two triplet markings over the notes G-A-B and B-C-D.

**Staff 2 (Chords):** Treble clef, 4/4 time. Chords: F/A (quarter), G(SUS4) (quarter), G (quarter), C(SUS4) (quarter), C (quarter).

#### TASK 2

Now play just the first three notes, highlighted in RED. These are called the tritone.

#### KEY VOCAB IN FOCUS - THE TRITONE

The interval encompassed by three consecutive whole steps. For example, from F to B (the whole steps F-G, G-A, and A-B).





#### TASK 4

Can you play the Tritone again but drop down one interval to create a perfect fourth? (see below)

#### KEY VOCAB IN FOCUS - DIATONIC

The music theory term “diatonic” is usually intended to mean “of the scale”. For example, if you’re playing in the key of C major and you’re using C major scale notes, then you would say that the notes you’re using are *diatonic*.

#### THEME VARIATION - DIATONIC

The image displays three systems of musical notation for piano. Each system consists of a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The first system shows a melodic line in the treble and a bass line in the bass. The second system continues the melody with a tritone interval. The third system features a triplet in the treble and a bass line with a sharp sign.

#### Q. WHAT EFFECT IS CREATED BY THIS?

A large rectangular area with ten horizontal blue lines, intended for a student to write their answer to the question.

# STUDENT WORKSHEET 8

## THE SECONDARY THEME

The Secondary Theme is often heard in conjunction with the main theme when played in its entirety.

### TASK 1

You are now going to focus on the Secondary Theme and follow the notation. What instruments do you hear?

SECONDARY THEME

You will have heard this theme throughout the show at various moments. Can you evaluate the effect created for the audience in the following two key moments, when this theme is used?

- 1) When Marty successfully travels back to 1985 at the end of the show and full brass in the orchestra is used.

*"This created the effect of...."*

2) When George reunites with Lorraine after rescuing her from Biff. Orchestrated with strings and with woodwind taking the lead, it is played at a slower tempo.

*"This created the effect of..."*



## STUDENT WORKSHEET 9

# COMPOSITION

"THERE ARE SEVERAL MINOR MOTIFS WHICH YOU HEAR THROUGHOUT THE SHOW. THIS ONE IS USED TO REPRESENT SOME FORM OF **DANGER** TO THE CHARACTERS AND OFTEN HEARD IN THE BASS SECTION OF THE ORCHESTRA DURING DRAMATIC MOMENTS, SUCH AS THE FIGHT AT THE END OF ACT ONE."

**JIM HENSON, MUSICAL DIRECTOR**

MOTIF - Danger



### KEY VOCAB IN FOCUS - CELESTE

The celeste, also called a bell-piano, is a struck idiophone operated by a keyboard. It looks like an upright piano but has smaller keys and a much smaller cabinet.

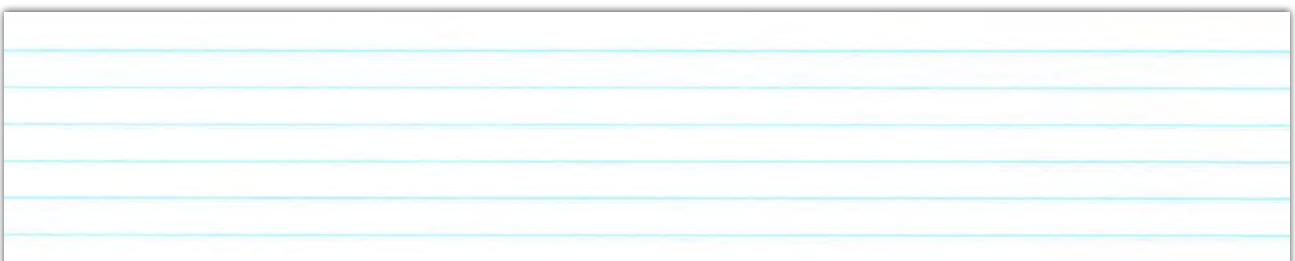
#### TASK 1

Create your own motif which conveys 'danger'. Your success criteria should be:

- 2 to 4 bars in length
- Fast tempo

#### TASK 2

Can you adapt the motif so it can be played on another instrument? Can you transpose it? Can you change the tempo? What is the effect?



### TASK 3

Doc has his own little set of musical characteristics in Alan's score.

Listen to or play the following theme and discuss how this theme communicates Doc's character:

MOTIFs - Doc related

E B $\flat$  E B $\flat$

### TASK 4

Select one of the following characters from **Back to the Future** and create a motif which communicates their character:

- George McFly
- Biff
- Jennifer Parker
- Goldie Wilson



# TEACHER NOTES

## JIM HENSON

Here are Musical Director Jim Henson's personal reflections on the main themes from the production:

### THE MAIN THEME

This theme makes strong use of the tritone, as marked above. This naturally creates some tension and adds to the drama of the theme. It has a strong sense of adventure about it.

Alan Silvestri uses the first two bars of the theme as a mini motif throughout the score and also uses the tritone interval to create some smaller motifs, using this tension to highlight the perils of time travel (e.g. heard on flute as Marty writes a letter to Doc explaining about his future death).

### THE SECONDARY THEME

This theme crops up at many places and is often used with differing orchestrations to provide a variety of dramatic effects. When played with full brass section and up tempo, it sounds triumphant and victorious, (e.g. when Marty successfully travels back to 1985) and when orchestrated with strings and woodwind taking the lead, and played at a slower tempo, it underscores some of the more romantic moments when characters come together (e.g. when George reunites with Lorraine after rescuing her from Biff in the car).

