

LEGALLY BLONDE

THE MUSICAL

Music & Lyrics
LAURENCE O'KEEFE & NELL BENJAMIN

Book
HEATHER HACH

Director
NIKOLAI FOSTER

Choreographer
LEAH HILL

Musical Supervisor
MATT SPENCER-SMITH

ROYO

BASED ON THE NOVEL BY AMANDA BROWN AND THE METRO-GOLDWYN-MAYER MOTION PICTURE

PRESENTED BY ARRANGEMENT WITH MUSIC THEATRE INTERNATIONAL

MADE AT CURVE

Sponsored by PPL

RESOURCE PACK

"Being true to yourself never goes out of style."

CONTENTS

"What you want is right in front of you!"

INTRODUCTION
About the pack and how to use it as a student, teacher, artists or audience member that wants to know more about how the show came together.

PAGE 3

WORLD OF LEGALLY BLONDE
The creators, the story, the characters, the themes, a synopsis and an exercise to get you thinking and exploring the message behind all the pink!

PAGE 4

MAKING LEGALLY BLONDE
Meet the creative production team at Curve that made it happen, as well as learning about the different roles and responsibilities needed to create a musical.

PAGE 12

DURING THE SHOW
Gain some further insight into the process for the performers and take on a challenge to try out some similar tasks used in the rehearsal room.

PAGE 20

"HARVARD'S THE PERFECT PLACE FOR ME TO GROW!"
Some practical and written exercises for you to explore individually and in groups, to help you analyse and think critically about the impact of the musical.

PAGE 24

REFLECTION
Looking back on where this all began, from auditions to casting, teasers and rehearsal videos which have all built our anticipation for the Live Theatre Experience at Curve Theatre. Are you ready for this version in 2026!

PAGE 28



INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Legally Blonde Teachers Resource Pack.

If you are planning to see the show, seen the show or want to explore the genre of musicals, there will be something in this pack to help your students understand the story, and this live theatre Interpretation.

The pack is aimed at KS3 and 4 and introduces the musical from concept to creation. The themes, overall message and information on characters and roles within the musical, are also explored. The importance of multi- rolling and how it is used as a creative tool to convey the story. Alongside all of this, short and longer tasks to undertaken have been woven in.

Towards the end of the pack are longer tasks that could be carried out in groups and individually. This will allow you to lift tasks out to be delivered to the whole class or offer as extension tasks for those learners that want to work more in-depth. The hope is that this can support your students understanding and knowledge development for formative or summative assessment or towards coursework.

The content of the pack is like Curve and its architecture, being an` inside out theatre', giving insight and access into the process leading up to, and during the rehearsals period. The pack also leans into the different roles and responsibilities the cast and production team have, which enables them to put a show like this together.

Hopefully this will provide an opportunity for students to learn about the many roles and careers in theatre, especially those not always seen or highlighted, as these are developing all the time.

Finally, we hope that you will be able to engage with the pack in a way that is useful to you, your students and your setting. For whatever stage they are at, like Elle, we encourage them to know the power of learning and education and where it can take you!

"What you want is right in front of you!"

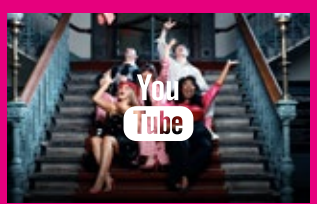
taken from the song *What You Want*, a reminder to go after your dreams, fearlessly!

Resource Pack created by
MIA GRANT





Scan the QR code to watch the video announcement that **Amber Davies** (THE GREAT GATSBY, PRETTY WOMAN) will be taking on the iconic role of Elle Woods.

