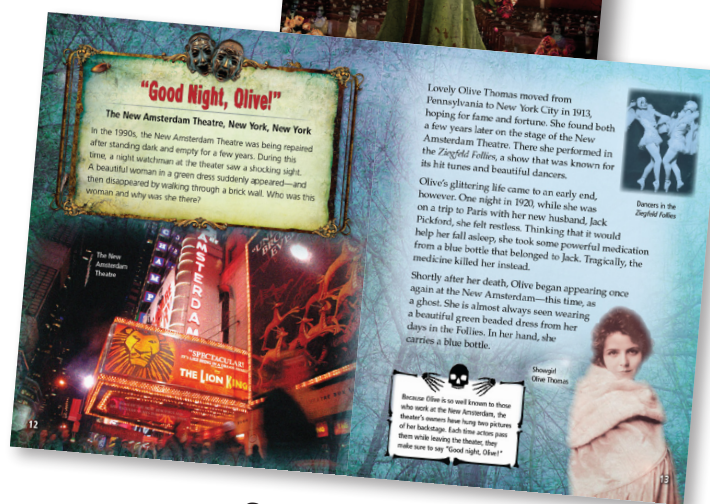
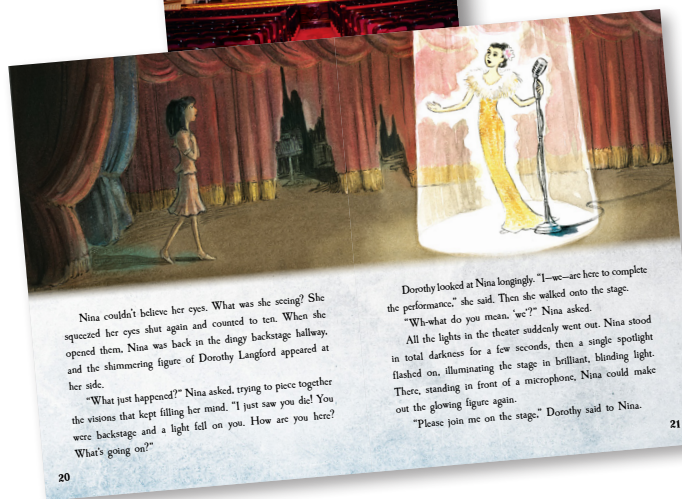


# The Secret of the Tragic Theater COMBO



## Teacher's Guide



**Cold Whispers:**  
*The Secret of the Tragic Theater*

**Scary Places:**  
*Tragic Theaters*

### Fiction and Nonfiction

Use this Teacher's Guide to help students learn about fiction and nonfiction texts. The first section of the guide provides a basic overview of the genres, while the second section can be used as a lesson plan for comparing two individual titles about similar spooky topics.

#### CCSS Language Arts Standards

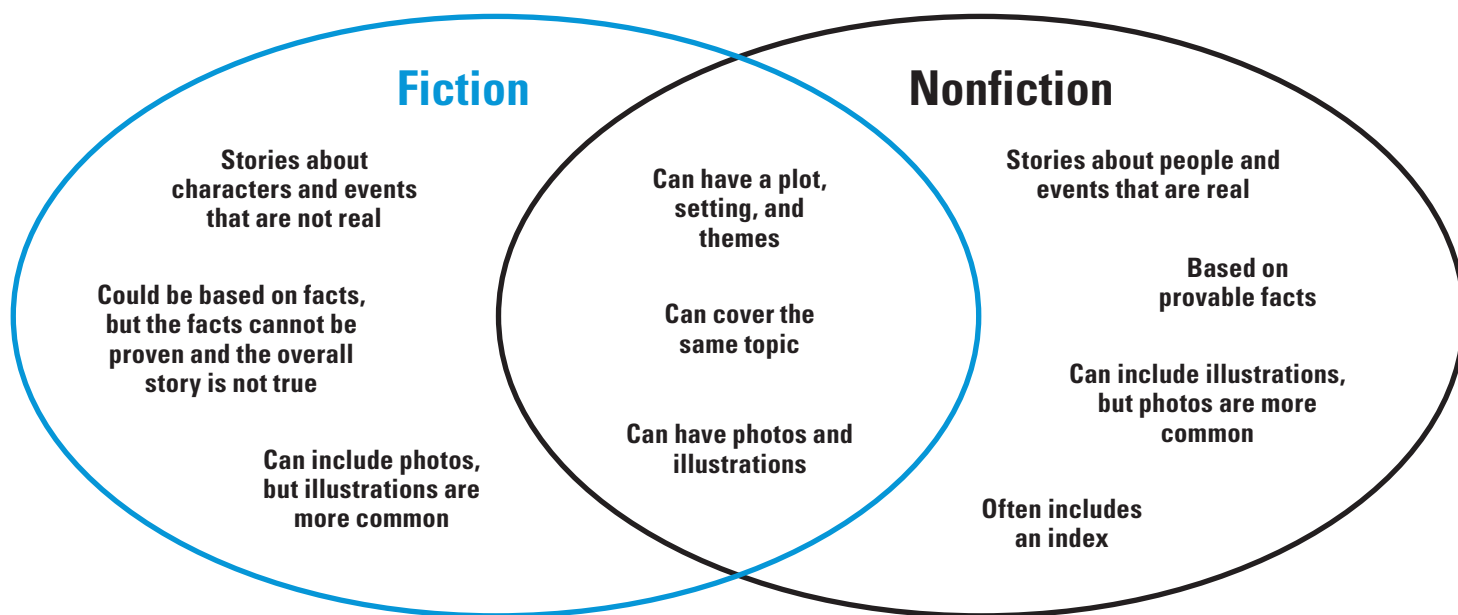
- RI.3.9** Compare and contrast the most important points and key details presented in two texts on the same topic.
- RI.4.9** Integrate information from two texts on the same topic in order to write or speak about the subject knowledgeably.

