

EDUCATOR GUIDE

Story Theme: Let's Talk Politics
Subject: David Edgar's *Continental Divide*
Discipline: Theatre

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A set piece for David Edgar's *Continental Divide* staged at the Berkeley Repertory Theatre.
Still image from SPARK story, January 2004.

SECTION I – OVERVIEW

EPISODE THEME

Let's Talk Politics

SUBJECT

Theatre

GRADE RANGES

K-12 & Post-secondary

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Theatre

Social Science

Language Arts

OBJECTIVE

To introduce educators to the political drama of British playwright David Edgar through the play *Continental Divide*, his most recent production, at the Berkeley Repertory Theatre in Berkeley, California.

STORY SYNOPSIS

With his two-play cycle, *Continental Divide*, acclaimed British playwright David Edgar takes aim at American politics at Berkeley Repertory Theatre. Through this two-part play which examines political allegiances during a gubernatorial campaign in an unspecified state in the US, Edgar captures the complexity of the political landscape in contemporary America. As he says, he is interested in “the dreams of both sides,” the visions of the future, and the dissipation of principles and ideals.

INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES

To illustrate the way contemporary politics can be explored through theatre

To analyze theme and characterization

To evaluate the presentation of viewpoint and argument

To derive meaning from theatrical performance

To understand a theatrical piece in terms of historical context

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

Individual student writings and research

Individual and group exercises

Group discussion

Teacher facilitated investigation and discussion

Experiences of live or recorded theatre performance

EQUIPMENT NEEDED

SPARK story about *Continental Divide* on DVD or VHS and related equipment

Computer with Internet access, navigation software, speakers and a sound card, and color printer

MATERIALS NEEDED

Paper & pencils

Access to libraries with up-to-date collections of periodicals, books, and research papers

Flip chart and paper, or easel with paper

INTELLIGENCES ADDRESSED

Intrapersonal - awareness of one's own feelings, emotions, goals, motivations

Interpersonal – awareness of the feelings, emotions, goals, and motivations of others

Visual-Spatial - the ability to manipulate and create mental images to solve problems

Bodily-Kinesthetic - the ability to use one's mind to control one's bodily movements

Logical-Mathematical - the ability to detect patterns, reason deductively, think logically



See more information on [Multiple Intelligences](http://www.kqed.org/spark/education) at www.kqed.org/spark/education.

SECTION II – CONTENT/CONTEXT

CONTENT OVERVIEW

David Edgar, the English playwright, describes his two-play production entitled *Continental Divide* as a “European epic play that has an American subject.” ... “Europe has an epic theater tradition, a traditional realism less naturalistic than American. I’m not sure America thinks in terms of political writing.”

Continental Divide was commissioned in 2000 by Tony Taccone, the Artistic Director of the Berkeley Repertory Theatre, as a co-production with the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. Three years later, after months of research, the play opened as part of the Rep’s 2003/04 season. It is a theatrical work of epic proportion, taking the form of two 3-hour interconnected plays that explore the complex political landscape of contemporary America focusing on a gubernatorial election in a state that seems to resemble the West Coast of the US, and could be California. Although, Taccone and Edgar maintain that any resemblance to real events in Californian politics is coincidental. *Mothers Against* is about the Republican campaign and *Daughters of the Revolution* concentrates on the Democratic side, with the same characters appearing in both plays. Although they are intertwined in these ways, the plays can be seen in either order, and each one stands alone as a complete play. However, the endings are both deliberately ambiguous - there is no electoral victory or resolution. The meaning of the play is the political process, and the issues and arguments debated, and the possibilities of the future as seen on either side.

David Edgar has been a lifelong supporter of the Labour Party in the United Kingdom, and politics have always been his central concern as a dramatist. But, Edgar does not use drama to answer questions, but rather to raise them. Edgar says:

At the end [of *Daughters*] there’s a big confrontation between the candidate and the central character in the play, and I hope they’re presented fairly and balanced and I hope it’s a good argument where you’re pulled each way.

Despite his efforts at being even-handed, ultimately Edgar is an idealist who values commitment, social activism, and the possibility of utopia.

One of the casualties of the eighties was the way in which those utopian ideas in particular, which I talk about a lot in the play, became completely marginalized and politics became very much about the present and very individualized, and I think that was a great loss.



Still from a scene of *Continental Divide* with tables crowded with delegates. Still image from SPARK story, January, 2004.

