

# *Arms and the Man*

by Bernard Shaw

## Study Guide

THE NATIONAL ARTS CENTRE ENGLISH THEATRE  
PROGRAMMES FOR STUDENT AUDIENCES  
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## About This Guide

This study guide is formatted in easy-to-copy single pages. They can be used separately or in any combination that works for your classes. The two colour pages are meant for classroom display, but may also be photocopied for students. Here is an outline of the contents of each page with suggestions as to its use.

<b>Page:</b>		<b>May Be Used To:</b>
Pages 2, 3	<b>The Play</b> Plot outline of the play, character descriptions, themes and comments.	Aid students in appreciating the script and performance
Page 4	<b>Biography of Bernard Shaw</b>	Provide students' enrichment
Page 5	<b>Historical Background of the Play</b>	Foster students' understanding of the politics of the period.
Page 6	<b>War in the 19th Century</b>	Aid students' understanding of terms in the play.
Page 7	<b>Who Helped Put the Production Together?</b> List of cast members, director and heads of design and production.	Aid students in writing a review and help them relate to the production.
Page 8	<b>Activities Before Viewing the Play</b>	Prepare the class for the performance.
Pages 9-11	<b>Short Scene from <i>Arms and the Man</i></b>	Explore Shavian text.
Pages 12, 13	<b>ArtsAlive Website Research Project</b>	Introduce NAC website and provide viewing activity.
Page 14	<b>Activities After Viewing the Play</b>	Aid teacher in helping students reflect on and appreciate the show.
Page 15	<b>A Review of Shaw's script</b>	Provide source of discussion.
Page 16	<b>Ideas on Designing a Set</b>	Provide enriched understanding of the design elements of a set.
Pages 17, 18	<b>Curriculum References</b>	Provide the teacher with connections between curriculum and performance.
Page 19	<b>Theatre Etiquette</b>	Prepare students as audience members.

## The Play

***Arms and the Man***, one of Bernard Shaw's earliest plays written when he was 38 years old, was first performed in London in 1894. The success of *Arms and the Man* has been consistent right from its first production. The original staging of the play was so well received that Shaw's reputation as one of the greatest wits in the London drama scene was almost instantly established. It was and is still one of his most popular and most frequently produced comedies. It was published four years later in a collection called *Plays Pleasant*.

### Characters of the Play – in order of appearance

**Raina Petkoff** – She is the young heroine of the play, the only child of Major Petkoff and Catherine Petkoff. She is a high-spirited idealistic girl who initially has romantic notions of love and war but changes her views as a result of events of the play.

**Catherine Petkoff** – She is a middle-aged affected woman who is Raina's mother. She is "imperiously energetic", good looking and wishes to impress everyone with her social standing. She tries to pass herself off as a Viennese lady.

**Louka** – She is a servant girl in the Petkoff household who is proud and looks down on servility. She is ambitious and wishes to rise in life. Nicola wishes to marry her, but she has other plans.

**Major Petkoff** – Paul Petkoff has acquired his rank in the Bulgarian army more because of his family's wealth than his ability as a military strategist or leader. He is good-natured, gullible and blustery.

**Sergius** – Major Saranoff is a dashing handsome romantic hero filled with bravado and idealistic morals. He, too, has gained his high military rank in the Bulgarian army through charm and family position rather than through common sense or training. He is engaged to Raina but flirts with Louka.



**Bluntschli** – He is a Swiss professional soldier who has been appointed Captain in the Serbian army. He is energetic, practical, well-trained and of "undistinguished appearance". He feels that it is better to be armed with chocolates than with ammunition in the battlefield.

**Nicola** – He is an old servant of the family who is discreet and servile. He is fond of Louka, but disapproves of her bold attitude.



A medal of the Serbo-Bulgarian War, 1885

## More About the Play

Shaw employs irony in the title of his play, taken from the opening line of the epic poem "The Aeneid" written in 19 BC by the Roman poet Virgil - "Of arms and the man I sing ..." - in which Virgil glorifies war. Shaw's purpose in this play, however, is to attack the romantic idea of war.

The **conflict** in *Arms and the Man* is between opposing beliefs and ideas: the romantic or idealistic notions of war and love which are held by Raina and the realistic picture of war drawn by Bluntschli, as well as the practical side of love and marriage as expressed by Louka.

The **comedy** of the play depends on contrasts of characters, unexpected turns of events, mistaken identities, surprising opinions, irony, wit and satire.

The play has two major **themes** or issues: war and marriage. A romantic illusion about war as held by Sergius and Raina leads to disasters, in the same way that romantic notions of love lead to unhappy marriages. A minor theme deals with the relationship between the upper and lower classes as represented by the Petkoffs who are somewhat frivolous and incompetent and their servants Nicola and Louka who are intelligent, practical and focused on clear goals. Although Shaw set the play in an exotic corner of southeast Europe, his characters have recognizable British traits. Like all of Shaw's plays, *Arms and the Man* offers social criticism tempered by fine comedy.

