

# MERCHANTS OF VENICE

## CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS



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# MERCHANTS OF VENICE

## How to use Curriculum Connections:

Dear Teacher,

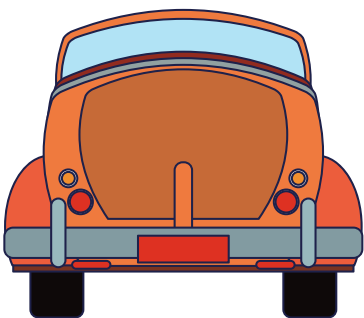
We appreciate you!

This guide can help in your classroom, whether before or after coming to see a play or musical it can be used to highlight important concepts. The curriculum connections introduced by the Broward Center for the Performing Arts are always aligned to the Florida Standards with the idea that they introduce another tool to effectively implement engaging methods to bring the page to the stage.

Curriculum Connections improve comprehension, help students organize information, and assist students' metacognition by enabling students to check for understanding. It is designed to be used before or after coming to the theater unless otherwise stated and may contain activities for certain grade levels (this will be clearly labeled).

Curriculum Connections will always contain a reminder of theater etiquette as well as a social emotional learning activity, and a Student-Family Cooperative Activity. The activities may be re-printed for individual use, used on smart boards as class activities, or in groups. It is suggested to discuss the play or musical as a class before your field trip.

Remember to follow us on Facebook and Instagram @Broward Center Education and use the QR code (below) for our Teacher's Lounge to receive insight about discounted tickets and information for you and your students!



# MERCHANTS OF VENICE SYNOPSIS:

The original plot occurred in a fictional 17th century Venice and 'Belmont' at a time and place when shipping was a key means of wealth and trade.

<https://youtu.be/0KvIuy7ETUI>

Shakespeare's fictional Belmont was a 'place of love' and Venice the 'place of cold commerce.' Miami replaces 'Venice' and Fort Lauderdale is 'Belmont.' The religious restrictions and discrimination were very real problems in Italy and around the world at the release of Shakespeare's work in the early 1600's.

With careful research, our team found incredible examples of merchants in Miami and Fort Lauderdale who thrived despite restrictions on movement and capital for African Americans in 1930-40's Florida. 'Merchants of Venice' celebrates the neighborhoods of Overtown and Sistrunk and the historic businesses that served African American families.

Most of the businesses no longer exist, but the legacies of the pioneering merchants in the South Florida community are explored in the play.





# Theater etiquette

It is often helpful to remind students of appropriate audience etiquette by explaining and discussing WHY these rules of behavior are important:

- Restroom visits are best made prior to the performance.
- Listen carefully to the ushers and your teachers. This gets everyone to your seats quickly and ensures a pleasant experience.
- Turn watches and cell phones to silent.
- Walk single file, hold hand rails as you use the steps for your safety.
- Listen carefully to each performer. They are working hard to entertain and inform with lots of clues about the story.
- Refrain from TALKING. This allows everyone to enjoy the show without distraction. Sometimes we think that if we whisper it is okay. But, if everyone in the audience whispers, it becomes disruptive.
- Laugh if something is funny, but not too loudly, you don't want to miss any dialogue.
- Photography and recording are not permitted.
- Pay attention to the lighting, scenery, costumes and music—all of these elements help provide more details to tell the story in an interesting way.
- Applaud (clap) at the end. This shows the performers that you respect and appreciate their work.

# MERCHANTS OF VENICE: HISTORY OF OVERTOWN

Overtown was settled by the black workers who built Miami's railroads and hotels. During segregation, entertainers like **Ella Fitzgerald and Louis Armstrong** stayed in Overtown after performing in Miami Beach. Today, "The Harlem of the South" is a showcase for Miami's Black history. Overtown is the second oldest neighborhood in Miami. Overtown was built by the same black laborers who also helped build the rest of Miami and the county's section of the Florida East Coast Railway.