Continental Divide explores what has happened to the ideals of the 1960s against the backdrop of a political campaign, exploring the dissipation of the beliefs of the American Right and Left.

CONTENT OVERVIEW (continued)

David Edgar lives in Birmingham, England, and has been very well known in the UK for bringing politics into mainstream theater, for articulating the distress of Vietnam, and for the revolutionary Leftist ideas of his work. “I wanted to be an activist,” Edgar says,

When I began playwriting, I wrote much more directly—plays that were a call to arms, a call to the barricades. I realized theater wasn’t very good at getting people to go to the barricades. What it was good at was more profound “[...]” “I decided this was my important role in the struggle. But the truth is, I am also stage struck. I do adore it. I love actors and I love being around the process. It is the most thrilling thing to do.

Along with other prominent playwrights of his generation such as Alan Ayckbourn, Harold Pinter, John McGrath, Trevor Griffiths, David Hare, Howard Brenton and Tom Stoppard, Edgar is celebrated on the British stage. He has also been well received in the US. His adaptations include *Mary Barnes* (which premiered at the Birmingham Repertory Theatre and revived at the Eureka Theatre in San Francisco), *The Jail Diary of Albie Sachs* (Royal Shakespeare Company), a play based on Gitta Sereny’s biography of *Albert Speer* (National Theatre), and a Tony award-winning adaptation of Dickens’ *Nicholas Nickleby* (RSC in London, New York, and Los Angeles).

Edgar’s original plays for the theatre include *Death Story* (Birmingham Repertory Theatre), *That Summer* for Hampstead Theatre and *Entertaining Strangers* for the National Theatre. His original plays for the RSC include *Destiny*, *Maydays* and *Pentecost* (revived by Tony Taccone at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival and Berkeley Rep in 1997). *Pentecost* was the second of a series of plays about Eastern Europe after the Cold War, following *The Shape of the Table* (National Theatre) and preceding *The Prisoner’s Dilemma* (RSC). Edgar has also written for television and radio, and he wrote the screenplay for Trevor Nunn’s 1986 film *Lady Jane*. He also founded and directed Britain’s first post-graduate course in playwriting at the University of Birmingham from 1989 to 1999; he was appointed professor in 1995.

THE BIG PICTURE

Continental Divide can be seen very much against the political landscape the 1960s and 1970s. As a product of this generation of political activism, Edgar’s work expresses the senses of disillusionment, idealism and passion characteristic of the period. It was a time when the Left was steeped in the theories of Jean Paul Sartre, Karl Marx, Vladimir Lenin, Leon Trotsky, and Mao Tse Tung, and united in the potential of social agency – the belief that revolution could change the world and that working people could inherit the earth. There was a rejection of materialism (“property is theft”) and of “power elites.” (See Vocabulary section.)

In Britain and Europe, the politics of the New Left was focused on mass action and grass roots campaigns. The labor unions were organized and strong, there were women’s movements, powerful student movements culminating in the May 1968 uprising in Paris, and Leftist organizations evolved and grew strong, spanning Marxist and Leninist beliefs to Anarchist and Communists groups. Politics pervaded music, art, film, and theater and all forms of cultural production.



Performance still from *Continental Divide* at the Berkeley Repertory Theatre. Still image from SPARK story, January 2004.

Although the activism of this time period failed, the political consciousness generated by the period lives on in the ideas and cultural productions of those who participated in the struggle for social transformation. In *Continental Divide*, Edgar distills the powerful sentiments of this experience, transposing aspiration and disillusion to the American stage using a conventional political campaign to portray the failure of political dreams both on the Left and the Right.

THE BIG PICTURE (continued)

The good sixties/bad sixties' analysis is fraught with historical omissions...It bolsters complacency masked as maturity by underestimating how profoundly periods of intense conflict can alter people's conceptions of what is possible and desirable.¹

In the USA political theater appears to be undergoing a major revival in response to contemporary events – the September 11th attacks, the war in Iraq, and the perceived threat of terrorism, AIDS, and ecological destruction. The Study Guide for Edgar's works published by the Berkeley Repertory Theatre School of Theatre includes a list of dramatic works that address contemporary political concerns, including:

Resurrection Blues, Arthur Miller's play about warped American values, premiered at the Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis.