### THEME VARIATION - DIATONIC

By taking the tritone of the main theme and dropping that interval to make a perfect fourth, Alan Silvestri makes a more diatonic theme variation. This theme has a warmer more reflective feel to it, and often underscores moments where the characters are more introspective. (e.g. when Doc and Marty discuss their time together in 1955 in the diner before they attempt their plan to send Marty back to the future).

### MOTIF - DANGER

There are several minor motifs which you hear throughout the show. This one is used to represent some form of **danger** to the characters and often heard in the bass section of the orchestra during dramatic moments, such as the fight at the end of Act One. It is also played on a high celeste and can be heard in the background when Doc describes to Marty that his brother is in danger of disappearing due to Marty's interference with the time-continuum.

MOTIF - Danger



## THE DISCOVERY MOTIF

Alan uses chords that are related with the tritone interval to create other little motifs. This motif is used to represent a discovery moment for characters and appears often in muted trumpets (e.g. when Doc is learning that his inventions will actually work after Marty has travelled back to 1955).



## THE TIME-TRAVEL MOTIF

This one illustrates moments relating to time-travel, along with other falling motifs with a dissonant characteristic. These uneasy tonal relationships illustrate the dangers and pit falls of time-travel (e.g. when Marty looks at the photo of his siblings and sees them fading away).



## MOTIFS FOR DOC

Doc has his own little set of musical characteristics in Alan's score. Listen out for a more staccato rhythmic feel, and again, built on chords related through the tritone. These represent his manic brain activity and quirky thought processes. For example, it is heard when Doc is working out how to send Marty back to 1985 during the underscore for the song 'Future Boy'.



# STUDENT WORKSHEET 10

## ORCHESTRA FACTS

THE SHOW BAND FOR **BACK TO THE FUTURE THE MUSICAL** CONSISTS OF 14 PLAYERS:

**JIM HENSON** - MUSICAL DIRECTOR / KEYS 1

**STEVE HOLNESS** - ASSISTANT MUSICAL DIRECTOR / KEYS 2

**ROB ECKLAND** - KEYBOARD

**MARK COLLINS** - KEYBOARD COVER

**DUNCAN FLOYD** - GUITAR 1

**OLLIE HANNIFAN** - GUITAR 2

**MIKE PORTER** - DRUMS

**JESS WOOD** - PERCUSSION

**LAUREN WEAVERS** - OBOE / COR ANGLAIS

**SIMON MARSH** - ALTO SAX / TENOR SAX / FLUTE / CLARINET

**RICHARD ASHTON** - FRENCH HORN

**PABLO MENDELSSOHN** - TRUMPET / FLUGEL

**GRAHAM JUSTIN** - TRUMPET / FLUGEL

**SIMON MINSHALL** - TROMBONE / BASS TROMBONE

### DID YOU KNOW?

One percussionist plays a wide variety of percussion, including tuned percussion: timpanis, vibes, xylophone, glockenspiel, tubular bells, crotales and also congas, tambourines, snare-drum, shakers, triangle, bell tree, cymbals and a vibraslap!

There are 44 music cues in the show (compared to 36 in the concert version of the film score), with approximately 2900 bars of music in total.



Here's a still from the MD Camera which the band, DSM and cast watch to see Musical Director Jim Henson conducting, throughout the show.

# STUDENT WORKSHEET 11

## WRITING FOR STAGE AND SCREEN

One of the early scenes in the stage musical, in Act 1, is when Marty meets Doc Brown in Twin Pines Mall Car Park. In this scene, he reveals the DeLorean Time Machine for the first time, and this leads to Marty travelling back in time to 1955.

In the following activities, you are going to explore how the Twin Pines Mall sequence was adapted and translated from the film version of **Back to the Future**, onto the stage.

### KEY VOCAB IN FOCUS - SIGHTLINES

A key consideration in theatre is sightlines. Sightlines means always taking into consideration the view of the audience, to ensure that they can see the actors, the main action and the set pieces at all times, regardless of where they are sitting in the auditorium.

### TASK 1

In the Twin Pines Mall scene from the film, Doc explains how to operate the time circuits to Marty. This dialogue takes place inside the DeLorean, with Doc sitting in the driver's seat and Marty filming.

Watch the same scene in the stage production:



### DISCUSSION:

1. Why does this scene need to be written and staged differently, compared to film?
2. Why are sightlines important to consider here?



## TASK 2

A script for a film is called a **'screenplay'**, whereas the script for the musical is known as the **'book'**. Bob Gale wrote both the screenplay and the book for the stage musical. Look carefully at the following extract from the screenplay, when Doc is showing Marty the time circuits for the first time. How do you think it differs from the book for the stage musical, in terms of content and format?



*Exterior location (outside)*      *Scene heading - describes location*      *Time of day*

EXT. TWIN PINES MALL PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Brown motions Marty toward the DeLorean. ——— *Action - always written in the present tense*

BROWN ——— *Character name*

C'mon, I'll show you how it works. ——— *Dialogue*

Marty is a bit skeptical, uneasy. Brown is like a kid who wants to show off a new toy. Marty continues videotaping as Brown sits in the driver's seat, explaining.

