

***ABCs of Theatre* Teacher's Guide**

This Teacher's Guide was developed to help you enjoy your upcoming trip to the auditorium at EE Bass to familiarize your students with the basic elements of theatre, a free field trip with a workshop component for kindergarten students, sponsored by The Greenville Arts Council.

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To schedule a trip for your class, call the Greenville Arts Council offices at 662-332-2246.

Introduction

This Teacher's Guide was designed to help you and your students not only prepare for your upcoming field trip to tour the Jake and Freda Stein Hall at EE Bass, but to extend this arts experience throughout your curriculum. We have taken special care to point out connections to specific competencies with the lessons outlined in this packet.

Reading Illustrations

Language Arts Connections:

Students will explore how illustrations contribute to the telling of a story.

The Elements of Theatre

Language Arts Connection:

Students will use the nonverbal communication to reinforce their comprehension of vocabulary and stories.

Rhyme Time!

Language Arts Connection:

Students will identify rhyming words and patterns in the story and create their own pairs of rhymes with story elements.

Nursery Rhymes Take to the Stage

Language Arts Connection:

Students will fulfill various roles for theatre including actors, narrators, and audience and recite and perform nursery rhymes with minimal props.

Competencies Addressed

Specific competencies and objectives covered in lessons in this guide are provided for Language Arts and Theater.

Theatre Etiquette Guidelines

These guidelines are intended to help you prepare the students to view live theatre and understand the important role of the audience.

We hope this guide will help you in integrating this experience into the valuable work you do everyday in the classroom. Thanks for taking the time to look through it.

Reading Illustrations

http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/educators/lessons/grade-k-2/Reading_Illustrations.aspx#Instruction

Explore how illustrations contribute to the telling of a story by creating illustrations to accompany text, and then creating text to accompany illustrations. Students will explore picture books (without words) and discuss the specific elements of the illustrations that "tell" the story. They will learn to "read" illustrations as they look at the ways in which pictures reveal information about the characters, setting, and plot of a story. (Ages 4-7)

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- create illustrations to accompany text.
- "read" a variety of illustrations for information.
- convey elements of a story such as character, setting, and plot through illustration.
- identify techniques and/or symbols used by illustrators to convey information.
- critique their own illustrations.
- participate in a variety of independent literacy-building activities.

Engage

1. Read aloud a short excerpt from a storybook of your choosing. Do not share the story's illustrations, but instead, have students listen carefully, and then create an illustration to go with the text.

2. Allow students to share their illustrations. Have students explain why they chose to depict what they did, and how the picture correlates with the story they just heard. Explain that pictures, or illustrations, are an important element of storybooks, and they can help us understand the elements of the story, including the characters, setting, and plot. Point out that illustrations can also provide valuable clues when one gets "stuck" on a word one doesn't understand.

Build Knowledge

1. Explain that just as listening to a story creates a picture in our minds, looking at a picture can create a story in our minds. Show students a sample illustration from a large picture book of your choosing, preferably one that is unfamiliar to students. Cover up the text so that the students are focused on the illustration.

2. Discuss with students which elements of the story they can discern simply by looking at the picture. Can they identify who the characters are and what they might be like? What about the setting? Where or when might the story take place? What season is it? Can they describe the action that is taking place? Can they guess what one or more of the characters is feeling and/or thinking? Flip to the next page, again covering up the text.

Based on the second illustration, see which ideas about the storyline seem to be correct. Can students discern something more about the storyline? What elements of the illustrations are

most helpful in figuring out information about the story? Discuss specific techniques the illustrator used to “tell” the story. If students are having trouble coming up with specific techniques, point out facial expressions on characters, actions, body language, gestures, or clothing that help reveal information about the characters or action of the story.

Apply

1. Explain that some books rely entirely on pictures to tell a story. Divide the students into groups of 2-3. Distribute a picture book to each group. Allow them to flip through the picture book to discern the characters, setting, storyline of the book. Have a reporter from each group to briefly share the plot of the story with classmates, along with one of the illustrations that most helped them to understand the story and why.

2. Have each student draw a picture, or series of 2-3 pictures that tell a story. Their picture should reveal the characters, setting, and some part of the action of the story. You may wish to have students use ReadWriteThink's interactive Story Map as a graphic organizer for their story elements. Students can choose from a character, conflict, setting or resolution map. (<http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/storymap/index.html>) Character and setting are most appropriate to this lesson. The story map can then be used to create the picture. Students should then exchange pictures with a partner and have the partner guess the elements of the storyline. Distribute copies of the Storyline Elements handout so students know what to discuss as they look through peer illustrations. (<http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/multimedia/LessonPrintables/grade-k-2/Reading-Illustrations/Story%20Elements%20Worksheet.aspx> -- open with Adobe Reader if you have difficulty)

Reflect

1. Have students share whether their partner correctly guessed the elements of the storyline. If not, what part of the story did they have a hard time understanding?