Angels in America by Tony Kushner (premiered in December 2003 on HBO) is an emotional and political epic in two parts: *Millennium Approaches* and *Perestroika*. This play explores "the state of the nation" --the sexual, racial, religious, political, and social issues confronting the country during the Reagan years, as the AIDS epidemic spread.

Book of Days, Lanford Wilson's update of "Our Town," at the Arena Stage in Washington, a play that attributes the corruption of American values to the corporate world, the church and the Republican Party.

The Exonerated, the anti-death-penalty play by Erik Jensen and Jessica Blank.

Dirty Story by John Patrick Shanley and "O Jerusalem" by A. R. Gurney, two works currently Off-Broadway that deal directly with America and the Middle East.

The Fourth Wall, by Mr. Gurney revised his play produced in 1992 and aimed at the presidency of the first George Bush to reflect his anger at the presidency George w Bush. It is directed at the indifference of the current Bush Republicans to the under-served, and the complacency of bourgeois Democrats.

Homebody/Kabul, Tony Kushner's prescient work about fundamentalism in Afghanistan, produced in Chicago, Los Angeles, and the Bay Area.

¹. Max Elbaum, Revolution in the Air: Sixties Radicals Turn to Lenin, Mao and Che, Verso Press, 2002 – quoted in the Berkeley Repertory Theatre program for *Continental Divide*, 2003-04.

SECTION III – RESOURCES

TEXTS & ARTICLES

Bari, Judi. Timber Wars. Common Courage Press, 1994.

Berman, Paul. A Tale of Two Utopias. The Political Journey of the Generation of 1968. New York, 1968.

Davies, Andrew. Other Theatres: The Development of Alternative and Experimental Theatre in Britain. Macmillan Education, 1987.

Edgar, David. "Making Drama Out of Crisis." Guardian Newspaper Saturday, July 7, 2001.

Elbaum, Max. Revolution in the Air: Sixties Radicals Turn to Lenin, Mao and Che. Verso Press, 2002.

Farber, David. The Sixties: From Memory to History. Chapel Hill, 1994.

Garner, Stanton. Trevor Griffiths: Politics, Drama, History. University of Michigan Press, 1999.

Gitlin, Todd. The Sixties, Years of Hope, Days of Rage. Bantam Books, 1989.

Harvey, Sylvia. May 1968 and After: Cinema in France and Beyond. BFI: London, 1978. – An in-depth analysis of theoretical discourses of the period.

Itzin, Catherine. Stages in the Revolution: Political Theatre in Britain Since 1968. Methuen: London, 1968.

Katsiaficas, George. The Imagination of the the New Left: A Global Analysis of 1968. Boston, 1987.

Klatch, Rebecca. A Generation Divided: The New Left, the New Right, and the 1960s. University of California Press, 1999.

Ross, Kristin. May '68 and Its Afterlives. University of Chicago Press, 2002

Touraine, Alain. The May Movement. New York, 1971.

WEB SITES

Berkeley Repertory Theatre School of Theatre – Web site for the School, including a study guide for *Continental Divide*. – http://www.berkeleyrep.org/HTML/SchoolOfTheatre/matguide_CD.html.

AlterNet.org - A project of the Independent Media Institute, a nonprofit organization dedicated to strengthening and supporting independent and alternative journalism. – <http://www.alternet.org>.

National Republican Web site - <http://www.gop.com>

National Democratic Web site - <http://www.democrats.org>

Conservative News Source - <http://www.conservativenewssource.homestead.com>.

Full bibliography on the ideas and movements on the international perspective in the 1960s. - http://www.fu-berlin.de/jfki/history/Lehmkuhl/ws02_03/biblio_1960s.html

TreeSit - A Leftist Web site detailing all things related to the tree-sitting form of social protest, including current actions. – <http://www.treesit.org>

Out of Joint – An educational Web site including a reading list on theatre in the UK from different theoretical perspectives. <http://www.outofjoint.co.uk/education/readinglist.html>

WEB SITES (continued)

Working Class Movement Library – A history of political theatre in the UK from 1928 –86 written by Howard Goorney. –

<http://www.wcml.org.uk/culture/hgepilogue.htm>

Performing Arts Learning & Teaching Innovation Network – Organizational Web site with links to articles on and interviews with David Edgar including link to IN-YER-FACE THEATRE interview with the playwright with Aleks Sierz - <http://www.palatine.org.uk/directory/index.php/prawri/ed/>

Culturevulture.net – A cultural Web site including reviews of books, movies, and performances, including a review of *Continental Divide: Mothers Against/Daughters of the Revolution* by Suzanne Weiss, November 2003. -

<http://www.culturevulture.net/Theater6/ContinentalDivide.htm>

VIDEO RESOURCES

Unless otherwise noted, the following resources are available from <http://www.amazon.com>.