Shaw chose what seemed like an insignificant little conflict between minor countries as the starting point for his anti-war play. His warnings were prophetic, however, since the conflicts in the Balkans during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century eventually led to the First World War of 1914-1918. It was only through the senseless horror of this conflict that the British people and the rest of the world came to realize the folly of their romantic vision of war.

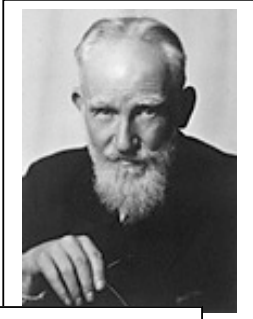
The **plot**: A fleeing member of the Serbian army desperately climbs through Raina Petkoff's bedroom window to escape capture, but he turns out to be a Swiss mercenary officer by the name of Captain Bluntschli. Raina scolds him for being cowardly and informs him of the bravery of her fiancé, Sergius, a cavalry officer who led the Bulgarian victory. Bluntschli informs her of the foolish nature of Sergius' charge in the battle and then explains that chocolates are more valuable in a war than bullets, a statement that outrages Raina. He shocks her even more when he reveals that he is afraid and unwilling to die. However, when soldiers come seeking out the run-away, Raina hides the fugitive, and only her maid, Louka, is aware of her actions. Act II takes place four months later, when Raina's father and fiancé have returned after the war. The two men talk about a young Swiss officer who had impressed them with his practical approach to the exchange of soldiers. The men also laugh about the tale of the officer's escape and how a young girl had given him shelter in her bedroom, little suspecting that it happened in Major Petkoff's own house. Meanwhile in secret, Sergius has been flirting with Louka. Unexpectedly, Captain Bluntschli shows up to return an overcoat that Raina



had lent him for his escape, and she panics when her father invites him to stay for lunch. In Act III, while Bluntschli is helping the men plan for the transport of troops, Raina is worried that her father will find the photo she had secretly left in the coat pocket for her "Chocolate Cream Soldier". When Sergius discovers the bond between Raina and Bluntschli he challenges him to a duel, but Raina interrupts and expresses her real feelings for Bluntschli. Louka succeeds in securing Sergius for herself and Major Petkoff and his wife give consent to Bluntschli to marry Raina.

## (George) Bernard Shaw (1856 –1950) – A Brief Biography

Did you know that Bernard Shaw (he hated the name George and never used it) wrote more plays than Shakespeare? He was also a strong supporter of women's rights, a teetotaler, a vegetarian, a music critic, one of the most popular speakers of his time, a great wit, a critic of Shakespeare's writing, an advocate of simplifying the alphabet and spelling of English, an Oscar winner, a Nobel winner, an avid socialist, and one of the most performed playwrights in the English language.



Bernard Shaw

He had opinions on almost any topic and gave them quite freely. His plays call attention to problems such as class snobbery, prostitution, slum landlords, the folly of war, the evils of capitalism, the benefits of capitalism and the hypocrisy of do-gooders, to name a few. To expose the problems of society he did not present a hero versus a villain representing good against evil, but he instead tried to create life-like people who are a mixture of good and evil.

Shaw's career as a dramatist began slowly with his plays unappreciated or, as in the case of *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, banned. He was recognized as a great wit after his production of *Arms and the Man* in 1894, but with the production of *Man and Superman* in 1905 his fame as a serious playwright was established. Other plays by Shaw include *You Never Can Tell* (1899), *The Doctor's Dilemma* (1906), *Candida* (1897), *Misalliance* (1910), *Major Barbara* (1905), *Pygmalion* (1913), *Caesar and Cleopatra* (1906), *Overruled* (1912), *Saint Joan* (1923), *The Apple Cart* (1929), *Androcles and the Lion* (1912), and *Heartbreak House* (1920).

Shaw was born in Dublin, Ireland on July 26, 1856, to a mother who was a singer and a father who was a drunkard. At the age of twenty, he moved to London and continued his personal studies in music, the arts and writing. By this time he was also an accomplished public speaker. He took a great interest in the works of Karl Marx and became an avid socialist and founding member of the Fabian society. Here Shaw met and married the wealthy Charlotte Payne-Townshend in 1898. However, on their wedding night she made him sign a paper by which he had to consent to never consummate their marriage. Still, they lived together happily for the next 45 years until her death. He did, however, carry on many relationships with other women, including one for many years with the famous actress who starred in a number of plays, Mrs. Patrick Campbell. Shaw died in 1950 at the age of 94 and was still an active writer.



Mrs. Patrick Campbell

As a playwright he made one of the most comprehensive contributions to dramatic literature in the English language, writing over fifty plays and creating a string of masterpieces which continue to be widely performed. He was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1925. In 1938 he received an Academy Award for the film adaptation of his play *Pygmalion*, the play which was later turned into a hit Broadway and movie musical called *My Fair Lady*. The Shaw Festival, one of North America's foremost theatre companies, was founded in 1962 in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario and is devoted to presenting plays by Shaw and his contemporaries.