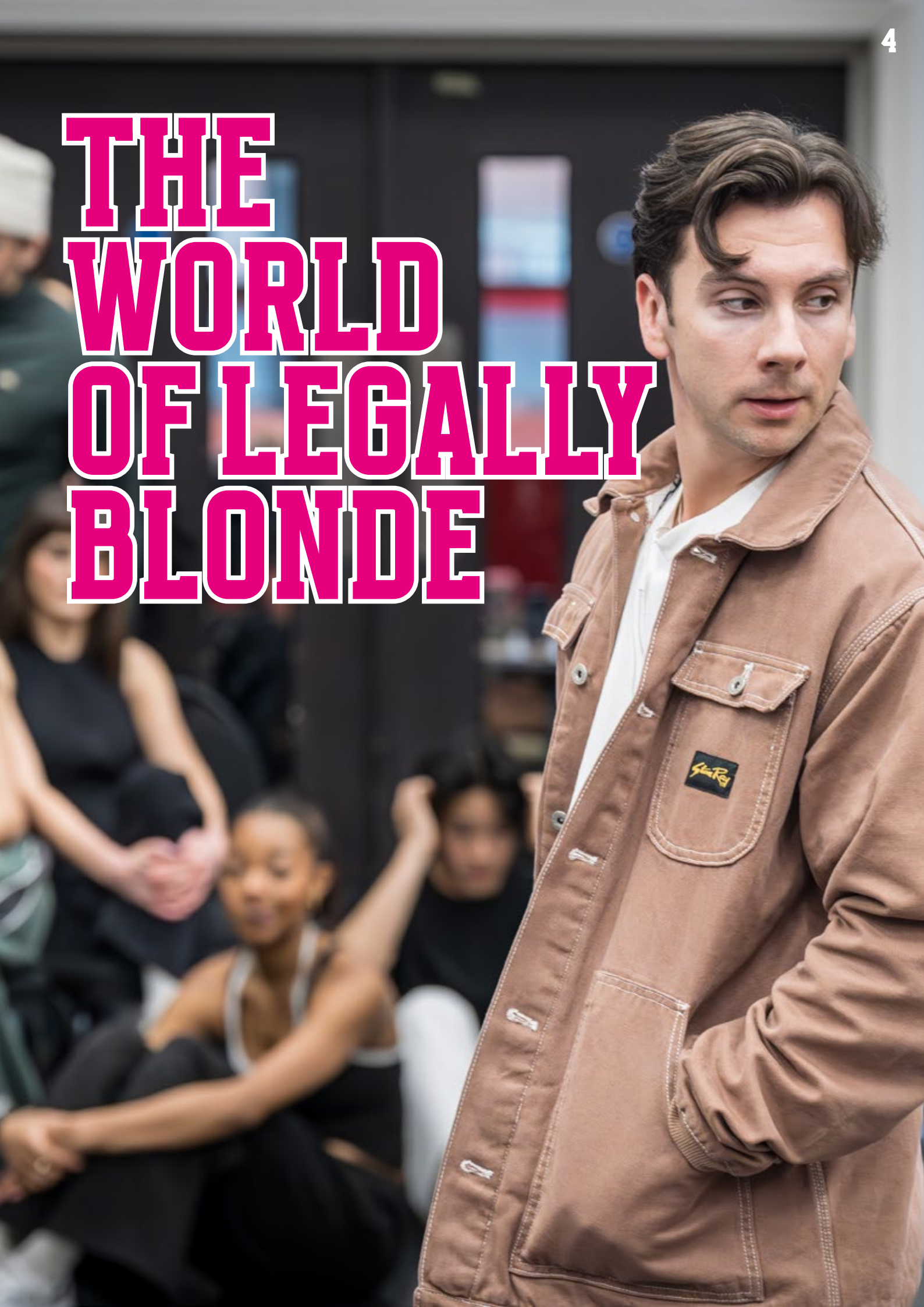


Scan the QR code to watch the video announcing the cast of LEGALLY BLONDE.



Scan the QR code to listen to Curve in Conversation and hear all about rehearsals for LEGALLY BLONDE with members of our incredible cast.

THE WORLD OF LEGALLY BLONDE



About Legally Blonde – The Musical

LEGALLY BLONDE opened on Broadway in 2007, with music and lyrics by Laurence O'Keefe and Nell Benjamin and a book by Heather Hach. It follows Elle Woods, who enrols in Harvard Law School to win back her ex-boyfriend. Once she is there, however, she is introduced to new challenges that make her reconsider her goals and priorities.

DID YOU KNOW: The iconic 2001 film LEGALLY BLONDE starring Reese Witherspoon was based on a book by the same name, written by Amanda Brown. The book was based on Brown's own experiences at Stanford Law School.

About The Writers

Music and Lyrics
LAURENCE O'KEEFE AND NELL BENJAMIN

Laurence O'Keefe and Nell Benjamin met at Harvard University. They were married in 2001; that same year BAT BOY opened off-Broadway with music and lyrics by O'Keefe. The pair's first professional collaboration was Sarah, Plain and Tall, based on a children's book by Patricia MacLachlan, which opened off-Broadway in 2002. LEGALLY BLONDE was their next show, and the pair's Broadway debut. O'Keefe later collaborated with Kevin Murphy to write the music for HEATHERS: THE MUSICAL. Meanwhile, Benjamin went on to write lyrics for MEAN GIRLS: THE MUSICAL, which premiered in Washington in 2017.

Book
HEATHER HACH

In 2003, Heather Hach and Leslie Dixon wrote the screenplay for the film FREAKY FRIDAY, starring Jamie Lee Curtis and Lindsey Lohan. Hach went on to write the book (aka all the spoken scenes) for LEGALLY BLONDE, which earned her a nomination for a Tony Award for Best Book of a Musical in 2007.



Main Themes

Overcoming Stereotypes

The musical challenges assumptions about gender, appearance and intelligence.

Self-Confidence and Authenticity

Elle's journey is about trusting her intelligence and instincts, even when others underestimate her.

Friendship

None of Elle's achievements exist in a vacuum. The support she both gives to and receives from her friends is integral to her success, highlighting the importance of community.

Justice

Beyond personal success, the musical underscores fairness, ethical choices, and using your skills to help others.

TASK

Let's start thinking about the themes!

Working in 2s Think, Pair, Share: Pick one of the above themes to explore and think about:

- Which character/s moments in the plot highlight this theme most strongly?
- How is this theme developed/resolved by the end of the musical?
- What message does the musical communicate about this theme?
- What would you expect/want an audience to take away from it?
- Can you relate this theme to real life and experiences in society today?

Be ready to share with your partner a short presentation about the theme you've chosen. This can be bullet points of your thoughts, ideas and observations

When you read the synopsis of the LEGALLY BLONDE, this task will help you to identify where some of those themes are highlighted in the show.

Full Synopsis

ACT ONE

The girls of Delta Nu sorority are celebrating the news that their president, Elle Woods, is about to get engaged to her boyfriend Warner Huntington III ***(Omigod You Guys)***. However instead of proposing, Warner breaks up with Elle because she does not fit into his plans and ambitions ***(Serious)***. Elle is comforted by her sorority sisters ***(Daughter Of Delta Nu)*** and decides to win Warner back by proving that she can be 'serious' and 'lawyerly' ***(What You Want)***.

With the support of her friends and family, Elle gains admission into Harvard Law School, where she quickly discovers she does not fit in amongst the other students ***(The Harvard Variations)***. On her first day, she is kicked out of class by Professor Callahan ***(Blood In The Water)***. To make matters worse, she discovers that Warner has got a new girlfriend called Vivienne. Her devastation manifests as a 'Greek Chorus' of Delta Nu girls, who appear in her mind and encourage her not to give up ***(Positive)***. To the Greek Chorus' horror, Elle decides to dye her hair brown to make herself look more 'lawyerly'; at the salon, however, the stylist Paulette talks her out of making this decision.

Paulette empathises with Elle's situation, and shares her own struggles with love ***(Ireland)***. When Vivienne invites Elle to a party, Paulette even lends Elle her playboy bunny costume to impress Warner ***(Ireland Reprise)***. However, when Elle arrives at the party, she discovers she is the only person in a costume, and Warner rejects her attempt to rekindle their relationship ***(Serious Reprise)***.