Morley Markson. *Growing Up in America*. VHS, B&W/Color, 90 minutes, 1988. - Documentary focusing on the lives of Abbie Hoffman, Timothy Leary, Fred Hampton, Allen Ginsberg, William Kunstler and Jerry Rubin. This striking documentary looks at the changes in the lives of these former counter-culture revolutionaries between 1969 and 1988.

David Van Taylor and R.J. Cutler. *A Perfect Candidate*. Color, VHS. First Run Features, 1996. - A humorous documentary focusing on the 1994 Virginia Senate race in which incumbent Charles Robb ran against “American Hero” and former Marine Lieutenant Colonel Oliver North.

Kevin Rafferty and James Ridgeway. *UFeedU*. Color, VHS, 76 minutes. First Run Features, 1992. - A documentary following the course of the ‘92 presidential election. The title refers to “video feeds” catching many candidates in the moments when they’re waiting to go on the air.

Mark Kitchell. *Berkeley in the ‘60s*. B&W/Color, VHS. First Run Features, 1990. - An informative documentary looking back at the social-political unrest in the Bay Area during the 1960s, featuring interviews with 15 people who were/are activists.

D.A. Pennebaker and Chris Hegedus. *The War Room*. Color, VHS. Vidmark/Trimark, 1994. - Documentary following Clinton’s campaign in 1992.

Sam Green, Carrie Lozano, Bill Siegel. *The Weather Underground*, (2003). – Oscar-nominated documentary offering insight into the well-known protest group, The Weather Underground, including archival photographs, film footage and FBI documents interwoven with modern-day interviews with some of the members. The film also explores the US government’s suppression of political dissent and protest in the 60s and 70s. Available from [Shadow Distribution](#) by calling 207.872.5111.

BAY AREA FIELD TRIPS

Berkeley Repertory Theatre
2025 Addison Street, Berkeley, CA 94704
E-mail: info@berkeleyrep.org
Web: <http://www.berkeleyrep.org>
Box Office: Tuesday–Sunday, 12pm–7pm
510.647.2949
1.888.4BRTTix

Magic Theatre Company
Fort Mason Center
Building D, 3rd Floor
San Francisco, CA 94123
Box Office: 415.441.8822
Administration: 415.441.8001
E-mail: info@magictheatre.org
Web: <http://www.magictheatre.org>

Lorraine Hansberry Theatre
620 Sutter Street (at Mason)
San Francisco, CA. 94102
Box Office: 415.474.8800
E-mail: lhtsf@aol.com
Web: <http://www.lorrainehansberrytheatre.com>

City Arts & Lectures
<http://www.cityarts.net>
Venues: Herbst Theatre & Others
City Box Office 415.392.4400

A Traveling Jewish Theatre
470 Florida Street
(btwn 17th & Mariposa)
San Francisco, CA 94110
Box Office: 415.285.8080

Custom Made Theatre Co.
Berkeley
<http://www.custommade.org>

San Francisco Mime Troupe
855 Treat Street
San Francisco, CA 94110
415.285.1717
<http://www.sfmt.org>

SECTION IV – VOCABULARY

Also refer to the discipline “Vocabulary” available in the Toolkit on the Spark Web site education pages at <http://www.kqed.org/spark/education/>

Articulate

To express or communicate, to make explicit

Baby boomers

The generation of children born to parents that grew up in the period following the Second World War, who were young adults in the 1960s

Boondocks

Wilds, rough country, or wasteland

Debut

A first appearance, or initial introduction

Dialogue

Discussion or debate - usually between two opposing sides

Dynamic

Something or someone active, energetic, or forceful

Engagement

Involvement with something or others, including ideas, concepts, or physical activity

Epic

In drama, a large scale, ambitious piece spanning a wide subject either in terms of time or scale of subject matter (e.g. an historical drama spanning decades)

Fictitious

Related to fiction or imaginary, as opposed to based on truth

Fissures

Crack or narrow opening

Germinate

Literally to grow, develop or take root - as in a plant; can also refer to an idea or plan

Gubernatorial

Related to a Governor

Objective

Based upon fact that can be verified as opposed to an impression or feeling

Preconception

Assumption, opinion already formed

Premiere

Opening, first performance

Radical

In this context refers to Left-leaning or progressive views; can be interpreted to mean extreme views

Reductive

To reduce an argument to its first or original principles, or bare it down to essentials; when used critically, suggests a lack of subtlety or sophistication in thought

Straight-laced

Prim or conventional

Topical

Something that is current, contemporary, or relevant.