BROWN (CONT'D)

First, you turn the time circuits on.

Brown turns a handle on the console. An array of indicator lights go on inside.

INSERT - TIME DISPLAYS ——— *An extreme close-up which can be filmed later*

Three colored time displays show the month, day, year and time.

*Action described*



## KEY VOCAB IN FOCUS - STORYBOARDS

“Storyboards are a way to present the screenplay visually and are particularly important in complicated sequences with lots of action. They’re a way for everyone working on the movie to see what the director has in mind. They can also help in the budgeting process. Simple dialogue scenes are rarely storyboarded. Because the storyboards are drawn in advance of knowing what the location or set will look like, they may not look exactly like the finished film. That’s why one of the panels is blank with the description, ‘Camera Angles to be determined at location.’”

**BOB GALE**

Here’s one of the original storyboards from **Back to the Future**:



TPM-57

AFTER SOME DIALOGUE,  
BROWN DROPS INTO THE  
DRIVER'S SEAT AND  
WAVES MARTY OVER --



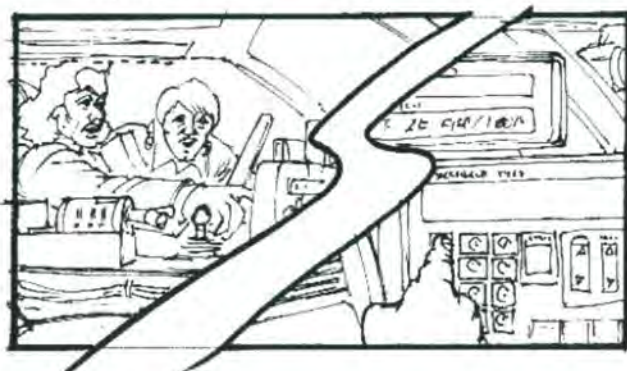
TPM-58

REVERSE - AS MARTY  
LEANS IN.  
BROWN:  
"FIRST, YOU TURN ON  
THE TIME CIRCUITS..."



TPM-59

INSERT - BROWN  
FLIPS THE SWITCH --




TPM-60

INTERCUT --  
BROWN & MARTY TWO-SHOT,  
INSERTS OF APPROPRIATE  
INSTRUMENTS

### **TASK 3: WRITE A SCREENPLAY**

1. Select a key moment from a play or novel you have studied.
2. Create a six-frame storyboard of the scene, with annotations.
3. Finally, create a one-page screenplay version of the scene. Ensure that you include all of the necessary details of a screenplay: Scene Heading, INT/EXT, Character Names, Dialogue, Action & INSERTs.
4. 'Pitch' your screenplay to your class and use your storyboard to present your ideas.
5. Work with actors to film your screenplay you have created!





# STUDENT WORKSHEET 12

## SET DESIGN

There are multiple settings in **Back to the Future** in two different time periods. Production Designer Tim Hatley, who was responsible for designing all the costumes, props and set, faced a huge challenge. However, this is something which he says he loved most about working in the production - the challenges and problem-solving involved to create such a ground-breaking theatrical experience!

One location or setting which you saw multiple times throughout the production was Doc's Workshop. This featured in the opening scene, in 1985. Then in Act 1, when Marty goes back in time, we see Doc's workshop in 1955.



### AN 'IN ONE' SCENE

Doc's workshop is positioned downstage (near to the audience). There are a few reasons for this. Firstly, the audience can see the detail in the set, with all the props and items, which tell us so much about Doc as a character and whether it's set in 1985 or 1955. Tim Hatley explains why this detail is so important:

"That's why we've crammed it with all those props and things, and a lot of those things are influenced by the film and the choices. And they're all real things, and we found them, and I think it's quite important that things feel real. When you're zooming in like that on something that's right at the front of the stage, I think it's really important to get the detail in."



However, Tim Hatley highlights a much more practical reason why it needs to be downstage:

“It became quite clear to me that it needed to be what we would call an ‘in one’ scene, where it comes in at the front, so therefore, we can be changing and preparing a following scene behind it.”

### TASK 1

Look closely at the following image of Doc’s Workshop in 1955. Annotate both of the images with ideas for how the set and props convey:

1. Setting and time period - how do we know the scene is set in 1955?
2. Character & Personality - what does this setting tell us about the character of Doc Brown?
3. Mood and Atmosphere - what is the mood and / or atmosphere communicated through the set design?



### MINI-PROJECT - CREATE A SUSTAINABLE DESIGN

“I’VE ALWAYS MADE THINGS OUT OF OLD BITS OF CARDBOARD, AND I STILL DO. FOR ME, THAT’S NEVER CHANGED. THAT’S ALWAYS THE WAY I’VE BUILT A SET.”

#### TIM HATLEY

A key feature of Doc’s Workshop is all the found and re-purposed objects. He keeps and re-uses everything!

## TASK 2

Read the following definition of 'sustainable design' and discuss why you feel it is important when designing set, props, and costumes.

### WHAT IS SUSTAINABLE DESIGN?

Within the context of theatre, this means focusing on sets, costumes, and props with a minimal carbon footprint, which may include using objects and materials which have been recycled or re-purposed.

## TASK 3

Now, you've explored the amazing set design from **Back to the Future** you are going to create your own set model or costume. However, it must be 'sustainable'.

Create a set design for one of the scenes in the show or design a costume for a futuristic Doc Brown.