On Elle's way home she encounters Emmett, Professor Callahan's teaching assistant, who shares his own struggles to survive Harvard Law School and be accepted by his peers ***(Chip On My Shoulder)***. With the help of Emmett and Paulette, and the encouragement of her Greek Chorus of Delta Nu girls, Elle begins to excel in her studies. She even uses her legal skills to help Paulette get her dog Rufus back from her ex-boyfriend ***(Elle Reflects)***. Callahan announces he has selected four students for an internship at his law firm: Enid, Warner, Vivienne... and Elle ***(So Much Better)***.

ACT TWO

Act Two opens with an exercise tape, filmed by fitness queen Brooke Wyndham ***(Whipped Into Shape)***. Callahan and his team will be representing Brooke in court as she stands trial for murdering her husband; however, Brooke refuses to reveal her alibi for the time of the murder. At the prison, Elle connects with Brooke because they are both Delta Nus ***(Delta Nu Nu Nu)***. After swearing Elle to secrecy, Brooke confesses to her that she was having liposuction at the time of the murder.

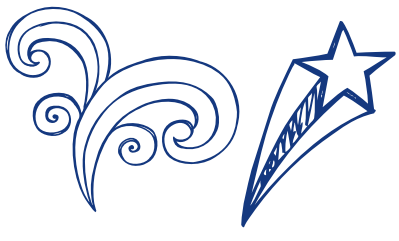
In preparation for Brooke's trial, Elle takes Emmett to a department store and helps him pick out some smarter clothes ***(Take It Like A Man)***. Elle then visits Paulette's salon, where she discovers that Paulette fancies the UPS delivery guy, Kyle. Paulette is adamant that she has 'nothing to offer', a declaration that outrages Elle. Elle's Greek Chorus are equally horrified at Paulette's lack of self-confidence, and appear to Paulette. They teach Paulette (and the other women in the salon), the 'Bend and Snap', a cheerleading move that is "99.99% effective on straight men" ***(Bend And Snap)***. With her newfound confidence, Paulette attempts to use the Bend and Snap on Kyle, but instead accidentally breaks his nose.

In court, Brooke's defence team are thrown by the testimony of Brooke's pool cleaner Nikos, who claims to have been Brooke's lover. However, when Emmett questions Nikos about his personal relationships, Nikos' boyfriend Carlos reveals himself to the court, forcing Nikos to admit his relationship with Brooke was a lie ***(Gay Or European?)***.

Back at the office, Callahan asks Elle to stay behind and attempts to kiss her. Elle immediately pushes him away, causing Callahan to fire her on the spot. Devastated, Elle begins to pack her bags to return to Malibu ***(Legally Blonde)***. She visits the salon to say goodbye to Paulette, but she is stopped by Vivienne, who admits that she has misjudged Elle. With the support of Vivienne and Enid, Elle decides to return to the trial, and leads a parade back to the courtroom ***(Legally Blonde Remix)***. Brooke immediately fires Callahan, and hires Elle instead to represent her.

In the courtroom, Elle calls Brooke's stepdaughter, Chutney, to the stand. Chutney testifies that on the day of the murder she had got a perm and then returned home to shower; when she came downstairs, she saw Brooke covered in the victim's blood. Elle requests the court visit the scene of the crime, where she demonstrates with the help of Enid that Chutney could not have been in the shower, leading Chutney to confess to committing the murder herself ***(Scene Of The Crime)***. Shocked, the judge immediately orders Chutney's arrest and acquits Brooke. As Elle celebrates her victory, she is approached by Warner, who unexpectedly proposes, admitting that Vivienne dumped him. Elle gently rejects him and thanks him for unintentionally motivating her transformation and helping her to find her passion for law ***(Find My Way/Finale)***.

At graduation, two years later, Vivienne praises Elle, who has been made valedictorian. During her speech, Elle proposes to Emmet, who accepts. The pair are celebrated by Elle's classmates (except Warner, who has quit law school to become a model) and Elle's sorority sisters, as well as Paulette and Kyle, who are now married and expecting their third child.



Meet the Characters

ELLE WOODS

Elle Woods is a stylish and kind-hearted woman, who lived a life of privilege and luxury in Malibu. She is frequently underestimated as being air-headed, but throughout the musical she repeatedly proves herself to be extremely intelligent, both intellectually and emotionally. Her compassionate nature and persistent optimism are at the core of every decision she makes, and even as her goals shift, she pursues them with a fierce determination.

EMMETT FORREST

Having grown up in a poor neighbourhood with a single mother, Emmett has had to work exceptionally hard to graduate from Harvard Law. However despite his disadvantages, his generous and supportive attitude makes him one of the first characters to recognise Elle's full potential.

PAULETTE BUONUFONTE

When we meet Paulette, she is emotionally broken down from a ten-year long abusive relationship with a man who took her dog and kicked her out of her home. Yet despite her own heartache, she is always ready to support Elle. As her friendship with Elle blossoms, so does her confidence, and she learns to celebrate herself just as much as she celebrates others.

PROFESSOR CALLAHAN

Callahan's success in the legal profession has been driven by his lack of morals and his willingness to exploit any loophole in the US justice system. His mistreatment of Elle is reflective of his wider cruelty; his arrogance and callousness fuel his lack of compassion for others.

WARNER HUNTINGTON III

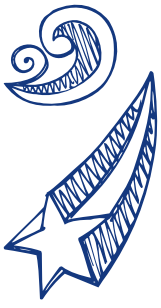
Much like Elle, Warner's character has been shaped by his family's wealth and privilege. However, in Warner, this has manifested as a passive sense of entitlement. His repeated dismissal of Elle throughout the musical reflects his binary view of the world, where only some people are deserving of success, and his inability to grow beyond this mindset leads to Elle's ultimate rejection of him.