In the wake of

Literally, the tracks or waves left by a ship moving in the water; refers to the aftermath or resulting effects of something or an event

The following are excerpted from the Berkeley Repertory Theatre Study Guide for Continental Divide prepared by Outreach Coordinator Christopher Morrison and Education Intern Emily Fleisher.

GROUPS, MOVEMENTS & ADDITIONAL VOCABULARY

Affirmative Action

A highly controversial subject defined by supporters as “an active effort to improve the employment or educational opportunities of members of minority groups and women.” And by opponents as “reverse racism or gender/racial favoritism.”

The Anti-Vietnam War Movement

The ongoing political protests by tens of thousands of people of the United States involvement in the Vietnam War (1959–1975). This movement was the most vocal and sustained antiwar movement in the nation’s history. The movement eventually encompassed thousands of different groups and millions of people. By 1972 opposition to U.S. involvement in Vietnam had become a mainstream, if still controversial, political viewpoint.

The Black Panther Party

A militant black political organization founded in Oakland, California by Huey Newton and Bobby Seale in October 1966, the BPP affirmed the right of blacks to use violence to defend themselves and thus became an alternative to moderate civil rights groups

“...by any means necessary...”

A phrase used by Malcolm X, African-American activist, reflective of his militant beliefs that Western nations were inherently racist, and that black people must join together to build their own society and value system. The phrase had an important influence on black nationalist and separatist movements of the 1950s and 60s.

Cesar Chavez

American labor leader, born in Arizona, formed the National Farm Workers Association in 1966. He gained nationwide attention with a boycott of California table grapes.

Civil Rights Movement

A political, legal and social struggle by African-

Americans to achieve racial equality and be given the same, full rights enjoyed by whites. The civil rights movement was first and foremost a challenge to segregation, the system of laws and customs separating blacks and whites that whites used to control blacks after slavery. Their movement employed a variety of tactics including, but not limited to: protest marches, boycotts and refusals to abide by segregation laws.

Democratic Party

In the 1930s and ‘40s the Democratic party became a party of vigorous government intervention in the economy and in the social realm, willing to regulate and redistribute wealth and to protect those least able to help themselves. The party developed a commitment to social welfare legislation and economic regulation.

Genetically Modified Crops

The manipulation of a crop’s genetic endowment by introducing or eliminating specific genes through modern molecular biology techniques. This is achieved through GMOs (Genetically Modified Organisms) which are organisms produced from genetic engineering techniques that allow the transfer of functional genes from one organism to another, including from one species to another. Bacteria, fungi, viruses, plants, insects, fish and mammals are some examples of organisms the genetic material of which has been artificially modified in order to change some physical property or capability.

Libertarianism

A political ideology emphasizing the rights of the individual, its doctrine stresses the right to self-ownership and, by extension, the right to private ownership of material resources and property. Advocates oppose any form of taxation and favor a laissez-faire economic system.

GROUPS, MOVEMENTS & ADDITIONAL VOCABULARY (continued)

New Left Movement

A loosely organized political movement in the United States during the 60s. The goal of the New Leftists was to create what they saw as a more democratic American society. It refers to an ideal society in which all peoples enjoyed political and economic equality. The means for accomplishing this goal was a participatory democracy in which all citizens shared in solving national problems. In a participatory democracy, citizens would join together and work directly to achieve change at the local level.

“Paper Tiger”

A derogatory term for an enemy that seems or wishes to seem powerful or threatening but is really not; Chairman Mao Tse Tung is credited with coining the phrase when he said “All reactionaries are paper tigers.”