Possible Resources: A shoebox, cereal boxes, toilet roll tubes, off-cuts of material, old garments, newspaper, found objects, foil.

## TASK 4

Share your design creatively through a costume parade or a set model-box presentation.

# STUDENT WORKSHEET 13

## LIGHTING DESIGN

Tim Lutkin's sophisticated lighting design for **Back to the Future The Musical** utilises a range of lanterns, colours and special effects. We asked him what the considerations were for translating such an iconic film onto the stage. He spoke to us about creating 'black art illusions':

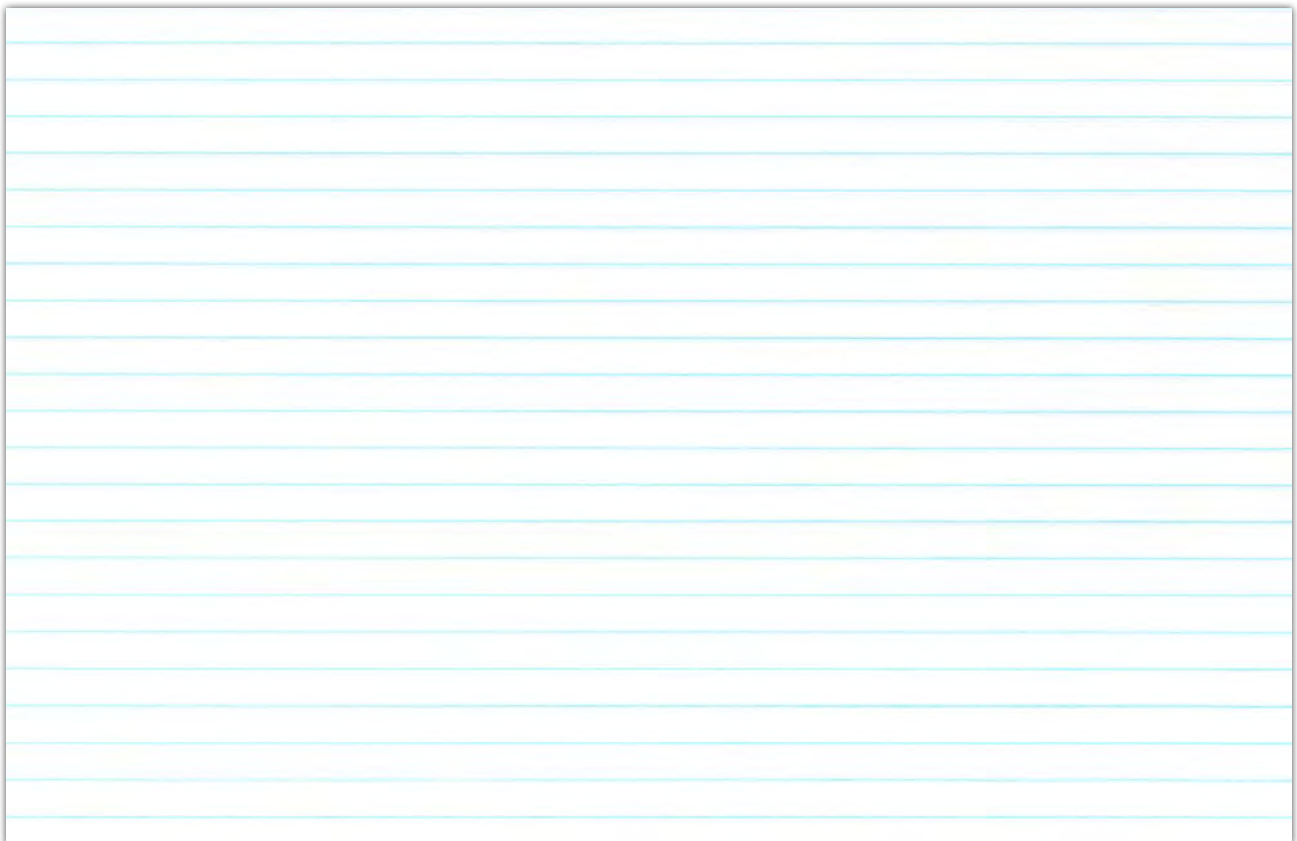
"The overall design vision for the lighting on the show developed from me and Tim Hatley talking about 'how do you deliver iconic film moments in a box space?' And one of the big things we do with illusions is called 'black art illusions'. This is, basically, where everything is covered in black velvet. And then you can get away with pretty much anything because you only light the object you want to see or the person you want to see.

***"When you define a space around it, which we call 'framing', and the black box space has been framed with the edges of the LED portals."***

"You've essentially got black floor, black wings, and a black video wall. And then we control the whole levels of light and video within that box to give you what we'd call negative space, which is all the black space. So then, we frame it with those LED lights. And then you add some content on the video wall, and you add the skeletal bits of scenery. And then suddenly, you've got a toolbox to be able to deliver all these visuals inside it."

***"So, we decided that was the concept. We're going to deliver all these iconic moments within this black box."***

**Brainstorm:** Which moments in the show do you think were created using 'black art illusions'?



### KEY VOCAB IN FOCUS - LEDS

Stage lights known as 'LEDs' use light-emitting diodes as a light source whereas traditional stage lighting often use halogen lamps. LEDs have high light output but a lower power consumption. There are three main types of LEDs: PAR Cans, strip lights and moving heads. All three of these LEDs are used in **Back to the Future The Musical**.