VIVIENNE KENSINGTON

Vivienne is privileged and ambitious but, unlike Warner, she is motivated and hard-working. When she initially meets Elle, she is cruel, assuming that Elle is empty-headed and undeserving of her place at Harvard. However, over the course of the musical, she comes to recognise Elle's intelligence, and ultimately her support and friendship is integral to Elle's success.

BROOKE WYNDHAM

Much like Elle, Brooke is frequently judged by others based on stereotypes and assumptions. Her success in the business world is dismissed and even her marriage is assumed to be based on greed rather than love. However, she proves herself to be brave and fiercely loyal. Her decision to make Elle her attorney, rather than Callahan, proves how much she values integrity and sisterhood.





Delta Nu Girls

At the top of the musical, we are introduced to Elle's friends, who are **sorority sisters** at UCLA. This includes Margot, Serena and Pilar, Elle's three best friends. The Greek system, which includes fraternities and sororities, is a network of social organisations across U.S. universities.

DID YOU KNOW

The term "sorority" comes from the Latin word "**soror**", **meaning sister**, reflecting the familial connections that these groups aim to build. Although there are, in the 21st century, a handful of co-ed chapters, fraternities and sororities are traditionally single-sex organisations.

Generally, membership in a fraternity or sorority is obtained as an undergraduate student but **continues thereafter for life by gaining alumni status**. Individual fraternities and sororities vary in organisation and purpose, but most – especially the dominant form known as social fraternities and sororities – share five common elements:

- Secrecy
- Single-sex membership
- Selection of new members based on a two-part vetting and probationary process known as rushing and pledging
- Ownership and occupancy of a residential property where undergraduate members live, known as a chapter house
- A set of complex identification symbols that may include Greek letters, armorial achievements, ciphers, badges, grips, hand signs, passwords, flowers, and colours

Fraternities and sororities engage in **philanthropic activities**; host **social events**; provide "**finishing**" **training** for new members, such as instruction on etiquette, dress, and manners; and create **networking opportunities** for their newly graduated members.

Definition: *Philanthropic*

Helping others through generous voluntary or long-term donations of money, time or resources to charitable causes, aimed at creating systemic change or solving problems.



OBJECTION, OUTDATED!

The Women who opened the Courtroom Doors

From courtroom pioneers to history-making judges, the story of women in law is one of grit, brilliance, and doors pushed open, then kept open for others to follow. It is the real-world counterpart to LEGALLY BLONDE's sparkly punchline: never let anyone decide what you are capable of, least of all in places that were never built with you in mind.

As Elle Woods proves, confidence is only the start, what changes the room is competence, courage, and the refusal to be dismissed. The firsts below are not trivia, they are the moments the rules shifted, the barriers cracked, and the profession quietly changed shape, one woman at a time.

BREAKING IN (1869–1920)

1869 ARABELLA MANSFIELD
Challenged exclusionary rules and became the first woman admitted to practise law in the United States.

1872 CHARLOTTE E. RAY
Broke both racial and gender barriers to become the first Black woman lawyer in the United States (Washington, DC).

1875 MARY RICHARDSON (WITH ELIZA ORME)
Co-founded one of Britain's first women-run legal offices when women could not qualify as solicitors or barristers.

1880 BELVA LOCKWOOD
Campaigned her way to the top, becoming the first woman to argue a case before the US Supreme Court.

1888 ELIZA ORME
Earned England's first law degree for a woman (UCL), then practised via chambers on Chancery Lane with Mary Richardson.

1920 MADGE EASTON ANDERSON
Won a Court of Session appeal and qualified as the UK's first woman professional lawyer, admitted as a Scottish solicitor.



Arabella Mansfield



Charlotte E. Ray



Belva Lockwood



Eliza Orme

TAKING THE BENCH (1934–1981)

1934 FLORENCE ALLEN
Set a federal precedent as the first woman appointed a United States Circuit Court judge.

1949 ROSE HEILBRON
Reached the summit, becoming one of the first two women appointed King's Counsel in England.

1956 LILA FENWICK
Marked a breakthrough in elite legal education as the first woman to graduate from Harvard Law School.

1966 CONSTANCE BAKER MOTLEY
Made history as the first Black woman federal judge, after shaping landmark civil rights litigation.

1981 SANDRA DAY O'CONNOR
Changed the shape of the highest court as the first woman appointed to the United States Supreme Court.



Florence Allen



Rose Heilbron



Constance Baker Motley

RECOGNITION AND REPRESENTATION (2010–2026)

2010 RUTH BADER GINSBURG
Received the Brandeis Medal, becoming the first woman honoured for a lifetime advancing equality and justice.

2017 BRENDA HALE
Broke the final ceiling in Britain's top court as the first woman President of the UK Supreme Court.

2020 RAFFIA ARSHAD
Expanded visibility on the bench as the UK's first hijab-wearing judge.

2021 VICTORIA MCCLOUD
Marked a step forward for inclusion as the UK's first openly transgender judge.

2023 MARY L. SMITH
Rewrote the record books as the first Native American woman elected President of the American Bar Association.

2024 DEBRA HEMBREE LAMBERT
Took the top judicial role in her state as the first female Chief Justice of Kentucky.

2025 LADY ELISH ANGIOLINI
Added a historic first in public life as the first woman appointed Lord High Commissioner to the Church of Scotland's General Assembly.

2026 JUSTICE REVATI MOHITE DERE
Made legal history in India as the first woman sworn in as Chief Justice of the Bombay High Court.

Constance Baker Motley Photo Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, NYWT&S Collection, [reproduction number, e.g., LC-USZ62-90145]

MAKING LEGALLY BLONDE



LEGALLY BLONDE stands as a contemporary classic in the musical theatre canon and it's been an honour for us all to work on such expertly crafted material. The show's intelligent structure, matched with its fun, irreverent tone, ensures it stands tall in a line of extraordinary musicals, brimming with confidence and chutzpah. Like all great musicals, the energy and pizazz so cleverly crafted by our writers, belies the politic and gravitas of the message hidden just under the surface.

Director **NIKOLAI FOSTER**

Production Team

It takes a large team of people to put together a show like LEGALLY BLONDE. Here is just a handful of the creative team involved.