## Historical Background of the Play

The Balkans is a name given to the region which includes modern-day Greece, Albania, Montenegro, Bosnia, Serbia, Bulgaria and Romania. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, after over 500 years of ruling this southeastern quadrant of Europe, (as well as North Africa, Spain and much of the Middle East), the once powerful Ottoman (Turkish) Empire was weakening. The great powers of Europe – Russia, Germany, Austria – were more than willing to divide up any spoils that would result from a Turkish defeat. The question was, of course, which of these powers would reap the largest benefits.

The Balkans has an exceedingly complex history, peopled by a wide variety of religious, ethnic and linguistic groups scattered through this mountainous territory in a seemingly random manner. Dividing up the region into countries during the latter part of the nineteenth century therefore became contentious and has resulted in border disputes, civil wars and ethnic massacres even to this day.



The Balkans (in white) at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century

*Arms and the Man* is set during the very brief Serbo-Bulgarian war of November, 1885. In a dispute between the two neighbouring Balkan countries, each of whom felt the other had expansionist designs, Serbia was being backed by the Austro-Hungarian Empire and Bulgaria was being backed by the Russian Empire. Each of the larger powers was supporting the quarreling countries with officers and supplies. The Swiss provided a large number of mercenaries, (such as Captain Bluntschli) who profited by, but cared nothing for, the outcome of the war. Shortly after Serbia declared war in November 1885 and invaded, Russia called back her officers and Bulgaria was left to fend for herself. In spite of this setback, the Bulgarians were victorious in the Battle of Slivnitsa on Nov. 19th. The small town where the Petkoffs live was on the main road leading back to Serbia where the retreating army was fleeing.

## War in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century

Traditionally an army has been divided into three main combat units: 1. the most numerous, the **infantry**, who fought on foot; 2. the **cavalry**, who fought primarily on horseback; 3. the **artillery**, who operated an assortment of cannon. The spectacular rise in effectiveness of the artillery allowed it to dominate most battlefields from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century right up to the recent Iraqi War. The cavalry units became less important following World War 1 because of their vulnerability in the face of the artillery. These three combat units were backed by various service



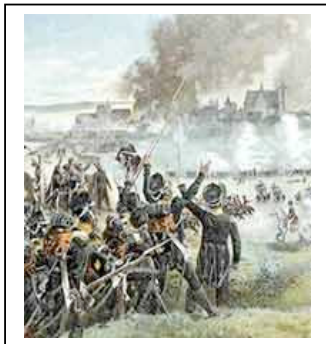
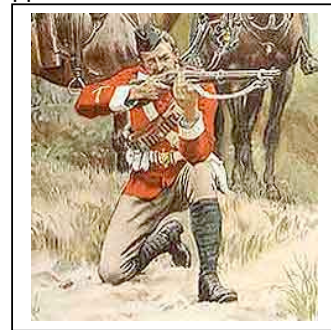
units responsible for things like transport, supply, communications and medical support, although these did not really become part of the army proper until the 19th century was well under way.

Success in battle often focused on the combination of the combat arms, with artillery preparing the way for an attack by the infantry, and the cavalry seeking intelligence, preventing a force from being surprised, charging on the battlefield or pursuing a beaten enemy.

Weapons were divided into those like longbow, musket, rifle and field gun, which achieved their effect by fire, and others, like pike, sword and bayonet, which required physical contact to kill or maim.

Often the two effects were merged: a line of infantry might charge after firing, using its bayonets to strike fear in the opponents and encourage them to seek an urgent appointment elsewhere.

It was easier to move troops and to deliver physical shock in column - formations which were narrow and deep - but then to reform into broad lines to deliver fire, a process in which drill and discipline were important. Until the end of the 19th century, combat was a centralized process, with men fighting standing up, under the eye of their leaders and often within touching distance of their comrades.



One of the consequences of the rise of the infantry rifle at the end of the 19th century was a more formless battlefield, with combatants more spread and often lying down. This tended to make formal discipline less useful than it had been in the past, and to emphasize individual qualities like initiative and determination.

For command and distribution purposes an **army** would be divided into large **regiments**, which in turn would be divided into **brigades**, then into **battalions**, and finally into **companies**. A company would be made up of approximately 221 officers and men.

### Hierarchy of Command in an Army (from lowest to highest)



A General would be in command of an army, a Colonel in command of a regiment, and a Captain in command of a company. In *Arms and the Man*, Petkoff and Sergius reached ranks of Major largely because of social status and family wealth rather than military training or intelligence – hence Sergius' foolish and disobedient cavalry brigade charge and Petkoff's inability to move troops.