2. Discuss the hardest and easiest parts of telling a story without words. Allow students five minutes to go back and add to or revise their pictures as needed.

The Elements of Theatre

What is different about the experience of listening to a story and the experience of reading a story? What techniques can an actor or narrator use to show the meaning of the words in the story? What clues from the text can you use to develop a character’s voice? How can you use your body to communicate the character’s feelings?

Using a story everyone is familiar with such as the *The Three Little Pigs*

- Assign each person a portion of the story.
- Read the story for clues. Have them make decisions about the ways they can use face, voice and body to tell the story and to develop each character.

- Have them practice their choices. Do they work? Are there changes that they need to make to tell their story more effectively?
- Try those changes.

Read a story of your choice and look at the illustrations that accompany each part of the story. Have the students practice imitating the gestures and facial expressions in illustrations that clearly show emotion. Use this technique to reinforce vocabulary words related to the way each character is feeling. Call out a word from a list of feelings and ask students to make a facial expression and bodily gesture to communicate their comprehension of that word. Allow students to give feedback and to refine the expressions and gestures. Brainstorm a list of other feeling words and have students act each out without making any sounds. Then practice communicating the same feelings but with voice changes. Have the students say students requiring various emotions such as “I lost my puppy” and “I won the prize!” in voices that communicate different feelings. If you have a list of feeling vocabulary words the class is studying, write each word on an index card and have students draw one card out of a bag. This can be done in small groups or individually. Instruct them not to tell anyone what word they picked but to say something that would make them feel that way in a voice and with gestures to communicate the feeling on the card. Have the other students in the class guess which feeling the student is communicating.

Discuss beginning, middle, and end and select an image to represent each part of the story. Call for volunteers to act out each image. Let them practice and posing like each image. Arrange the groups of actors in the front of the room but not in the correct order. Have the rest of the class determine which part of the story each group is representing and then put them in the correct order.

Rhyme Time!

Discuss the meaning of the words “characters” and “setting.” Ask students to listen for the characters and setting in a story such as Dr. Seuss’ *The Sneetches* or *Green Eggs and Ham*. Read the story and ask students to name the characters in the story. What is the setting? (You may need to re-read a particular section to them that talks about the beach.)

Point out how Dr. Seuss made up an imaginary word for the name of the characters so it would rhyme with the setting (Sneetches/beaches) or point out rhyme patterns in other stories you read. Review rhymes and practice with a few familiar word families (sit, hit, fit.) Ask the students to come up with another setting (place) for a story (lake, field, school, etc.) and let them make up some rhyming words to see if they can come up with a name for a character for a story in that setting. You may want to try your school name or some other proper nouns to see if they can come up with something as silly-sounding as Sneetches. Then have the students think of something that can happen in the story and practice coming up with pairs of lines that rhyme. You can provide a simple line structure with your character like “The beebuls went to the mall, because they wanted to see _____.” Ask the students to fill in the blank with

words that rhyme with mall. Let the students give you more settings to replace the word “mall” and continue the pattern with them coming up with words that rhyme with each setting to fill in the blank. This can also be put to music if you like. If so, you can talk to the students about writing lyrics.

Nursery Rhymes Take to the Stage

If you have an auditorium in your school, take the students to see it and talk about the various parts. Let them walk up on the stage and look out over the audience. Talk about how people have different roles in different parts of the auditorium. If they are on stage, they are the actors. If they are seated facing the stage they are the audience. If they are reciting the nursery rhyme, they are the narrators.

Explain that each group has just as important a job as the other groups and rotate groups so each child gets to be an actor, a narrator, and a member of the audience. Review the Theatre Etiquette Guidelines at the end of this guide and discuss how the audience should sit quietly so they don't distract the actors or narrators but that they should laugh if there is a funny part in the story and clap for the actors when they bow at the end. This makes the actors feel like they have done a good job. Create a large poster board or sentence strips of the text of the nursery rhyme for the narrators to watch and track. Bring a yardstick to point to the words as they recite them. Practice with the narrators to be sure they know the words for the nursery rhyme you choose for them. Explain that they need to speak slowly, loudly, and together so that the actors know what to do and so that the audience can hear them. Have them stand where they can see the actors and the audience. Provide very basic props for the actors (pail for Jack and Jill, cardboard bricks for Humpty Dumpty, etc.) and review actions with the children they can do as the narrators recite. For example, Jack can pretend to fall down and then rub his head and then Jill can fall. For Humpty Dumpty, someone can pretend to fall off of the wall and others can pretend to gallop in and try to help him up.

We hope your students will have multiple opportunities to come to Bass to see real plays but we want to introduce them to the idea and the place at an early age so that they are not distracted by being in a new place. We will also be able to show them the 1901 Armitage-Herschell Carousel which has illustrations from four nursery rhymes carved into its sides. We can top off the visit with a ride on this historic treasure!