### CREATING THE EFFECT OF A ROCK CONCERT USING LIGHTING

Tim says that one of the first decisions he made as a lighting designer was choosing the 'rig'. The lighting 'rig' is the structure, often suspended above the stage, that holds the lights. The lights on the rig can then be focused on the actors and scenery on stage to create specific effects. Tim chose a rig which enabled him to create the effect of a rock concert:

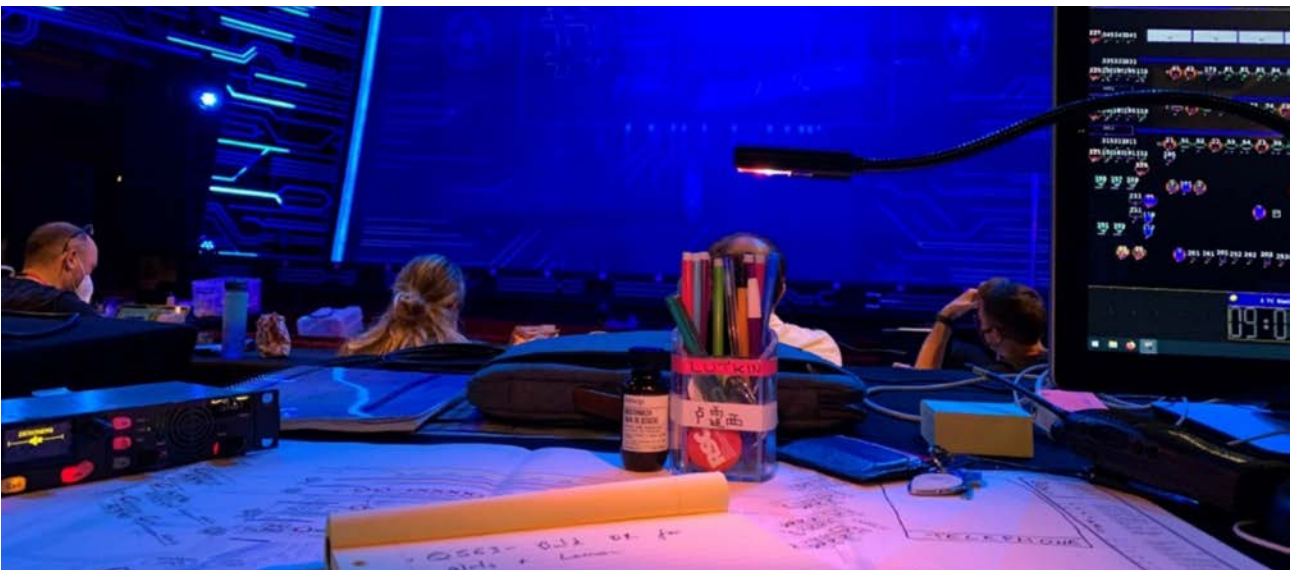
***“The show has this rock concert drive all the way through.”***

“So in the lighting rig, we decided to create a complete concert lighting rig. So it's just rows of moving lights that we can fly in and create a big old concert, moving lights around, blast a load of smoke on. But it also provides us all the tools we need to recreate everything inside the black box. And that is what's quite unique about the show, that the lighting rig is very much geared towards the concert. But obviously the other thing to say that might be useful for students, is that as technology's moved on in the last 10 years, especially LED technology... most of our rig is LED. Not all of it, but most of it.”

***“A theatre rig is now looking more like a concert rig anyway. They're all moving lights. So that's a big design choice that we went on. And that means that we've essentially got an extremely flexible lighting rig.”***

### KEY VOCAB IN FOCUS - INTELLIGENT LIGHTS

When Tim refers to 'moving lights', these are also known as 'moving heads' or 'intelligent lights'. A new generation of fixtures called 'intelligent lights' can move to different focus points, as well as changing their beam size and edge hardness.



Tim Lutkin watching the Technical Rehearsal



## CREATING AN INTIMATE SPACE USING LIGHTING

Much of the show has a 'concert' feel to it, with bold colours and moving lights. However, there are more intimate moments in the show, for example, the scene in Act 1, when Marty wakes up in Lorraine's bedroom. We asked Tim Lutkin how he chose to light this scene:



"In the bedroom scene, you've got a small scene with two cast members that need to deliver this intimate moment where Marty's realizing that he's actually got these feelings for his mother, and she's got feelings for him, but you're in a 1000 plus-seat auditorium. And Tim (Hatley's) got this beautiful little house truck. And then to define the space from upstairs, we only light the area downstage of the truck, to keep it intimate. And then another layer that works with theatre lighting, to hone in even further, is actually adding a layer of blue, deep blue. There's a deep blue island around the house truck, and the (LED) portals glow a little bit, and there's a tree piece that flies in that's got deep blue lighting on it.

"And it's the same whenever we want to define a small space on stage, is we define the area that they're going to play it in, and then add a surround in a deeper, saturated colour.

"It does two things. It gives you a different energy in the space and creates a tone for the scene. But it also helps your eye be less distracted by the light that's bouncing from the space because it fills it in with a saturated colour. So that's a product of doing things in a black box space, because you're able to do that.

"It acts as a blank canvas and a general thought for students is, the blank canvas for a lighting designer, as opposed to a white canvas for an artist, is the blackout. And you've got to think about building a lighting state from black."

