

BACKGROUND INCLUDING PRIOR LEARNING AND PREPARATION

“It’s looking at things another way...”

The premise of WICKED is that you have not been told the whole story about the Land of Oz.

The Land of Oz is a metaphor for any time or place in which a story takes place. It could represent your world, a time in history or simply a magical world of the imagination.

It encourages you to look at things very differently by exploring the themes of friendship, difference and diversity, trust and tolerance, the use of propaganda, difference and diversity and the manipulation of public opinion.

Was the WICKED Witch of the West really WICKED? Was Glinda the Good really so good?

Why was the Lion so cowardly? How did the Tin Man lose his heart and the Scarecrow his brain?

And why did the WICKED Witch of the West want the jewelled shoes so much?

WICKED sets out to explore all of this and more. The musical is often described as a ‘prequel’ to the Wizard of Oz but in fact the story takes place before, simultaneously and after the familiar Oz tale. It has been described as creating ‘a parallel universe to that of the Wizard of Oz’ and a ‘re-imagining of the same world’ that looks at things very differently.

Prior learning / preparation

A useful starting point is to clarify pupil knowledge of the Wizard of Oz story (either as a novel or a film) so that they can draw parallels and fully engage with the moral context of the WICKED story as it explores the differences between right and wrong, good and evil (or being “WICKED”).

Accompanying notes provide information about the background to the creation of the musical and the themes and messages contained within the story. Many of the suggested activities would be best left until after students have seen the performance. There are some activities designed to introduce students to the characters, themes and plot and others designed for students who have some understanding of the show.