Competencies Addressed

Language Arts

1. The student will use word recognition and vocabulary (word meaning) skills to communicate.

a. *The student will apply knowledge of concepts about print. (DOK 1)*

4) Point to words in a text when reading aloud, matching spoken words to print.

5) Track words from left to right and top to bottom on a printed page.

- b. *The student will apply knowledge of phonological and phonemic awareness. (DOK 2)*
 (Phonological and phonemic awareness skills are oral skills. Once the skills are paired with print, they become phonics activities. Research indicates that over the course of a year no more than 20 hours should be spent in phonemic awareness instruction. Priority items are underlined.)
- 2) Identify and produce rhyming words in response to an oral prompt (e.g., fat/cat, wig/pig, hid/kid).
 - 4) Generate a group of spoken words that begin or end with the same sound (e.g., pig, party, penguin and cat, hot, sit).
- g. *The student will use pictures and context to understand the meaning of a word. (DOK 2)*
- 2. The student will apply strategies and skills to comprehend, respond to, interpret, or evaluate a variety of texts of increasing levels of length, difficulty, and complexity.**
- a. *The student will use text features, parts of a book, text structures, and genres to analyze text. (DOK 2)*
- 1) Text features – titles, illustrations, etc.
 - 2) Parts of a book – title page, title, author, illustrator, etc.
 - 3) Text structures – sequential order
 - 4) Genres – fiction, nonfiction, and poetry (nursery rhymes)
- b. *The student will understand and make simple inferences about text. (DOK 2)*
- 1) Answer literal who, what, and where questions.
 - 2) Identify and discuss main characters, settings, and major events.
 - 3) Use illustrations to discuss the main idea of a simple story.
 - 4) Make simple inferences about narrative and/or informational text.
- c. *The student will recognize or generate an appropriate summary or paraphrase of the events or ideas in text. (DOK 2)*
- 1) Retell a familiar story with the book as a reference.
 - 2) Retell a familiar story without the book including a beginning, middle, and end.
 - 3) Retell two to three steps in the sequence of events in text shared with the student.
- d. *The student will respond to narrative and informational texts in a variety of ways that reflect understanding and interpretation. (DOK 2)*
- 1) Interpret text through moving, drawing, speaking, acting, or singing.

Theater

- 2. Act by playing characters and interacting in improvisations. (Creating/Performing)**
- b. Perform group pantomimes and improvisations to retell familiar stories.
- 3. Respond to a variety of theatrical experiences. (Critical Analysis)**
- a. Identify appropriate and inappropriate audience behavior.
 - b. Identify characters, settings, and events seen or portrayed in formal and informal productions.

Theatre Etiquette Guidelines

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Unlike television and movies, theatre is an art that thrives on the participation of the audience. Audience reactions and responses can be heard by the performers and have a direct effect on the quality of the entire performance. The following are guidelines to help new theatergoers understand the importance and responsibilities of being a good audience member. Appropriate audience behavior ensures a good experience for everyone.

Be orderly and prompt. Safety is the primary concern. Please respect other audience members and the theatre building by entering and exiting in an orderly fashion. Please, no running, pushing or horseplay. It is best to arrive fifteen minutes early, as latecomers can disrupt the performers and the audience. Please visit rest rooms before or after the performance.

Listen and observe. There is so much to hear (dialogue, music, sound effects, and voice inflection) and so much to see (costumes, props, set design, lighting effects, and architecture of the theatre). Unlike videos, you cannot rewind if you miss something. When the lights dim before the show begins, it is the audience's cue to stop talking and begin listening.

Unplug. Please turn off or silence all electronics and anything that beeps: cell phones, cameras, watches, pagers, etc. If you are with a person who has a hearing aid that emits a high pitch please politely alert him/her to silence it. Inappropriate noises are forbidden as they distract both the actors and the audience. Even whispering to your neighbor is considered an inappropriate distraction.

Please, don't feed the audience. Food and gum are not allowed inside the theatre. Katherine Hepburn, a great stage and screen actress, once stopped a Broadway performance when she heard an audience member crinkling a candy wrapper! Eating and drinking, while permitted in movie theatres, is extremely distracting to live performers.

Laugh out loud. Positive audience sounds are encouraged. You may freely and honestly respond to the performance by laughing, applauding, crying, and expressing any other forms of appreciation and emotion. And, by all means, please do participate if asked by the actors to contribute a verbal response.

Think. Think about your theatre experience during and after the performance. How does the material apply to your life? Are there lessons to be learned? Would you make the same decisions as the characters in the circumstances given? Did the performance inspire you? Are you happy, angry, bored, or encouraged by what you saw? Think it through and talk about it with others after the show.