### KEY VOCAB IN FOCUS - SATURATED

A measure of how intense, rich or vivid a colour is. A lighting state which is described as 'saturated' is made of deep and powerful colours, rather than light tones or white light.

In contrast, a lighting state described as 'de-saturated' is one which combines different colours and is therefore 'muted'.

## TEACHER NOTES

### PRACTICAL EXPLORATION

The show **Back to the Future The Musical** was developed over many years. The performers were able to explore their roles with the Director John Rando in the rehearsal room, to develop detailed characterisations. Here is a selection of rehearsal techniques which you can use with your students, to explore the characters of Doc and Marty:

## REHEARSAL TECHNIQUE 1

### EXPLORE ACTIONS AND OBJECTIVES

The character's objective is their conscious desire for a scene. In any given scene, a character must always be actively pursuing their objective. A handy trick to ensure that actors are always actively playing their objectives (rather than passively playing the emotion) in any given scene is to use a technique called **actioning**. Actioning the scene is when an actor takes their character's lines and applies an action (a verb or doing word) to each line to help guide their vocal delivery. With actioning you are always specifying how your line is affecting someone else. (Helpful Hint - if it's not doing anything to the person you are talking to then the line is not active!)

A) Divide your class into pairs and label them A and B. A's will play Doc Brown and B's will play Marty Mcfly. Hand out **Student Worksheet 14 - Actioning and Objectives**. Students can practically explore playing the 'objectives' and 'actioning the text', using the ideas in brackets.

#### REFLECTION

See how this affects their vocal choices. The actions which they choose should inform their use of pitch, pace, pause, volume and tone and ensure it is varied from line to line.

B) Handout **Student Worksheet 15 - Explore Actions and Objectives**. Students can practically explore this section of text and jot down ideas for the objectives and actioning in the scene.





# STUDENT WORKSHEET 14

## ACTIONING AND OBJECTIVES

SCENE XII: INT. DOC'S LAB - NIGHT, 1955

UNIT 1 (EXAMPLE)

Doc's objective: **I want to try out my latest invention.**

Marty's objective: **I want to make Doc understand that I have come from the future.**

Suddenly, getting an idea, Doc puts a strange geodesic contraption on his head.  
Doc opens the door and a frantic Marty enters.

MARTY (I ALERT you)

Doc!! Doc!! Thank God you're here! I need your help!!

DOC (I HALT you)  
Don't say a word!

(I IMPRESS you)

I'm going to read your thoughts! Hold that right there...

DOC slaps a suction cup onto Marty's forehead. It's wired to a tall machine full of tubes and dials. Doc twists some dials, then concentrates.

DOC (I MYSTIFY you)

I perceive...that you've come...from a great distance...

MARTY (I ADMIRE you)  
Yes!

DOC (I INTERRUPT you)  
Wait -- don't tell me!

(I PROBE you)

You're... collecting donations for the coast guard youth auxiliary!

MARTY (I OPPOSE you)  
No!

DOC (I ACCUSE you)  
You want me to buy a prefabricated nuclear bomb shelter!

MARTY (I EDUCATE you)  
My name is Marty McFly and I'm from the future.

(I INFORM you)

I came here in a time machine that YOU invented.

(I COMMAND you)

And now I need your help to get back to the year 1985.

DOC (I WARN you)  
My God! Do you know what this means?  
It means...

(I DISILLUSION you)

This damn thing doesn't work at all!

(I RILE you)

Six months of labor down the drain!

Doc removes it in frustration and paces. Marty goes to him.

# STUDENT WORKSHEET 15

## EXPLORE ACTIONS & OBJECTIVES

Doc's objective.....

Marty's objective.....

MARTY

(I ..... you)

Stop! Wait, I can prove I'm from the future!

(I ..... you)

See? My drivers license. I haven't even been born yet!

DOC

(I ..... you)

Fake I.D. I've got three of 'em.

MARTY

(I ..... you)

And a photo of my brother and sister and me.  
Look at her sweatshirt. Hill Valley Class of 1984!

Doc takes the photo and puts it into an opaque projector. The image appears on a screen so the audience can see it, a vacation photo with Marty flanked by his siblings, all full figure. But Dave is a bit out of focus.

DOC

(I ..... you)

Pretty mediocre photographic fakery.

(I ..... you)

Look - your brother's out of focus!

MARTY

(I ..... you)

Doc, ya gotta believe me. I'm not making this up!

DOC

(I ..... you)

Then tell me, "Future Boy," who's president of the United States in 1985?

MARTY

(I ..... you)

Ronald Reagan.

DOC

(I ..... you)

The actor? Then who's vice president - Daffy Duck?

(I ..... you)

I've got better things to do than play games with you, kid.

(I ..... you)

Good night, future boy.



# TEACHER NOTES

## REHEARSAL TECHNIQUE 2

### TASK 1 - DISCUSS WITH STUDENTS:

Q. What are the factors which may affect a character's physicality?

Q. How would you describe the physicality of Doc?

### TASK 2

Ask the students to walk around the space and tell them that you are going to call out different body parts and that they have to 'lead' with that body part as they walk around the space. Get them to really exaggerate the leading part at first (this should not look naturalistic) and then work on scaling it back so that the leading body part is more subtle. Some examples to use are to lead with -

- The tip of your nose
- Your heart
- Your pelvis
- Your right shoulder
- Your left big toe
- Your belly button

Let the students have fun with this and see how far they can take the physicality before scaling it back.