Power Elites

A sociological term taken from C. Wright Mills’ The Power Elite, published by Oxford Press in 1956, the term refers to the concentration of power in the hands of certain social strata of society

Redwoods

Redwood National Park, which covers 455 square kilometers (176 square miles) along California’s northwestern coast, represents one of the last remaining ancient redwood forests in the world

Republican Party

The “Grand Old Party or GOP” committed to less government intervention, big business and military strength. The party currently focuses on “traditional family values,” tax cuts and open markets

“Running Dogs”

Lackey, underling or servant. “People of the world, unite and defeat the U.S. aggressors and all their running dogs!” Chairman Mao

Utopias

Ideal or perfect communities

SECTION V – ENGAGING WITH SPARK

STANDARDS-BASED ACTIVITIES & DISCUSSION POINTS

Understanding Political Concepts

Divide students into small groups and ask each group to choose one of the terms, movements, or organizations from the **QUOTES, GROUPS, MOVEMENTS AND VOCABULARY** section of this guide.

Challenge students to research the movement or group selected, explaining the mission or purpose of the group, what they stood for and their campaigning activities. For students who choose a term, they should fully explain the term and its historical context. They should also explain the arguments surrounding the term and its importance. For example – what was the origin of the term “affirmative action” and why is it important historically and contemporarily?

Ask students to share their research findings with the whole class and discuss the issues that arise.

Continental Divide explores a political campaign between the Republican Party and the Democratic Party, and the play frequently refers to the terms right and left wing in relation to political viewpoints. Ask student to engage with these terms by responding to the following questions:

- What is the difference between right wing and left wing views on the political spectrum?
- Identify key principles that underpin a right wing ideology and a left wing ideology? (Give examples of issues from these two sides of the divide.)
- Apply this to the Republican and Democratic parties. What do they stand for and what are their guiding principles? Give examples of their position on three different issues referring to contemporary politics.

Share student responses to these questions with the class for discussion.

RELATED STANDARDS THEATRE

Grade 2

1.0 ARTISTIC PERCEPTION

- 1.1 Use the vocabulary of theatre, such as plot (beginning, middle, and end), scene, sets, conflict, script, and audience, to describe theatrical experiences.

4.0 AESTHETIC VALUING

- 4.1 Critique an actor’s performance as to the use of voice, gesture, facial expression, and movement to create character.
- 3 Students critique and derive meaning from works of theatre, film/video, electronic media, and theatrical artists on the basis of aesthetic qualities.
- 4.4 Identify the message or moral of a work of theatre

Grade 4

1.0 ARTISTIC PERCEPTION

- 4 Identify a character’s objectives and motivations to explain that character’s behavior

Grade 7

4.0 AESTHETIC VALUING

- 2 Explain how cultural influences affect the content or meaning of works of theatre.

Grade 8

4.0 AESTHETIC VALUING

- 1 Develop criteria and write a formal review of a theatrical production

Grades 9-12 (Proficient)

3.0 HISTORICAL & CULTURAL CONTEXTS

- 2 Describe the ways in which playwrights reflect and influence their culture in such works.

4.0 AESTHETIC VALUING

- 4.2 Report on how a specific actor used drama to convey performances

Devising a Campaign Strategy

The Berkeley Rep held four “Forums” on Continental Divide to provide opportunities for the public to discuss the issues raised by the play. One of the Forums was entitled “Campaign Managers and Political Consultants – Realities of the Field.” Using Berkeley Rep as a resource, or through other contacts, find a speaker who can talk to students about the campaign process. Ask students to prepare questions in advance. If possible, they should videotape the presentation for later discussion.

In the gubernatorial campaign in *Continental Divide*, different political personnel lead the campaigning process. Invite students to imagine that their classroom is a campaign headquarters. The following people are in the office:

Candidate
Campaign manager
Policy Adviser (to the campaign)
Political Commentator
Pollster
Publicist
Community Activist
Volunteer Coordinator

Ask students to devise appropriate job descriptions for each role by responding to the following questions:

- What do these roles involve?
- How do these people spend their time?
- What qualities do they need?
- Do you know anyone who has performed one of these roles in a campaign?

Discuss how Proposition 92 is used in the play as part of the gubernatorial election campaign. Invite students to form groups of six and to role-play the political personnel identified above, convening a campaign meeting to devise their own proposition on an issue of importance to them. It could relate to education, the environment, civil rights, the family etc. Students should then act in character to devise their campaign strategy around the proposition, to include:

- Statement fully spelling out the proposition
- Policy document explaining the reasons for the proposition

- Poster and campaign for distribution (i.e. where should it be posted to achieve maximum impact)
- Campaign strategy
- PSA (public service announcement)

Encourage each group to present their proposition to the class, explaining the rationale for the proposition and their campaign strategy for promoting it. After each presentation, encourage feedback and discussion. Finally, invite students to vote on each proposition and record the results.