As in most Southern cities around the turn of the century, blacks were not allowed to live in the same neighborhoods as whites, so they built their homes on the less desirable side of Henry Flagler's new railroad tracks.

Despite segregation, early Overtown prospered in many ways. The economic and social isolation created a cohesive community where a real black middle class arose, and some Overtown black business owners became relatively wealthy.





# MERCHANTS OF VENICE: HISTORY OF OVERTOWN

Overtown's 2nd Avenue Corridor of music halls, restaurants, hotels, and entertainment venues came to be known as 'Little Broadway' in the 1920s. On this street, you'd find Rockland Palace, the Ritz Theater, The Harlem Square Club, Clyde Killens' Pool Hall, Odell's Bar & Grill, and The Mary Elizabeth Hotel & Birdland Fiesta. It wasn't uncommon to pass right by Nat King Cole, Bojangles, Count Basie, Billie Holiday, or Ella Fitzgerald when walking the street.

Residents would often see Mary McCloud Bethune visiting her son who ran the Pharmacy store located in the Mary Elizabeth Hotel. The likes of Langston Hughes read poetry in the Lyric Theater and made appearances at Mr. Zion Baptist Church, W.E.B. Dubois would always seek hotel accommodations in "Miami's Little Broadway" between trips in and out of the country.

Because of the extensive nightlife, permanent residents of color in Miami established businesses which were sustained economically by the Broadway feel.



# MERCHANTS OF VENICE: HISTORY OF OVERTOWN

Use the information to answer each of these questions with your class:

1. Why was Overtown called the "Harlem of the South?"

2. What influence did Henry Flagler have on Overtown?

3. What was so special about 2nd Avenue?

4. Is Overtown still the same today?  
Why or why not?

# MERCHANTS OF VENICE: MIAMI TODAY

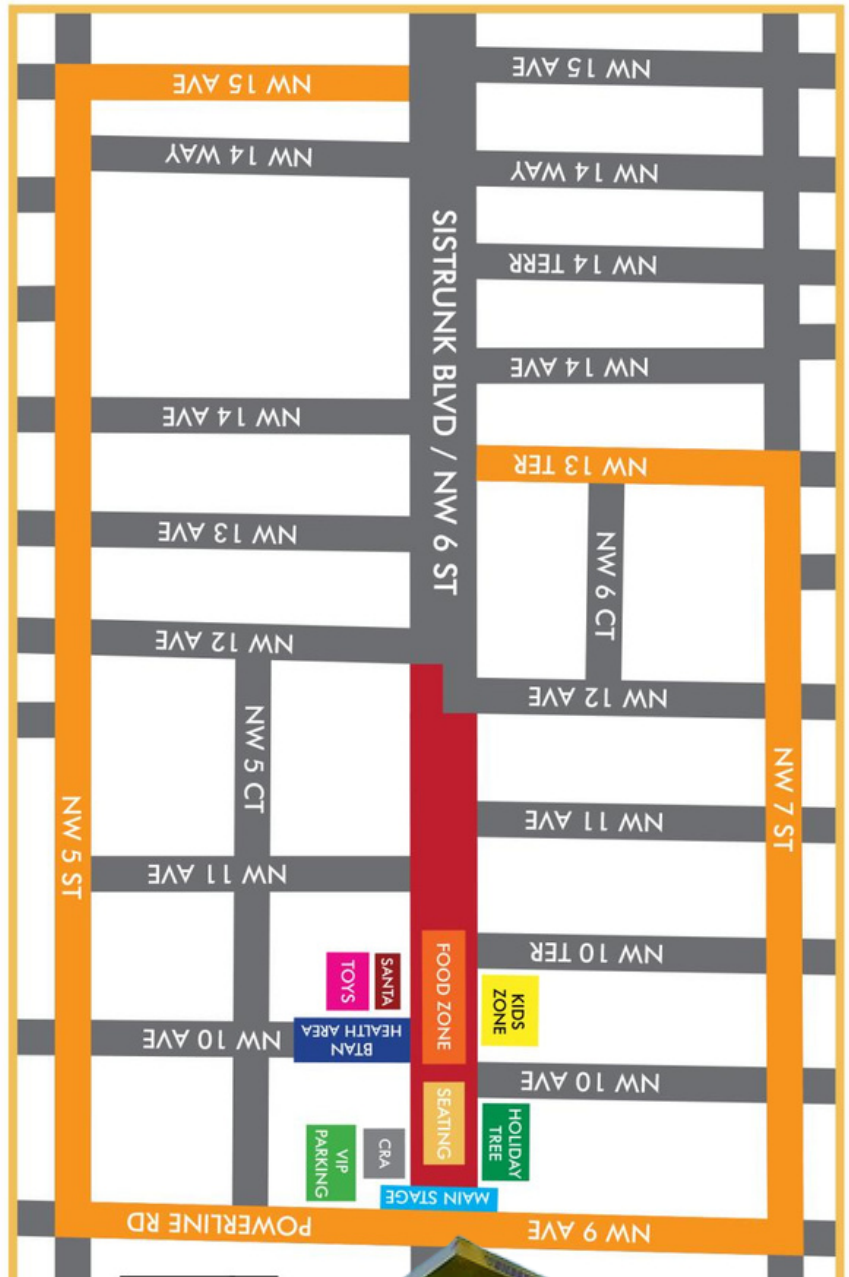


1. If you are in South Beach, what causeway can you take to get to Overtown? \_\_\_\_\_
  2. Overtown is \_\_\_\_\_ of Wynwood?
  3. Name three things to do in Miami: \_\_\_\_\_
  4. Brickell is \_\_\_\_\_ of Overtown?
  5. If I'm in Overtown and I want to see the Miami Heat play, which direction do I need to drive? \_\_\_\_\_
- Have you ever been to Miami? What did you do there? What did you see?



# MERCHANTS OF VENICE: HISTORY OF SISTRUNK

**HISTORIC SISTRUNK, THE HEART AND SOUL OF THE CITY, IS FORT LAUDERDALE'S OLDEST AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY. THE NEIGHBORHOOD SURROUNDING SISTRUNK BOULEVARD WAS ESTABLISHED IN THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY BY SETTLERS WHO MIGRATED FROM GEORGIA, SOUTH CAROLINA AND THE BAHAMAS AS THE RAILROAD WAS EXTENDED FROM JACKSONVILLE TO SOUTH FLORIDA. NAMED IN HONOR OF DOCTOR JAMES SISTRUNK, A BLACK PHYSICIAN WHO HELPED ESTABLISH BROWARD COUNTY'S FIRST AFRICAN-AMERICAN HOSPITAL IN 1938, SISTRUNK SERVES AS A GOOD REVITALIZATION AND PLACEKEEPING EXAMPLE FOR SIMILAR URBAN CORE MIXES USE DISTRICTS.**



## THE PROVIDENT PROJECT

**THE NAME PAYS HOMAGE TO THE HISTORIC PROVIDENT HOSPITAL, WHICH WAS FOUNDED IN 1938 BY DR. JAMES SISTRUNK AND DR. VON MIZELL. THE PROVIDENT WAS FT. LAUDERDALE'S FIRST MEDICAL FACILITY FOR AFRICAN AMERICANS.**



# MERCHANTS OF VENICE: SISTRUNK TODAY

THE SISTRUNK MARKETPLACE & BREWERY IS A FOOD HALL OCCUPYING A 23,000 SQUARE FOOT WAREHOUSE ALONG SISTRUNK BOULEVARD AND THE FLORIDA EAST COAST RAILWAY.



THE YMCA/MIZELL COMMUNITY CENTER AT SISTRUNK BOULEVARD. THE \$17 MILLION BUILDING WAS COMPLETED IN SEPTEMBER 2021. THE STATE OF THE ART COMMUNITY CENTER INCLUDES SPACE LEASED BY BROWARD COLLEGE, GROUND FLOOR RETAIL, INCLUDING A BUSINESS INCUBATOR/CO-WORKING SPACE, PRE/AFTERSCHOOL, WELLNESS CENTER, GYM, POOL, COMMUNITY CONFERENCE SPACE, ROOF TOP PATIOS, AND A BLACK BOX THEATRE.