### TASK 3

In their pairs, ask the students to experiment with performing the scene whilst also leading with a specific body part. Again, they should exaggerate this at first and then do the scene again but this time making the leading part more subtle. Ask them to explore which body parts they think work best for their characters. For example, young and confident Marty might lead with his pelvis resulting in a confident strut. In contrast the older and more cerebral Doc Brown may lead with his nose or head, resulting in a slight stoop of the shoulders.

## REHEARSAL TECHNIQUE 3

# ROLE ON THE WALL

### TASK

Students to create a 'Role-on-the-wall' for either Marty or Doc. Here is a modelled example for Marty. They should include details of: family, hobbies, beliefs and given circumstances.

# STUDENT WORKSHEET 16

## ROLE ON THE WALL EXAMPLE



**CURIOUS**

**17 YEARS OLD**

**“MY NAME IS MARTY MCFLY AND I’M FROM THE FUTURE. I CAME HERE IN A TIME MACHINE THAT YOU INVENTED. AND NOW I NEED YOUR HELP TO GET BACK TO THE YEAR 1985”**

**STANDS UP FOR THE PEOPLE HE CARES ABOUT**

**PLAYFUL**

**LIVES IN HILL VALLEY**

**LOYAL**

**A LEADER**

**OPEN MINDED**

**SKATEBOARDER**

**IS OFTEN LATE**

**CONFIDENT**

**CAN DRIVE**

**HAS A DAD CALLED GEORGE MCFLY**

**SHORTER THAN BIFF**

**FAVOURITE SONG - JOHNNY B GOODE**

**HAS AN OLDER SISTER CALLED LINDA MCFLY**

**HAS AN OLDER BROTHER CALLED DAVE MCFLY**

**DOESN’T LIKE REJECTION OR BEING UNDERESTIMATED**

**FAVOURITE COLOUR - RED**

**WEARS AN ORANGE VEST AND SPORTS SHOES**

**LIGHT-HEARTED**

**LOVES JENNIFER**

**A RISK TAKER**

**AMBITIOUS**

**HAS A MUM CALLED LORRAINE MCFLY (FORMERLY BAINES)**

**HAS A GIRLFRIEND CALLED JENNIFER PARKER**

**NEEDS TO GET BACK TO 1985**

**PLAYS GUITAR AND SINGS IN A BAND CALLED THE PINHEADS**

**LIKES MEATBALLS AND SPAGHETTI, THE SMELL OF SPRING, AND LUCKY CHARMS**

**DOESN’T LIKE ALLIGATORS, READING ASSIGNMENTS AND BULLIES**

**WEARS CALVIN KLEIN PANTS**

**ADVENTUROUS**

**NEEDS TO GET HIS DAD TO KISS HIS MUM AT THE ENCHANTMENT UNDER THE SEA DANCE IN ORDER TO SURVIVE**

**GRANDPARENTS ARE CALLED STELLA AND SAM BAINES**

**IS THE YOUNGEST OF THREE SIBLINGS**

**CARES ABOUT DOC BROWN, WANTS TO SAVE HIM**

**ATTENDS HILL VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL**

**HAS BEEN GOING OUT WITH JENNIFER FOR SEVEN MONTHS**

**DOESN’T LIKE REJECTION OR BEING UNDERESTIMATED**

**FAVOURITE SUBJECT AT SCHOOL - MUSIC**

### KEY

- GIVEN CIRCUMSTANCES (FACTS ABOUT THE CHARACTER GIVEN IN THE TEXT)**
- CHARACTERISTICS THAT ARE IMPLIED IN THE TEXT**
- IMAGINED TRAITS TO HELP BUILD MY CHARACTER**
- KEY QUOTE FROM CHOSEN SCENE**

# TEACHER NOTES - REHEARSAL TECHNIQUE 4

## EXPLORE STAGE SPACE & POSITIONING

The relationship between Doc and Marty is totally unique and there is so much chemistry between the two actors playing Doc and Marty. John Rando, the Director, would certainly have worked with the actors to develop this on stage chemistry and how they stage each scene. When looking at staging we must not only explore how the characters move in relation to the space, set and props around them but also how they move in relation to each other and how this conveys relationship, status and individual objectives.

