

# BASIC STAGE LIGHTING DESIGN

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**Grades 9-12**

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**Educational Objective:** Students will demonstrate their knowledge of the characteristics of stage lighting by identifying and duplicating the lighting in a Rembrandt Painting.

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**Materials Needed:** 2 flashlights, 2 fresnels or ellipsoidal light instruments, copies of a Rembrandt painting - from a book of prints, Tracing paper or Velum, Colored Pencils. Pre-arrange an area in the space where the final project can take place. This needs to be dark and have a place where students can manipulate 2 lighting instruments.

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**Can take place over 2-4 class periods.**

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**Hook:** Have students enter into a darkened room. Ask for a volunteer to come to the front for a demonstration.

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1. Experiment with the angle of light.
  - a. Have the student shine a flashlight at their face from below the chin (Frankenstein Style)
    - i. Ask the class to discuss the effect
      1. Where are the highlights
      2. Where are the shadows
      3. Is the face elongated, compacted, etc
      4. Is the person easily recognizable
      5. What emotion does the image evoke
    - ii. How does the effect change the students face

- iii. Repeat with 2-3 students
- b. Have a student shine a flashlight at their face from directly above their face.
  - i. Ask the class to discuss the difference between the two angles
- c. Repeat while having the student(s) shine the light:
  - i. Directly into face from in front of face
  - ii. Directly behind the volunteer, at back of their head (someone else hold flashlight)
  - iii. Directly behind and above the volunteer
  - iv. Shine the light from front/side angle
  - v. Shine the light from back/side angle
  - vi. Etc
- d. It is important that the students be able to see and discuss the effect of different angles on the human form.
  - i. Physical effect
  - ii. Emotional impact
  - iii. Etc

**Exercises:**

1. Discuss the primary qualities of light as they relate to lighting an actor
  - a. 3-Dimensionality, visibility, focus, emotional impact
2. Divide the students into teams of 3 or 4
  - a. Give each group a pre-selected Rembrandt print, 3-4 pieces of tracing paper or velum, 3 different colored pencils
  - b. Have the teams identify the direction and angle of the primary light with arrows and one color

- c. Have the teams identify the direction and angle of the secondary light with arrows and different color
- d. Have the teams identify the direction and angle of the reflected light with arrows and a third color
- e. When the teams have finished have each team describe their lighting analysis to the class

### 3. Final project

- a. Break students into their teams with 2 light sources. Have teams brainstorm in their group the angles of light necessary to create the look. They need to identify the angle of the light sources. Then have groups come one at a time and manipulate the 2 light sources to duplicate the look in the picture.

NOTE: The students will need to be able to recreate the prints as closely as possible. Be selective on the number of models and activities shown in the prints. Choose pictures that will be easily recreated physically so the students can concentrate on lighting.