Director NIKOLAI FOSTER

The director is at the centre of the production, leading the creative process and working with the other creatives to coordinate a consistent creative vision for the show. Along with the choreography and music teams, they lead the rehearsal room, and work closely with the actors on text work, blocking, and characterisation.

Choreographer LEAH HILL

The choreographer is in charge of creating and teaching all the dance numbers in the show. They work closely with the director to make sure the storytelling remains cohesive across both dance numbers and scene work.

Musical Supervisor MATT SPENCER-SMITH

The musical supervisor looks after the music of the entire show. This means that they not only work with the actors, along with the Musical Director, but also put together and rehearses the band, as well as re-arranging/re-orchestrating parts of the score to fit the demands of their particular production.

Set Designer COLIN RICHMOND

On a touring production such as LEGALLY BLONDE, the set designer needs to create a set that can fit into a vast array of venues, all with different dimensions and technical systems. They also need to consider the logistics of the tour, and how each piece will be transported from venue to venue.

Costume Designer TOM ROGERS

The costume designer is in charge of designing costumes for all the actors. This usually involves a mix of sourcing items from various stores and commissioning makers to create specific pieces for the show. Not only do the costumes have to fit the aesthetic of the show, but they also have to allow for choreography.

Wham Designer SAM COX

The Wigs, Hair, and Make-up Designer is in charge of designing wigs, hair and make-up for the entire cast. Although the cast will do their own make-up before each show, the looks are carefully designed in order to fit the production. Similarly, hair styles will be agreed on in advance, to be done by the actors themselves. There will, however, be a designated touring team to support the cast with their wigs. Our production of LEGALLY BLONDE features over 40 individual wigs, all of which will need to be styled and maintained across the entire tour.

TOURING TEAM

LEGALLY BLONDE is a touring production, meaning that after its run at Curve it will travel to theatres across the UK and Ireland. This means that every week the entire set will need to be taken down and transported (along with all the costumes, wigs, props, etc.) to the next venue, where it will be reconstructed in the new theatre.

The production remains mostly the same at each venue; however, because of the size and capabilities of the different theatres small changes often have to be made before the first performance at a new venue. In order to support this process, a small creative team remain attached to the show until the end of the tour, with a variety of different responsibilities.

On the next page are just a handful of the creatives who will be travelling with LEGALLY BLONDE in addition to the multitude of technical professionals.

Musical Director CERYS MCKENNA

As Musical Director, Cerys works closely with Matt to teach the score to the actors. In a touring production like LEGALLY BLONDE, unlike the Musical Supervisor, the Musical Director will tour with the show and conduct both the band and the actors at every performance. Additionally, Cerys will support any extra rehearsals that are needed, such as for covers (often referred to as understudies).

Associate Director MICHELLE PAYNE

During rehearsals, Michelle works closely with Nikolai to understand his vision for the show. She is also in charge of rehearsing the covers for each role, including running cover runs. Once the show sets off on tour, Michelle will visit every venue to help transition the actors into this new space. She will also continue to watch the show regularly and give notes to actors, to help them keep their performances consistent. While touring, Michelle will continue to rehearse with covers and will be in charge of supporting them when they go onstage.

Dance Captain AARON SHALES

Aaron is a member of the ensemble (playing a variety of roles including Elle's Mom and Courtroom Stenographer) who works closely with the rest of the choreography team to maintain the integrity of the show's dance numbers. While on tour, they are able to support any necessary choreographic changes, due to venue restrictions or cast changes. They will also occasionally watch the show in order to give notes.



The Show Must Go On

This production of LEGALLY BLONDE will be on tour for a year. During that time, there will inevitably be days when actors are unable to perform the show, due to illness or other commitments. Because of this, it is important that each 'track' has been learnt by multiple actors, in order to cover as many actors being off as possible.

The Cover System: Key Vocabulary

Track

An actor's track refers to everything they do onstage during a show, including all the roles they play, their participation in dance numbers, the specific harmonies that they sing, and any set pieces or props that they move.

Alternate

An alternate is an actor who is contracted to perform a specific role for designated performances. Unlike a cover, who typically performs the role for one-off shows, an alternate is specifically cast to do a set number of shows. Alternates are typically cast for particularly strenuous roles, in order not to overwork the lead actor, and are also a great chance to offer some variety in the production and showcase another talented actor.

Cover

A cover (also known as an understudy) is a member of the company who is contracted to learn a specific role in case the usual actor is unable to do a specific show (usually due to illness). This is learnt in addition to their usual role, but the cover would never combine the two roles (except in highly exceptional circumstances). The cover is supported in learning the role by the Associate Director and the Dance Captain, and will typically have cover rehearsals in which they will develop the character for themselves. In larger shows there will often be multiple covers for each role. These are typically denoted as 'first cover'/'second cover' etc. to convey the order in which they would be asked to cover the role.





Swing

A swing is typically contracted to learn all the ensemble's tracks across the whole show, so that if a member of the ensemble is performing the role that they are covering, a swing can perform that ensemble member's usual track. For example, in LEGALLY BLONDE, James Lim (an ensemble member) is first cover for Emmett Forrest. If he goes onstage as Emmett, then Dylan Gordon-Jones (a swing) will take over James' track.

Split Track

If multiple cast members are ill, there will sometimes not be enough covers/swings to fill in for them, meaning that there may be fewer people onstage than normal. Unlike covers, who are contracted to perform a specific track, swings cover a wide range of actors, meaning they are able to sometimes perform a split track. This involves jumping between different actors' tracks to make sure that all important moments are covered and to the dance numbers look balanced.

Cut Show

A cut show refers to a show that is altered because of fewer actors being onstage. The extent to which a show is cut varies significantly, but it can refer to anything from having fewer people in a dance number to reassigning, or even cutting, small chunks of lines. The Associate Director, with the support of their dance captain, is in charge of making these cuts and supporting the actors to make it work. It is very important that these cuts do not compromise the standard of the show.