RELATED STANDARDS – LANGUAGE ARTS

Grade 7

Narrative Analysis of Grade-Level-Appropriate Text

- 3.2 Identify events that advance the plot and determine how each event explains past or present action(s) or foreshadows future action(s).
- 3.3 Analyze characterization as delineated through a character’s thoughts, words, speech patterns, and actions; the narrator’s description; and the thoughts, words, and actions of other characters.

Grades 9 & 10

1.0 LISTENING AND SPEAKING STRATEGIES

Comprehension

- 1 Formulate judgments about the ideas under discussion and support those judgments with convincing evidence.

Expository Critique

- 2.8 Evaluate the credibility of an author’s argument or defense of a claim by critiquing the relationship between generalizations and evidence, the comprehensiveness of evidence, and the way in which the author’s intent affects the structure and tone of the text (e.g., in political speeches, PSAs, political records).

Exploring the Legacy of 1968

David Edgar has described the legacy of 1968 in Europe and its impact on his thinking, saying: “*Continental Divide* explores what has happened to the revolutionary fervor that took hold of both the Right and the Left in the 1960s, and how it continues to resonate through multiple generations.”

Working in small groups, ask students to investigate the 1960s and early 1970s in Europe, and to construct a timeline that records the major milestones and key events. Student groups should choose one of the following European countries - the UK, France, Germany, or Italy - and record their timeline on flip-chart paper to display on the wall in the classroom. Place the charts together and compare events in the different countries discussing any similarities and differences in protest movements and ideas.

Challenge students to write a 500-word response paper on the country they researched, outlining the events of 1968 and evaluating the historical importance of the political radicalism of the period.

The same exercise can be repeated looking at the period in the USA and the protest movements that were taking place at the time.

SPARKLERS:

* View the segment of the SPARK story showing the Artistic Director, Tony Taccone, and the cast members of *Continental Divide* exchanging photos of each other in the 1960s. Encourage students to request photos of their parents, relatives, friends, and/or neighbors from the 1960s and bring them into class. They should also interview the subject of the photograph to gain an understanding of what they were doing in that period, as well as their beliefs and ideals, and whether they feel emotions similar to the disillusion expressed in Edgar’s play. Share the photos and responses with the class.

* David Edgar talks about the importance of “impossible dreams” and of a sense of utopia. Do students share this view and do they have such dreams and ideals? What are they?

Writing a Theater Review

Suggest to students that they bring in listings of plays currently staged in the Bay Area. They should work in pairs to go through the listings and choose a

play they would find interesting. It may be possible to organize a group outing at a reduced cost to one of the plays selected. Encourage students to attend a performance.

Ask students to write a 500-word theater review using the following guidelines.

- Introductory response to the play
- Outline of the plot and key themes
- Discussion of characterization and setting
- Evaluation of the production – was it compelling, exciting, interesting, or enjoyable?
- Evaluation of what the play was trying to say
- Concluding comments – would you recommend it to others?

Invite students to read extracts from their reviews to the class choosing a section that most expresses their feelings about the piece they saw.

RELATED STANDARDS – SOCIAL SCIENCE

Grades 6-8

Historical and Social Sciences Analysis Skills

Chronological and Spatial Thinking

1. Students explain how major events are related to one another in time.
2. Students construct various time lines of key events, people, and periods of the historical era they are studying.

Research, Evidence, and Point of View

5. Students detect the different historical points of view on historical events and determine the context in which the historical statements were made (the questions asked, sources used, author's perspectives).

Historical Interpretation

1. Students explain the central issues and problems from the past, placing people and events in a matrix of time and place.

Grades 9-12 - Chronological and Spatial Thinking

1. Students compare the present with the past, evaluating the consequences of past events and decisions and determining the lessons that were learned.

Historical Interpretation

1. Students show the connections, causal and otherwise, between particular historical events and larger social, economic, and political trends and developments.
3. Students interpret past events and issues within the context in which an event unfolded rather than solely in terms of present-day norms and values.