## Who Helped Put the Production Together?

### Behind the Scenes

Director: **Marti Maraden**  
Set / Costume Design: **Leslie Frankish**  
Lighting Design: **John Munro**  
Sound Design: **Peter McBoyle**  
Assistant Director: **Joan Sullivan**  
Stage Manager: **Rebecca Miller**  
Assistant Stage Manager: **Sharon M. Simper**  
Apprentice Stage Manager: **Matthew Byrne**

### Cast

"Major Petkoff" - **Bernard Cuffling** (Vancouver)  
"Catherine Petkoff" - **Kate Hurman** (Ottawa)  
"The Man / Bluntschli" - **David Marr** (North Vancouver)  
"Sergius" - **Gordon Rand** (Toronto)  
"Raina Petkoff" - **Nicole Underhay** (St. John's)  
"Louka" - **Daniela Vlaskalic** (Edmonton)  
"The Officer / Nicola" - **Larry Yachimec** (Barrie)

(You can refer to these names when you write your review of the show.)





## Activities Before Viewing the Play

1. Introduce the students to the play by handing out copies of the character list, play synopsis and commentary.

2. Assign the preparation of the short scene from *Arms and the Man* found on pages 9, 10 and 11 of this guide for presentation in class. This scene is from Act I of the play and is for 1 male and 1 female. There are other excellent scenes that could be chosen: the scene that opens the play is for 2 females; a scene half way through Act III is for 2 males and 1 female (Raina, Bluntschli, Sergius) beginning with Sergius' line: "Captain Bluntschli ... You have deceived me."

The students may choose to work in pairs or in teams, one of whom is the director for the scene. Points that the student director may wish to focus on are:

- blocking / movement* – try to show: the relation of Raina and Bluntschli by the distances between them, who is the aggressor, who needs something from the other, who deserves the audience's focus at the moment.
- characterizations* – show physical and emotional states, practical vs. idealistic personalities.
- effective delivery of lines* – find the point being made in each speech, show the emotional content, become comfortable with the style of this more formal way of speaking.
- comic timing* – discover the pacing and 'topping' of lines which lead to a laugh.

The scenes could be thoroughly memorized before performance, or if time is limited, read with scripts in hand. There is an online full text of the play available on: [http://eserver.org/drama/arms\\_and\\_the\\_man.html](http://eserver.org/drama/arms_and_the_man.html).

3. Pass out copies of page 5 "Historical Background of the Play" and page 6 "War in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century". Assign a research project on Balkan 19<sup>th</sup> century history, culture or social history. There is a wealth of websites available on the Internet which may be accessed by using a Google or Yahoo search under "Balkans", "Bulgaria", "Serbo-Bulgarian war" or "19<sup>th</sup> century warfare".

4. Assign a research project on the life of Bernard Shaw. Again, there are numerous available websites listed in a Google search.

5. Assign a research project in the form of a quiz on the NAC's "ArtsAlive.ca" website (see quiz on pages 12 and 13 of this guide).

**Any trip to the theatre should also involve the students being made aware of proper theatre etiquette while at the NAC. A handout is available on page 19.**

Script - page 1 of 3

**A Scene for Rehearsal and Performance – 1 male / 1 female**

*A bedraggled escaping member of the opposing army has just clambered through the bedroom window of Raina Petkoff following a battle between the Serbs and Bulgarians. Raina finds his behaviour cowardly and contemptible but impetuously allows him to hide behind the curtains while the room is searched by soldiers and then by her mother and Louka, the maid. As they leave, she shuts the door with a slam, locking it violently. The "man" [Bluntschli] immediately steps out from behind the curtain, sheathing his sabre, and dismissing the danger from his mind in a businesslike way.*

MAN. A narrow shave; but a miss is as good as a mile. Dear young lady: your servant to the death. I wish for your sake I had joined the Bulgarian army instead of the Serbian. I am not a native Serbian.

RAINA [*haughtily*] No: you are one of the Austrians who set the Serbs on to rob us of our national liberty, and who officer their army for them. We hate them!

MAN. Austrian! Not I. Don't hate me, dear young lady. I am a Swiss, fighting merely as a professional soldier. I joined Serbia because it came first on the road from Switzerland. Be generous: you've beaten us hollow.

RAINA. Have I not been generous?

MAN. Noble! -- heroic! But I'm not saved yet. This particular rush will soon pass through; but the pursuit will go on all night by fits and starts. I must take my chance to get off in a quiet interval. You don't mind my waiting just a minute or two, do you?

RAINA. Oh no: I am sorry you will have to go into danger again. [*Pointing to the ottoman*] Won't you sit--[*She breaks off with an irrepressible cry of alarm as she catches sight of the pistol. The man, all nerves, shies like a frightened horse*].

MAN [*irritably*] Don't frighten me like that. What is it?

RAINA. Your revolver! It was staring that officer in the face all the time. What an escape!

MAN [*vexed at being unnecessarily terrified*] Oh, is that all?

RAINA [*staring at him rather superciliously as she conceives a poorer and poorer opinion of him, and feels proportionately more and more at her ease*] I am sorry I frightened you. [*She takes up the pistol and hands it to him*]. Pray take it to protect yourself against me.