Cover Run

Cover runs take place once the show is already running, usually in the morning or afternoon before a full show. They are arranged by the Associate Director and involve running the entire show, without an audience, with as many actors playing roles that they cover as possible. The aim is to give actors the chance to run the entire show, including logistical elements such as costume change, in a rehearsal setting. Although the schedule is yet to be finalised, for LEGALLY BLONDE there are likely to be many cover runs, due to the number of cast members that are covering multiple roles.

On LEGALLY BLONDE, the majority of actors are covering at least one extra role, in addition to their own. In addition, the cast includes two on-stage swings and three off-stage swings.

Swings are the Superheroes of Musicals!

Swings are integral to any show, supporting cast members who are unable to perform for any reason. One of the hardest jobs in theatre because they might get called mid-show to go on for someone.

You need to have a talent for detail, a flexible memory to learn, comprehend and execute the material, whilst handling the pressure of being ready to go at any moment!

TASK

Research the difference between an On-Stage and Off-Stage Swing.

The Greek Chorus

"Elle, this is a tragedy and every tragedy needs a Greek Chorus!"
SERENA

When we meet Margot, Serena and Pilar, we are introduced to them as Elle's sorority sisters, and three of her closest friends. However, midway through Act 1, they develop another role when they become Elle's own personal 'Greek Chorus'.

In Ancient Greek drama, a Greek Chorus was a group of performers who collectively commented on the action, providing background information and often offering judgements as the voice of the community. Traditionally they wore masks to avoid any sense of individuality, and they typically displayed a meta-theatrical awareness of the plot and structure of the play.

META-THEATRICAL

When a play addresses its own nature as a drama or performance. It breaks the fourth wall and highlights the distinction between reality and illusion, using the technique like a play within a play or direct address.

Trope

Derived from the Greek Tropos ("Turn") it represents a "turn of phrase" or conventional storytelling tool that, when overused, can become a cliché.

Adhere

Means to stick firmly to something, the rules, agreement, belief, to follow it literally or metaphorically.

Diverge

Means to move, branch off from the standard path, go in a different direction, different view, opinion or character.

TASK: RESEARCH

Research the role of the Greek Chorus in ancient theatre. Explore the history of the chorus in classical literature, and the features and rules of the chorus. Next, consider which plays or productions that you have seen use this trope, and how they adhere/diverge from the traditional 'rules' of a Greek Chorus. If you have seen LEGALLY BLONDE, you may choose to use this as an example. You may wish to consider:

- Who can see the Greek Chorus? Are they able to influence any characters, or is their presence only observed by the audience?
- Are the Greek Chorus aware of the audience? Are they aware that they are in a play/movie?
- What knowledge does the Greek Chorus have about the events of the play? Is their information filtered through a specific character? Do they have advance knowledge of future events?

TASK: CREATE YOUR OWN GREEK CHORUS

In groups of 5 or 6, decide on a simple narrative that the whole group knows or could use. For example, this could be the prologue for ROMEO AND JULIET or any other Shakespearian play, or a classic nursey rhyme or fairy tale; or simply something you have invented.

Once you have a storyline, create a short performance narrating that storyline as a Greek Chorus. Your storyline could be up of 8, 10 or 12 lines of narration.

You can choose to designate certain members of the group to be character/s outside of the chorus but make sure that the chorus comprises of the majority of the group.

THINK ABOUT

- Who are the Greek Chorus? In LEGALLY BLONDE they are sorority sisters; in other plays they may be neighbours, gods, or even animals. Think about who this group is comprised of, without inventing individual characters.
- How does the Chorus communicate? Do they speak entirely in unison? Do they sing? Speak in rhyme?
- How do they move? Where are they in the space? Can the other characters see them?
- Do they interact with the narrative? Are they involved in it? Do they know what is going to happen, or are they as surprised as the characters?

RULES OF A GREEK CHORUS

Research: Why and how the Greek Chorus were used in plays originally? Here are three to get you started.

- 12-50 chorus members
- Uses Unison
- Comment on the action

EXTENSION TASK: WHY NOT GET CREATIVE!

A key feature of a Greek Chorus is their **collective nature**. Traditionally, matching costumes are used to blend the group together. Have a go at adding this element to the task above. How can you create the same effect vocally and physically?









DURING THE SHOW



LEGALLY BLONDE THE MUSICAL is a big show, with around 35 named characters. In this production, there is a cast of 20 performers, plus 2 off-stage swings. As a result, there is a significant amount of **multi-rolling**, where a single actor plays multiple characters across the show.

Below are the headshots of four of our **ensemble**, all of whom have multiple **featured roles** across the show. Before the show, you could choose **one** of these actors and, while you watch, take note of what characters they play.



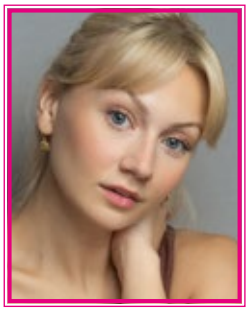
Bradley Delarosbel



Aaron Shales



Jaime Tait



Daisy Twells

After the show, find others who have followed the same actor's track. In small groups, complete the following tasks:

Compile a collective list of all the characters played by that actor across the show. NOTE: On the next page are lists for reference if you get stuck; however, do not worry about getting all the roles. Focus particularly on the actor's **speaking** roles.

Use a mix of research and your own memories of the production to write down some facts about each character.

Discuss how the actor differentiated between these roles. Think about their **acting choices** (vocal techniques, physical characterisations, etc.), but also consider the **production elements** that support these transformations (costume, props, make-up, hair, etc.).

OPTIONAL EXTENSION TASK

Let's get you up on your feet to explore your own interpretation of each character. If you were cast in these roles, how would you differentiate between these characters **physically** and **vocally**?