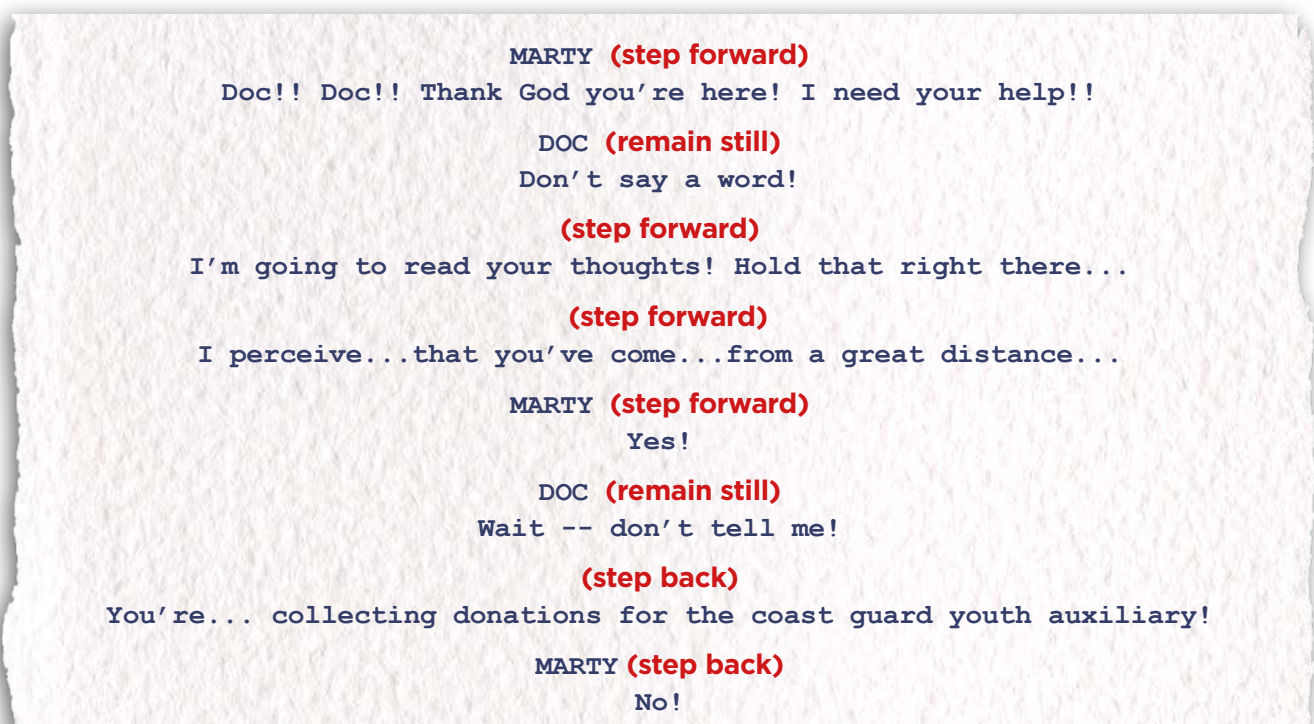
### TASK 1

Ask the students to get into pairs, with one person playing Doc Brown and the other playing Marty McFly. The students are going to perform the following extract but tell them they are only allowed to make three movement choices throughout:

- A step towards the person they are talking to
- A step away from the person they are talking to, or
- A definite choice to remain where they are.

Students can only make their move when they are speaking, taking it in turns like pieces on a chess board. (Top Tip – have the students begin the exercise standing four paces apart from each other if the space allows to prevent any collisions mid scene.)

**Important** – tell the students to let their character’s lines influence their choice of movement. So, taking the chosen extract the movement could look something like this –



Although the movements back, forth and still should be definite and over-emphasised (this should not look naturalistic) the students may find that their chosen movements convey the relationship between Doc and Marty well and when scaled down could form effective blocking for the scene. This exercise is great at helping students understand how space and proxemics can be used to define relationships and status, and it also helps students move with purpose on stage, avoiding the trap of meaningless wandering or wooden stillness.



# STUDENT WORKSHEET 17

## EXPLORE STAGING AND STAGE POSITIONING

### CHOSEN EXTRACT IS SCENE XII

Suddenly, getting an idea, he puts a strange geodesic contraption on his head. He opens the door and a frantic Marty enters.

MARTY

Doc!! Doc!! Thank God you're here!  
I need your help!!

DOC

Don't say a word!  
I'm going to read your thoughts!  
(Hold that right there...)

DOC slaps a suction cup onto Marty's forehead. It's wired to a tall machine full of tubes and dials. Doc twists some dials, then concentrates.

DOC

I perceive...that you've come...from a great distance...

MARTY

Yes!

DOC

Wait -- don't tell me! You're... collecting donations  
for the coast guard youth auxiliary!

MARTY

No!

DOC

You want me to buy a prefabricated nuclear bomb shelter!

MARTY

(yanks off the suction cup, intense)  
My name is Marty McFly and I'm from the future.  
I came here in a time machine that YOU invented.  
And now I need your help to get back to the year 1985.

DOC

My God! Do you know what this means?  
It means...

(indicates the headgear)

This damn thing doesn't work at all!  
Six months of labor down the drain!

Doc removes it in frustration and paces. Marty goes to him.





MARTY

Stop! Wait, I can prove I'm from the future!  
See? My drivers license. I haven't even been born yet!

DOC

Fake I.D. I've got three of 'em.

MARTY

And a photo of my brother and sister and me.  
Look at her sweatshirt. Hill Valley Class of 1984!

Doc takes the photo and puts it into an opaque projector. The image appears on a screen so the audience can see it, a vacation photo with Marty flanked by his siblings, all full figure. But Dave is a bit out of focus.

DOC

Pretty mediocre photographic fakery.  
Look - your brother's out of focus!

MARTY

Doc, ya gotta believe me. I'm not making this up!

DOC

Then tell me, "Future Boy," who's president  
of the United States in 1985?

MARTY

Ronald Reagan.

DOC

(snickers)

The actor? Then who's vice president - Daffy Duck?  
I've got better things to do than play games with you, kid.  
Good night, future boy.



# BACK TO FUTURE THE MUSICAL



**Mousetrap**  
theatreprojects

Commissioned by  
**Mousetrap Theatre Projects**  
[www.mousetrap.org.uk](http://www.mousetrap.org.uk)



**WE TEACH DRAMA**

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DESIGNED BY **DEWYNTERS**