MAN [*grinning wearily at the sarcasm as he takes the pistol*] No use, dear young lady: there's nothing in it. It's not loaded. [*He makes a grimace at it, and drops it disparagingly into his revolver case*].

RAINA. Load it by all means.

MAN. I've no ammunition. What use are cartridges in battle? I always carry chocolate instead; and I finished the last cake of that hours ago.

RAINA [*outraged in her most cherished ideals of manhood*] Chocolate! Do you stuff your pockets with sweets--like a schoolboy--even in the field?

MAN [*hungrily*] I wish I had some now.

- continued -

Script - page 2 of 3

*[Raina stares at him, unable to utter her feelings. Then she sails away scornfully to the chest of drawers, and returns with the box of confectionery in her hand.]*

RAINA. Allow me. I am sorry I have eaten them all except these. *[She offers him the box].*

MAN *[ravenously]* You're an angel! *[He gobbles the comfits].* Creams! Delicious! *[He looks anxiously to see whether there are any more. There are none. He accepts the inevitable with pathetic good humour, and says, with grateful emotion]* Bless you, dear lady! You can always tell an old soldier by the inside of his holsters and cartridge boxes. The young ones carry pistols and cartridges; the old ones, grub. Thank you. *[He hands back the box. She snatches it contemptuously from him and throws it away. He shies again, as if she had meant to strike him].* Ugh! Don't do things so suddenly, gracious lady. It's mean to revenge yourself because I frightened you just now.

RAINA *[superbly]* Frighten me! Do you know, sir, that though I am only a woman, I think I am at heart as brave as you.

MAN. I should think so. You haven't been under fire for three days as I have. I can stand two days without showing it much; but no man can stand three days: I'm as nervous as a mouse. *[He sits down on the ottoman, and takes his head in his hands].* Would you like to see me cry?

RAINA *[alarmed]* No.

MAN. If you would, all you have to do is to scold me just as if I were a little boy and you my nurse. If I were in camp now, they'd play all sorts of tricks on me.

RAINA *[a little moved]* I'm sorry. I won't scold you. *[Touched by the sympathy in her tone, he raises his head and looks gratefully at her: she immediately draws back and says stiffly]* You must excuse me: our soldiers are not like that. *[She moves away from the ottoman].*

MAN. Oh yes they are. There are only two sorts of soldiers: old ones and young ones. I've served fourteen years: half of your fellows never smelt powder before. Why, how is it that you've just beaten us? Sheer ignorance of the art of war, nothing else. *[Indignantly]* I never saw anything so unprofessional.

RAINA *[ironically]* Oh! Was it unprofessional to beat you?

MAN. Well, come! Is it professional to throw a regiment of cavalry on a battery of machine guns, with the dead certainty that if the guns go off not a horse or man will ever get within fifty yards of the fire? I couldn't believe my eyes when I saw it.

RAINA *[eagerly turning to him, as all her enthusiasm and her dreams of glory rush back on her]* Did you see the great cavalry charge? Oh, tell me about it. Describe it to me.

MAN. You never saw a cavalry charge, did you?

RAINA. How could I?

MAN. Ah, perhaps not--of course! Well, it's a funny sight. It's like slinging a handful of peas against a window pane: first one comes; then two or three close behind him; and then all the rest in a lump.

RAINA *[her eyes dilating as she raises her clasped hands ecstatically]* Yes, first One!--the bravest of the brave!

- continued -

Script - Page 3 of 3

MAN *[prosaically]* Hm! You should see the poor devil pulling at his horse.

RAINA. Why should he pull at his horse?

MAN *[impatient of so stupid a question]* It's running away with him, of course: do you suppose the fellow wants to get there before the others and be killed? Then they all come. You can tell the young ones by their wildness and their slashing. The old ones come bunched up under the number one guard: they know that they're mere projectiles, and that it's no use trying to fight. The wounds are mostly broken knees, from the horses cannoning together.

RAINA. Ugh! But I don't believe the first man is a coward. I know he is a hero!

MAN *[good-humouredly]* That's what you'd have said if you'd seen the first man in the charge today.

RAINA *[breathless, forgiving him everything]* Ah, I knew it! Tell me--tell me about him.

MAN. He did it like an operatic tenor--a regular handsome fellow, with flashing eyes and lovely moustache, shouting his war-cry and charging like Don Quixote at the windmills. We nearly burst with laughter at him; but when the sergeant ran up as white as a sheet, and told us they'd sent us the wrong cartridges, and that we couldn't fire a round for the next ten minutes, we laughed at the other side of our mouths. I never felt so sick in my life; though I've been in one or two very tight places. And I hadn't even a revolver cartridge--nothing but chocolate. We'd no bayonets--nothing. Of course, they just cut us to bits. And there was Don Quixote flourishing like a drum major, thinking he'd done the cleverest thing ever known, whereas he ought to be court-martialed for it. Of all the fools ever let loose on a field of battle, that man must be the very maddest. He and his regiment simply committed suicide--only the pistol missed fire: that's all.