BETWEEN 2010 AND 2012, THE CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE COMPLETED THE SISTRUNK BOULEVARD STREETScape AND ENHANCEMENT PROJECT AT THE COST OF \$13 MILLION. THE SCOPE OF WORK FOCUSED ON THE MODIFICATION OF SISTRUNK BOULEVARD FROM US 1 TO NORTHWEST 24TH AVENUE.





# MERCHANTS OF VENICE: HISTORY OF SISTRUNK

Use the information to answer each of these questions with your class::

1. Where did the earliest settlers of the Sistrunk neighborhood come from and why?
2. Who was the Sistrunk neighborhood named for and why?
3. What is the correlation between Sistrunk and Civil Rights?
4. Was segregation the same in Miami and Ft. Lauderdale?



# MERCHANTS OF VENICE:

## COMPARING THE MERCHANT OF VENICE SHAKESPEARE VS. ART PREVAILS PROJECT

Work through the following tasks to compare and contrast the two plays considering the structures, meanings, and style of each work.

### SHAKESPEARE

### ART PREVAILS PROJECT

### OVERALL STRUCTURE

Comment on how the works are ordered and how the plot is presented.

### CHARACTERS

List important characters along with their motivations that affect the plot.



## SHAKESPEARE



## ART PREVAILS PROJECT



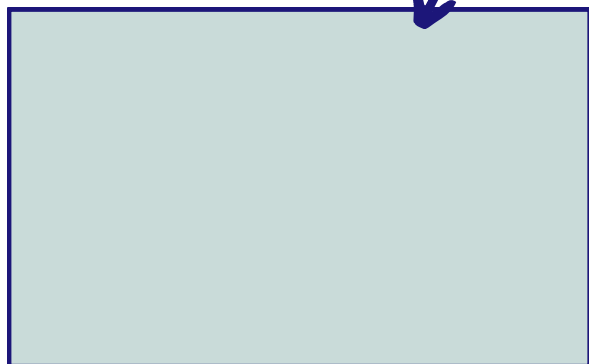
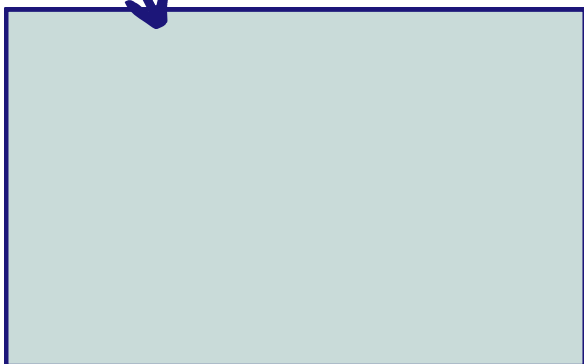
### SETTING

Comment on time periods, seasons, places, and social contexts.



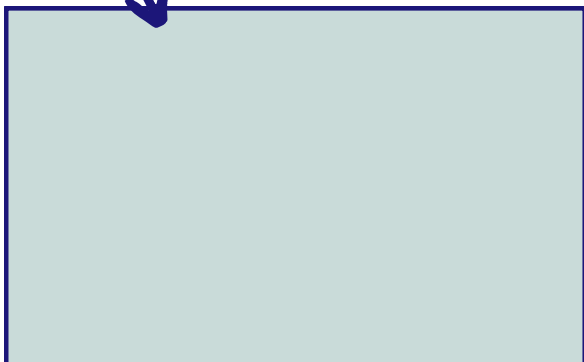
### CONFLICTS

List the conflicts and problems that define the stories and affect the characters' actions



### THEMES

List at least 2 theme statements for each text. What are the overall messages or lessons?