This is a list of the roles they play: (speaking characters are in bold)

Bradley Delarosbel

Elle's Dad, **Harvard Admissions Professor**, Harvard Student, Gym-Goer, **Carlos**

Aaron Shales

Gaelen (Delta Nu Girl), **Elle's Mom**, Harvard Student, **Kiki** (Hairdresser), Gym-Goer, Prison Inmate, **Court Stenographer**

Jaime Tait

Frat Boy, **Harvard Admissions Professor**, Harvard Student, **Dewey**, Gym-Goer, **Nikos**

Daisy Twells

Kate (Delta Nu); Harvard Student; **Inez** (Salon Customer); **Chutney**

REMEMBER

Track

An actor's track refers to everything they do onstage during a show, including all the roles they play, their participation in dance numbers, the specific harmonies that they sing, and any set pieces or props that they move.

Please note *that these lists were compiled during the rehearsal process, and so there may be some discrepancies in non-speaking roles from the final production. Additionally, at any given performance, actors' tracks may be covered by a swing/ another performer.*







"HARVARD'S THE PERFECT PLACE FOR ME TO GROW!"

Character Arcs

LEGALLY BLONDE is a **character-driven** show, meaning that it is the protagonist's (aka the main character's) **internal** journey which drives the narrative, rather than **external** events. In LEGALLY BLONDE, the Elle Woods that we meet at the beginning of the show has very different beliefs and desires than the Elle Woods that we see in the finale of the show.

This **emotional journey** can be plotted in a **character arc**. This shows the progression of a character's interior journey across a narrative, and usually features some key beats*

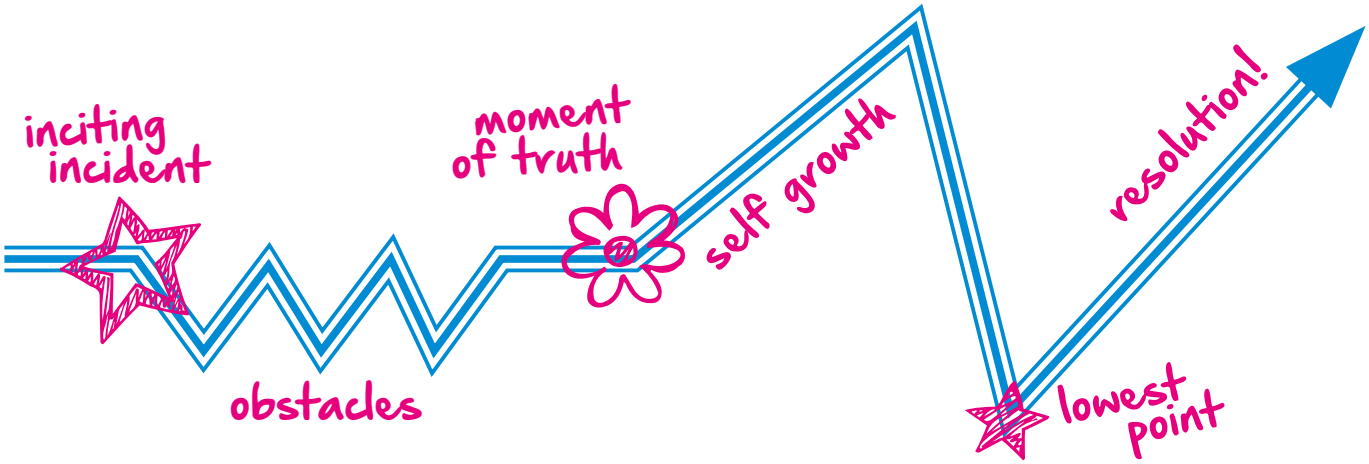
Inciting Incident The very first turning point that the protagonist encounters, that occurs near the beginning of the narrative and sets the character in a path that will lead to the following events.

Turning Point These are moments when a decisive change in situation occurs. The protagonist will encounter many turning points across the narrative.

Moment of Truth A pivotal turning point, usually around the midpoint of the narrative, when the protagonist realises something that changes their belief system. This may be an incomplete or temporary realisation, but it usually marks a slight shift in motivation or intention.

Lowest Point The "darkest night" for the protagonist, where they hit rock bottom in both their inner and outer conflicts.

Resolution The final section of the narrative, where the protagonist is either successful or unsuccessful in their goals.



YOUR TASK

In pairs or small groups, draw out the character arc of the protagonist of any **character-driven** film/play. If you have seen LEGALLY BLONDE, you may choose to use Elle Woods as your example.

Mark the above moments onto your character arc, and explore **why** the writers have chosen to highlight these moments as pivotal in their characters' journeys. Why do they start with that particular inciting incident? How does it set up the rest of the narrative? How is the character different at the end of the show from the beginning.

EXTENSION TASK

Time to delve deeper, consider what remains **consistent** about the character. A well-written character will have some core values/qualities that are established early in the narrative and remain consistent throughout. In your chosen example, what qualities define the character throughout the narrative? How do these qualities influence the decisions that the character makes?

When you are next looking at portraying a character in a play, consider using this task to help you to add more, understanding, depth and meaning to the interpretation and the characters journey.

Music and Meaning

On the first day of rehearsals, there is a **read-through** of the script, during which all the actors speak the songs as monologues, rather than singing them. This takes the pressure off on the first day (as even professional actors can be nervous to sing in front of each other for the first time!) but also encouraged the actors to focus on the lyrics and their meaning.

LEGALLY BLONDE is a musical that many people know very well – the majority of the actors had been listening to the soundtrack regularly before we started rehearsal and therefore knew by heart all the vocal choices that the performers on the soundtrack had made. By reading the songs rather than singing them, the actors broke this pattern and re-considered the lyrics as words, rather than as lyrics. Throughout the process, this method is used to help actors stay engaged in the reality of the scene and the emotions behind the words.

TASK

Individually select a solo song, either from LEGALLY BLONDE or another musical. Make sure to select a lyrically interesting song (rather than something overly repetitive).