RAINA *[deeply wounded, but steadfastly loyal to her ideals]* Indeed! Would you know him again if you saw him?

MAN. Shall I ever forget him! *[She again goes to the chest of drawers. He watches her with a vague hope that she may have something more for him to eat. She takes the portrait from its stand and brings it to him].*

RAINA. That is a photograph of the gentleman--the patriot and hero--to whom I am betrothed.

MAN *[recognizing it with a shock]* I'm really very sorry. *[Looking at her]* Was it fair to lead me on? *[He looks at the portrait again]* Yes: that's Don Quixote: not a doubt of it. *[He stifles a laugh].*

RAINA *[quickly]* Why do you laugh?

MAN *[shamefacedly, but still greatly tickled]* I didn't laugh, I assure you. At least I didn't mean to. But when I think of him charging the windmills and imagining he was doing the finest thing--*[He chokes with suppressed laughter].*

RAINA *[sternly]* Give me back the portrait, sir.

MAN *[with sincere remorse]* Of course. Certainly. I'm really very sorry. *[She deliberately kisses it and looks him straight in the face before returning to the chest of drawers to replace it].*

(End of Scene)

ArtsAlive Quiz - page 1 of 2

## QUIZ - ArtsAlive

Visit the *ArtsAlive* website to find the answers to the quiz: [www.artsalive.ca/en/eth/index.html](http://www.artsalive.ca/en/eth/index.html)  
Questions in brackets can be answered after seeing the show.

1. **Marti Maraden** is the director of *Arms and the Man*.  
Name two other shows she has directed for the NAC.

Name two other theatre companies she has directed for.



2. What's the difference between a **Proscenium stage** and a **Thrust stage**?

(The NAC's Theatre can be adapted to either configuration. Which kind was used for *Arms and the Man*?)

3. Briefly, what do each of the following people do in preparing for a show?  
- **stage manager**

- **propmaster**

- **cutter**

- **milliner**

(Identify an article created by one of these people in the production of *Arms and the Man*.)

Check the *ArtsAlive* section on Stage Management (under "Design and Production") to see how important a good stage manager can be for a school show.

4. What information is found in a "**prompt book**"?

(Identify a lighting cue that happens within a scene of *Arms and the Man*.)

**ArtsAlive Quiz** - page 2 of 2

5. Name four **"tools" used by set designers** to communicate their ideas.

6. What is meant by **"breaking down a costume"** for a show?

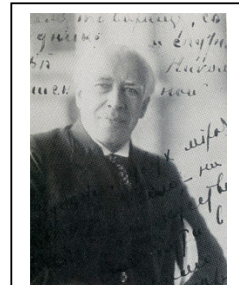
(Identify a costume in *Arms and the Man* that has been broken down.)

7. Supposing that you are interested in **acting as a career or a hobby**, what are four things that you can do to get started?

8. **Constantin Stanislavski** was a great Russian acting teacher.

What did he mean by:

- 'given circumstances'?
  
- the 'magic if'?
  
- 'subtext'?



C. Stanislavski (1863-1938)

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Check out this page to learn about attending NAC performances on the CHEAP:  
<http://www.nac-cna.ca/en/educationandoutreach/schools/discounttickets/index.html>

**Did you know** that after *Arms and the Man* closes at the NAC on Sept. 27, it will travel to the Citadel Theatre in Edmonton and then to the Vancouver Playhouse in British Columbia? Did you also know that when a production is completely finished, many of the props and costumes are stored at the NAC Warehouse where they can be rented out by community groups and schools?