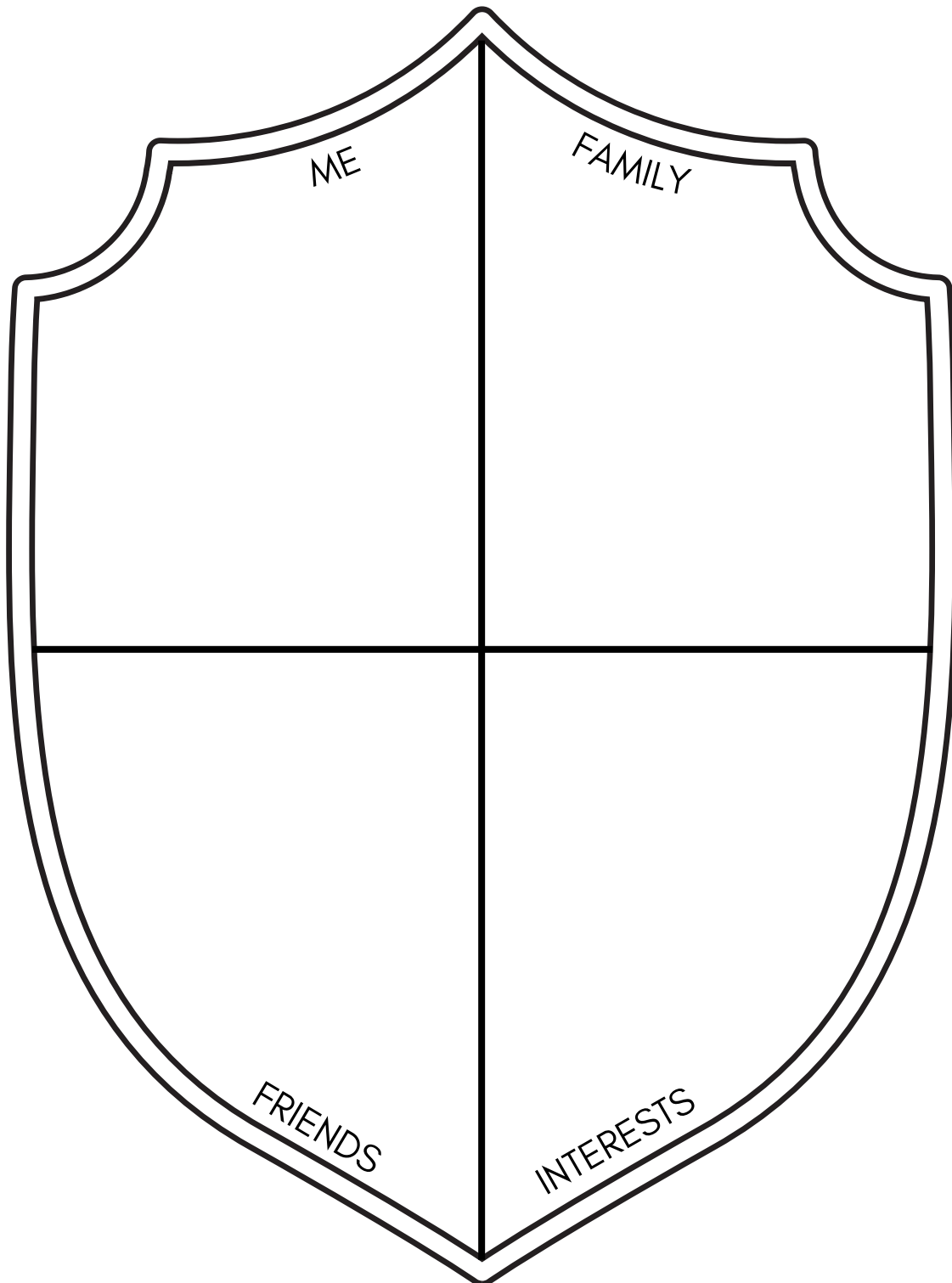


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# MERCHANTS OF VENICE: COAT OF ARMS: SEL

In the "Merchants of Venice" the characters built strong relationships in the community by sharing their identity and personality.