## Discuss Fiction and Nonfiction

Prompt students to describe the genres of fiction and nonfiction. Ask them to cite examples of each genre. For example, fiction includes short stories and novels, while nonfiction includes newspapers and textbooks.

## Create a Chart or Diagram

Help students establish what the differences and similarities are between fiction and nonfiction by using a Venn diagram or a chart. Place fiction attributes on one side of the chart and nonfiction attributes on the other side, with a space in the middle for shared attributes.



## Define Important Terms and Concepts

Assist students in defining the following literary terms and concepts in order to help compare fiction and nonfiction texts.

- **Character** (a person portrayed in a novel, short story, or play)
- **Characterization** (the way the author describes a character)
- **Chronological order** (the order in which events actually happened)
- **Facts** (information that can be proven true)
- **Mood** (the way the reader feels when reading a text)
- **Plot** (sequence of events in a story where each event causes the next event to happen)
- **Setting** (where a story takes place)
- **Theme** (the main idea of a story)

As students further explore works of fiction and nonfiction, they can apply the terms and concepts they have learned to individual books and add new words to this list.

## Remind Students

### Fiction

Explain that some works of fiction can be based on fact. For example, a historical novel may use factual details about a particular time to create a realistic setting. Also, fiction can sound like the truth, even though the author has invented the information in the book.

### Nonfiction

A nonfiction story, such as a ghost story, can include elements of fiction. For example, many visitors to the White House have claimed they saw the ghost of President Abraham Lincoln. While it's true that Lincoln lived at the White House and the visitors are real people who are certain about what they saw, there is no concrete evidence to suggest that the ghost actually exists.

## A Closer Look

### Cold Whispers: *The Secret of the Tragic Theater* and Scary Places: *Tragic Theaters*

**Objective:** To have students compare fiction and nonfiction texts about spooky theaters

### 1. Read

Have students read the Cold Whispers title, *The Secret of the Tragic Theater*. Then ask them to read the Scary Places title, *Tragic Theaters*—especially “Good Night, Olive!” (pages 12–13). Ask students to take notes about the setting, characters, and any important themes as they read.

- Which of the stories is fiction? Which is nonfiction? How can you tell? Ask students what clues helped them figure out what genre each book falls into.

### 2. Compare and Contrast: Dorothy Langford and Olive Thomas

Have students write short descriptions of the character Dorothy Langford in *The Secret of the Tragic Theater* and the showgirl Olive Thomas in *Tragic Theaters* “Good Night, Olive!” In what ways are Dorothy and Olive similar? In what ways are they different? Encourage students to use specific details from the text.

- Students should mention that Dorothy Langford is a fictional character, while Olive Thomas was a real woman.
- Both Dorothy Langford and Olive Thomas are former performers who died tragically and are believed to haunt the theaters where they last performed.
- Students may take note of other similarities and differences (e.g., time period, costumes, appearance, etc.) as well.

### 3. Challenge Students: Common Storytelling Devices

Begin a class discussion about specific storytelling devices used in Cold Whispers: *The Secret of the Tragic Theater* and Scary Places: *Tragic Theaters*. Consider how storytelling devices help distinguish fiction from nonfiction texts.

#### Point of View

Discuss point of view (the mode of narration, i.e., first person, second person, or third person) in both the fiction and nonfiction titles. Who's telling the story in each text? (For example, is Nina the narrator in the fiction text? Why or why not?)

#### Flashback

Flashback—or the narration of earlier events—is another important storytelling device. Is flashback used in the fiction and nonfiction titles? If so, how is it used? Ask students to provide specific examples.

### 4. Extend Knowledge: Put on a Show!

Break students into small groups and ask them to write a short skit that takes place in a haunted theater. Each group member should come up with a few lines of dialogue. Make sure students incorporate a spooky element into the skit. Then have the students perform it in front of the class.