## Activities After Viewing the Play

1. Distribute copies of the “review” of *Arms and the Man* found on page 15 of the Study Guide to the class and have them read it.
  - a) In groups, discuss: “... *Arms and the Man* is not an anti-war drama, but rather a satirical assault on those who would glorify the horrors of war.” Is there a case for saying that in fact the play is an anti-war drama?
  - b) Considering the underlying serious subject matter, would the play have been more effective if the ending had not been so cheerful and tidy?
  - c) What aspects of the production (acting/design/direction) bring out or illustrate the conflict between “romantic idealism” and “practical realism”?
2. Improvise the “missing” scenes from *Arms and the Man*.
  - a) the scene when Bluntschli wakes up in Raina’s bed and must escape.  
(perhaps her mother comes to the door)
  - b) a scene where Louka discovers Bluntschli in Raina’s bed.
  - c) a scene where Mrs. Petkoff visits Bluntschli’s mother at the Swiss hotel.
3. Reexamine the page on “Ideas for Designing a Set” (page 16) and discuss how the principles of design were used by this designer to achieve certain effects.
4. Hold a discussion on the acting seen in this production. Which actors were connected in their roles? Which actors used physicalization to their advantage in creating a character? Were voices clear and audible? Were any character voices used? Were any accents used effectively? When were you most interested in the play and how was this interest achieved?
5. Discuss the effectiveness of the costume and make-up designs for this production in determining personality, location, social status, etc.
6. Have the students write a review of *Arms and the Man* including a brief (2 or 3 sentence) summary of the plot, comments on all production aspects (acting, designs for set, costumes, lighting, etc.) and analyzing the effectiveness of the choices made by all the theatre artists. A suggested outline for writing a review can be found online on page 12 of: [http://www.nac-cna.ca/en/allaboutthenac/publications/chekhov\\_guide.pdf](http://www.nac-cna.ca/en/allaboutthenac/publications/chekhov_guide.pdf)
7. A minor theme of Shaw’s in *Arms and the Man* deals with social classes, a topic that he explored many times in later works. Shaw was writing for a British audience of the late nineteenth century. Is this theme still relevant to us in Canada today? Do we have social classes based on economic status or cultural or ethnic backgrounds?
8. Pass out copies of the set design ideas found on page 16. Refer to the descriptions of the 3 different settings in the play which may be found in the online script on the website at [http://eserver.org/drama/arms\\_and\\_the\\_man.html](http://eserver.org/drama/arms_and_the_man.html) . Recalling the set design for *Arms and the Man*, discuss what was observed about the use of lines, mass and colour. Pick out what elements gave it mood and atmosphere. Below are some websites with excellent photos of set designs, which may be used to illustrate the principles of design.  
<http://www.inch.com/~kteneyck/observatory.html>  
<http://www.entertainment-design.com/Theater.htm>  
<http://qfolio.com/clients/schweikardtm/nav/splash.shtml>  
<http://qfolio.com/clients/aronows/nav/splash.shtml>

### **What a reviewer has to say about the script *Arms and the Man*:**

George Bernard Shaw takes the title for this play from the opening line of Virgil's epic poem the "Aeneid," which begins "Of arms and the man I sing." Virgil glorified war and the heroic feats of Aeneas on the battlefield. However, Shaw's purpose in this play is to attack the romantic notion of war by presenting a more realistic depiction of war, devoid of the idea that such death and destruction speaks to nobility. Still, *Arms and the Man* is not an anti-war drama, but rather a satirical assault on those who would glorify the horrors of war.

Shaw develops an ironic contrast between two central characters. The play begins with accounts of the glorious exploits of Major Sergius Saranoff, a handsome young Bulgarian officer, in a daring cavalry raid, which turned the war in favor of the Bulgarians over the Serbs. In contrast, Captain Bluntschli, a professional soldier from Switzerland, acts like a coward. He climbs up to a balcony to escape capture, he threatens a woman with a gun, and he carries chocolates rather than cartridges because he claims the sweets are more useful on the battlefield.

In the eyes of Raina Petkoff, the young romantic idealist who has bought into the stories of battlefield heroism, Saranoff is her ideal hero. However, as the play proceeds, we learn more about this raid and that despite its success, it was a suicidal gesture that should have failed. Eventually Saranoff is going to end up dead if he continues to engage in such ridiculous heroics. Meanwhile, we realize that Bluntschli has no misconceptions about the stupidity of war and that his actions have kept him alive.

*Arms and the Man* is an early play by Shaw, first performed in 1894, the same year he wrote *Mrs. Warren's Profession*. The ending is rather traditional for comedies of the time, with all the confusion between the lovers finally getting cleared up and everybody paired up to live happily ever after. The choice of a young woman as the main character, who ultimately rejects her romantic ideals to live in the real world, is perhaps significant because serving in the army and going to war is not going to happen. Consequently, her views are not going to be colored by questions of courage in terms of going to war herself. I also find it interesting that this play understands the horrors of war given that it was the horrors of World War I that generally killed the romantic notion of war in Britain.

Internet review by Elizabeth Brown  
(on the website: <http://www.abacci.com/books/book.asp?bookID=183>)



## Ideas on Designing a Set

### Mood and Atmosphere hinted at through Line, Mass and Colour

- "mood" refers to the **feelings** created by the design;
- "atmosphere" refers to the **information** on the location/time/status/etc. suggested by details in the design.

### **LINES**

Straight lines: suggest strength, formality, austerity, rigidness, coldness

Curved lines: suggest softness, gaiety, gracefulness, sensuousness, comedy

Vertical lines: suggest reverence, nobility, majesty, claustrophobia, power

Horizontal lines: suggest serenity, stability, oppression, facelessness, weight

Diagonal lines: suggest force, action, anger, confusion, conflict, insecurity, distortion

Lines can also give an impression of an **age** (Elizabethan, Roaring 20's, Hippie) or a **style** (Baroque, Art Deco, Victorian) and, of course, work on the **cultural symbolic** level (Eastern European, Japanese, Scandinavian).

**MASS** is a plane or bulk which is most effective when an audience can see three or more sides of an object.

Bulky mass: gives solidity and weight

Thin mass: gives lightness and airiness

The opposite of mass can be defined as a negative space, which works dynamically with the existing masses and lines.