Complete the Coat of Arms by drawing or writing about yourself:



# M/H Student to Family Cooperative Activity Ideas:

- Cook a themed meal: If the play had cultural or culinary references, consider cooking a themed meal together as a family. Research recipes from that culture or recreate dishes mentioned in the play. This culinary exploration can add a delicious dimension to your theater experience and allow you to immerse yourselves further in the production.
- Watch a related film or documentary: If there are any film adaptations or documentaries related to the play or its subject matter, plan a family movie night to watch them together. This can provide additional context, offer a different perspective, or deepen your understanding of the themes explored in the theater production.
- Share impressions and discuss the play: Sit down with your kids and have a conversation about the play you all watched. Share your impressions, thoughts, and emotions. Discuss the elements that stood out to each of you, such as the performances, the set design, or the storytelling. This exchange of perspectives can deepen your understanding and appreciation of the production.
- **Remember, the goal is to create a memorable and immersive experience. Adapt these ideas based on your family's preferences and the resources available to you. The key is to have fun and enjoy the theater experience in your digs!**

## Additional Activity Ideas:

- Attend workshops or classes: Look for theater workshops or classes that interest you and your child. Participating in these educational opportunities can help your kids develop their skills, gain confidence, and connect with others who share their interest in the performing arts.
- Encourage your kids to create their own journals or scrapbooks to document their childhood memories. Take the opportunity to share your childhood stories as you help them with their own projects. You can even contribute by adding some of your own stories or mementos to their journals.
- What was your favorite song, band or genre growing up? Play a few songs for your child/children and let them play a few of their favorites for you!
- Volunteer or participate in theater activities: If your kids have developed a keen interest in theater, encourage them to get involved in local theater groups or school productions. Volunteer backstage, audition for roles, or assist with set design and costumes. This hands-on experience allows us to gain practical knowledge and further nurture a passion for the performing arts, and the whole family can volunteer with the show!



## Standards Alignment: Merchants of Venice

**Standards Alignment:** The activities in this guide are aligned with the standards listed below. When teachers incorporate the arts, they increase student engagement, offer multiple points for students to access the curriculum, and provide alternate means for students to demonstrate what they know.

Florida's Benchmarks for Excellent Student Thinking (B.E.S.T.) and NGSSS	
Kindergarten through Grade 12/ English Language Arts	
ELA.K12.EE.1.1	Cite evidence to explain and justify reasoning.
ELA.K12.EE.2.1	Read and comprehend grade-level complex texts proficiently.
ELA.K12.EE.3.1	Make inferences to support comprehension.
ELA.K12.EE.4.1	Use appropriate collaborative techniques and active listening skills when engaging in discussions in a variety of situations.
ELA.K12.EE.5.1	Use the accepted rules governing a specific format to create quality work.
ELA.K12.EE.6.1	Use appropriate voice and tone when speaking or writing.
Social Studies 6-12 NGSSS	
SS.6.W.1.1	Use timelines to identify chronological order of historical events.
SS.6.W.1.6	Describe how history transmits culture and heritage and provides models of human character.
SS.912.CG.2.6	Explain how the principles contained in foundational documents contributed to the expansion of civil rights and liberties over time.



# New:

Each time you submit student work,  
your name is entered in a drawing  
for tickets to a show  
at the Broward Center:

Fall Show: **HADESTOWN**

Spring Show: **MRS. DOUBTFIRE**

Dear Teachers,

Thank you for your continued support of the SEAS Program. We value the preparation you make before the show to attend the Broward Center for the Performing Arts, and the introduction you forge for the students when the show has concluded to continue making connections long after the buses have returned to school!

If you'd like to share any of the work from the study guides, please use this link:

Click Here to Upload Student Work Samples:

**<https://tinyurl.com/SEAS2324-samples>**



Should you have any questions, please contact  
Lauri Foster at: <mailto:lauri.fostere@browardschools.com>