In pairs, take it in turns to read the songs, as monologues, to each other. Each time you read the monologue, try to engage with the lyrics in a different way. Think about different emotions that you could capture and which specific words that you could emphasise. Don't worry about the context of the song within the musical that it is from – consider the song in isolation and challenge yourself to be creative with your interpretations.

Discuss with your partner how your choices change the meaning of the song.

DID YOU KNOW

Beat

This refers to the smallest unit of action or thought within a scene, marking a distinct shift in topic, tone, tactic, or intention.

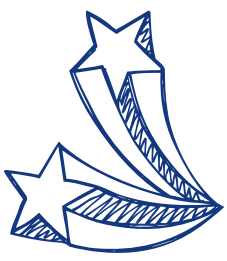
Can you find out more about how this is used in a scene?

EXTENSION TASK

Once you have explored a variety of different ways of speaking the song, put the lyrics back into context with the music. By either looking at sheet music for the song, or listening to a recording of it, consider how the music dictates where the emphasis is placed. Think about ways that the actors use techniques such as volume and articulation to place emphasis but also consider how the tune/ music itself instructs the singer on what to do. When does the accompaniment get louder? How does it affect the emphasis when the notes are higher or lower? Which of your choices suit the music, and which go against what the composer has written?

There are certain elements of the song that have to remain the same: the lyrics, and tune, etc, while other musical flourishes are at the discretion of the actor. Using the song you have selected as a reference, make a list of ways in which meaning is dictated by the composer and ways in which it can be shaped by a performer.





Developing Character within an Ensemble

LEGALLY BLONDE is a musical that has a lot of characters, who often appear for only a few scenes and have very few lines in which to establish their identity.

It is very important, therefore, for the actors to really explore how they deliver these lines, and to be able to quickly communicate their character's personality to the audience.

TASK

Below are some lyrics from the song *Omigod You Guys*, with the line assignments taken out. Try and disregard any prior knowledge of how the lines are divided/the characterisation of the Delta Nu girls are in the original musical.

Split into groups of 5 or 6 and read through the extract.

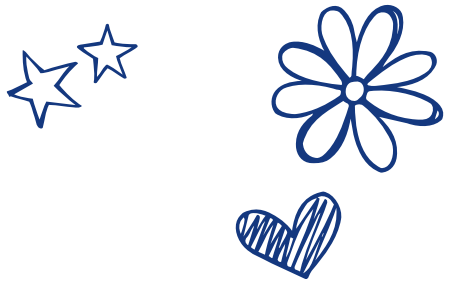
Split the text up between your group. It is up to you whether you speak or sing the lines (or a mixture of both!). Be creative about how you break down the lines – you could have multiple people on a single line.

Discuss your individual characters amongst the group and consider how your lines can be delivered in a way that introduces the audience to them. This may involve some shuffling of lines amongst yourselves. Keep these character choices simple and communicable to an audience, and think about what physical and vocal choices will make your character as easily readable on stage, as possible.

Now, stage the scene amongst yourself. Make sure that each character is firmly established, without changing any of the lines. Keep your character 'alive' throughout the scene while still giving the other actors space to establish their own characters.

TEXT

Dear Elle: He's a lucky guy – I'm, like, gonna cry – I got tears coming out of my nose! Mad props! He's the campus catch: you're a perfect match, 'cause you've both got such great taste in clothes! Of course he will propose!!! Dear Elle honey, mazel tov! Future's taking off... bring that ring back and show it to me! Four carats of princess cut – are you psyched or what? I just wish I could be there to see... when he gets down on one knee! Oh. My. God. Omigod you guys, looks like Elle's gonna win the prize! If there ever was a perfect couple, this one qualifies. Omigod you guys! Oh my god! This is happening, our own homecoming queen and king, finally she'll be trying on a huge engagement ring for size! Omigod you guys! Omigod! Okay... everybody sign? Good. Now fall in line. And we'll start the engagement parade. Light candles and single file. Don't forget to smile. Lose the gum, Kate, you look like the maid! Sorry. Now prepare to serenade! Shh! Oh. My. God. Omigod you guys! Looks like Elle's gonna win the prize. Shh! If there ever was a perfect couple, this one quali – shh! Omigod you – Guys, I'm serious! Elle and Warner were meant to be. Not once ever has he hit on me. Shut up! They're just like that couple from "Titanic!"... Only no one dies. Omigod- two, three, four!



REFLECTION



ACTIVITY: REVIEW WRITING

Below are links to some reviews for past productions of LEGALLY BLONDE. Read a selection of them and think about their structure. What production elements do they cover? What factual information about the show do they include? How do they frame their opinions?

If you have seen LEGALLY BLONDE, write your own review of the production.
If not, pick another musical or show that you have seen recently and write a review of that.

https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2022/may/25/legally-blonde-review-regents-park-open-air-theatre-musical

https://www.yorkmix.com/review-legally-blonde

https://www.independent.com/2019/04/17/legally-blonde-the-musical-lacks-substance/#:~:text=Overall%2C%20it's%20light%20and%20inoffensive,%2Dmusical%2Dlacks%2Dsubstance/

ACTIVITY: CRITICAL DISCUSSION

LEGALLY BLONDE is often referred to as a **feminist** musical. However, it is also sometimes criticised for having a **lack of nuance**. Research and share, either as an article or as a presentation, the ways in which LEGALLY BLONDE challenges/reinforces stereotypes about women. You may wish to consider:

- The ways in which Elle changes across the narrative vs. the ways in which Elle changes others
- Elle's privileges as a wealthy Malibu socialite
- The role of other women such as Paulette and Enid
- The effectiveness/limitations of musical theatre as a form of storytelling

Definition: *Nuance* = A subtle difference or distinction in appearance, meaning, sound, shade etc.

EXTENSION TASK

Compare LEGALLY BLONDE to another feminist narrative, such as MEAN GIRLS, SYLIVA or WAITRESS. How are they similar/how do they differ? Is one more effective than the other?





"You must always have faith in people. And most importantly, you must always have faith in yourself."

"Congratulations, Class of 2004. We did it!"





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