**COLOURS** help greatly in creating a mood on a set. Dark colours can suggest seriousness or richness; light colours can suggest comedy or cheerfulness. Blues, greens and purples can achieve a feeling of coolness, while reds, browns, oranges and yellows give warmth to a set. The selection of the colours for a set (the palette) could be those close to each other on the colour wheel or tones and tints of the same hue. This palette might give a feeling of harmony or evenness. Many contrasting colours, on the other hand, might suggest conflict or a more dynamic feeling.

### Illusions on Sets

1. Straight walls tend to make the set on a small stage look larger.
2. Jogs in a wall tend to make the set look smaller.
3. Arches and alcoves suggesting other areas off stage will expand a small stage.
4. Flats placed one behind another give the illusion of depth.

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## **CURRICULUM REFERENCES**

### **The Ontario Curriculum: The Arts**

A visit to see a live stage production helps fulfill the following curriculum expectations:

#### **Drama and Dance, Grade 8**

##### Specific Expectations:

- demonstrate understanding of the appropriate use of voice, gestures, and the level of language in different dramatic situations.
- write in role in various forms, showing understanding of a dramatic situation and using appropriate vocabulary, tone, and voice for the character portrayed.

##### Critical Thinking

- review drama and dance performances, orally or in writing, critiquing the use of elements and techniques in the particular genre of the piece.

#### **Dramatic Arts, Grade 9**

##### Theory: Overall Expectations

- demonstrate an understanding of the conventions of role playing.
- demonstrate an understanding of the elements and principles of dramatic expression.

##### Theory: Specific Expectations (Role)

- identify the skills necessary to remain engaged in role and the drama (e.g. concentration, listening, interpreting, questioning).

##### Analysis: Specific Expectations (Evaluation)

- identify the characteristics of a receptive, discriminating audience (e.g. engagement, listening, focus).
- use specialized vocabulary in discussing and writing about drama (e.g. production value, role development, stagecraft, comic relief, satire, irony).
- identify the main aspects of a production (e.g. acting, set design, lighting, costume).

#### **Dramatic Arts, Grade 10**

##### Theory: Specific Expectations (Role)

- demonstrate an understanding of techniques used to re-create roles (e.g. observation, research, improvisation).

##### Analysis: Overall Expectations

- use the vocabulary of dramatic arts to discuss, critique, and review drama presentations in the school and the community.

#### **Dramatic Arts, Grade 11 (University/College Preparation)**

##### Analysis: Overall Expectations

- evaluate dramatic performances presented in the school and the community.
- explain how dramatic arts represent, influence and contribute to culture and society.

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**Dramatic Arts, Grade 11 (Open)**

Theory: Specific Expectations (Role/Character)

- describe the process of portraying a character in a script through voice, gesture, props, and the character's relationships with other characters.

**Dramatic Arts, Grade 12 (University/College Preparation)**

Analysis and Evaluation: Specific Expectations

- explain how theatre can reflect issues, societal concerns, and the culture of the community, the country and other countries.

**Dramatic Arts, Grade 12 (Open)**

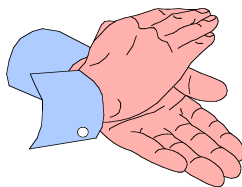
Theory: Specific Expectations (Role/Character)

- describe how dramatic elements (e.g. costumes, make-up, props, lighting, set design) are used to develop character and theme.
- describe how acting techniques are used to develop characters that are in keeping with the themes in the script.

## Theatre Etiquette

Please take a moment to prepare the students for their visit to the National Arts Centre by explaining good **Theatre Etiquette** which will enhance the enjoyment of the play by all audience members:

1. Matinées at the NAC are for students and the general public. It is important for everyone to be quiet (no talking or rustling of materials) during the performance so others do not lose their immersion in the "world of the play". Unlike movies, the actors in live theatre can hear disturbances in the audience and will give their best performances when they feel the positive involvement of the audience members. The appropriate way of showing approval for the actors' performances is through laughter and applause. For the enjoyment of all, people who disturb others inappropriately during the show may be asked to leave the Theatre.
2. It is important that there be no electronic devices used in the Theatre. Cell phones, pagers and anything that beeps must be turned off so the atmosphere of late 19th Century Bulgaria is not interrupted by 21st Century devices. Cameras and other recording devices are also not permitted in the Theatre.
3. Unlike movies, theatre seats are assigned according to row and number. It is important to find the seat indicated on the ticket rather than moving around and disturbing others. It might be wise for teachers to pass out the tickets before arriving at the Theatre so students can make sure in advance that they are sitting beside their best friend. Remember that in the Arts Centre Theatre, all odd numbered seats are on one side and all even are on the other, so, for example, seats 12 and 14 are actually beside each other.
4. A trip to the washroom before the play starts is a good idea. Anyone leaving during the show will unfortunately not be allowed back into the Theatre. The play has three acts. There will be one 15-minute intermission.



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