

COOKEVILLE CHILDREN'S THEATRE

engaging audiences through outstanding performances since 1976

Dear Principals, Teachers, and Parents,

Thank you for allowing your children the opportunity to experience live theatre. Studies consistently show that students exposed to the Arts score higher on standardized tests, demonstrate stronger self esteem and confidence, and have a higher awareness of other cultures and the world around them. The theatre is a collaborative process, of which the audience is a huge part. Included in this study guide are general activities related to the theatre arts to share with your students before, during and after the performance, as well as activities prepared for the specific show you will see.

It is our goal to provide a magical theatre experience that is applicable to your students and your classroom. Please let me know if you have suggestions or comments in helping us achieve this.

Best,

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Pre-Performance Vocabulary:

The following vocabulary may be helpful to review with your class.

Drama Terms:

Play:	A presentation (or show) that is acted out with actors who use words and movements to play the different characters to tell a story for an audience.
Moral:	The message or meaning of the play, how the characters' actions were good or bad.
Script:	The text (or words) of a story that the actors and director use.
Act:	A large section of the script that contains several scenes.
Scene:	A small section of a play that usually takes place in one location and time.
Setting:	Where a play takes place, this may be one or several locations.
Time:	When a play take place (present, past, or future)
Character:	A person who is a part of the story in a play (or book, movie, etc.)
Acting:	A way of playing as if you are another person (character) to tell a story.
Dialogue:	The written sentences that two or more actors say to each other during a play.
Monologue:	A longer selection of written dialogue that an actor says during a play.
Fantasy vs. Realism:	An imaginary world versus something that seems like it could happen in real life.

Theatre Parts:

Theatre:	A building that includes a stage for the actors and seats for the audience.
Stage:	The place where a play is presented, or acted out.
Backstage:	Where the actors wait until they come onto the stage.

Theatre People:

Director:	The person who is in charge of the actors.
Actor:	A person who plays a character in a play.
Audience:	The people who watch a play.

Show Terms:

Staging:	The way the director has the actors move around on the stage.
Dance:	Movement that is choreographed (or planned) to work with a rhythm or beat
Lighting:	The way the audience is able to see the play with light. Many times the lighting will change color, how bright they are and when they turn on and off.
Set:	The backdrop/scenery on the stage that lets the audience imagine where the play takes place.
Costume:	The clothes that the actors wear to help the audience know what character they are playing.
Music:	Can be just in the background (or playing softly), can be loud in between the scenes or sung along with by the actors.
Sound Effect:	A special sound, like a train whistle or a bird, that has been recorded and played at a certain moment in the play.
Special Effect:	Any kind of exciting thing that happens during the show, like fog appearing on stage or a trap door that lets an actor appear magically from “nowhere.”
Applause:	The way an audience lets the actors know they did a good job by clapping at the end of the show.

Performance activities:

The audience is a very important part of a great performance. You can make the play better by being a good listener and by using your imagination. What else do you think it takes to be a good audience member? Here are some tips that will help make all performances better for everyone:

- **When you arrive at the theatre, please stay on your bus until a CCT or CPAC representative greets you.**
- **When you enter the lobby, please wait to be seated and remain in a single-file line.**
- **During the performance, please be safe and stay seated.**
- **The actors love to hear laughter when they do or say something funny, but please, no talking or whispering during the performance unless you are helping the actors.**
- **Remember... no gum, eating or drinking in the theatre.**
- **No cameras, laser pointers or recording devices may be used during a performance.**
- **Please silence all electronic devices, including: Cell Phones, iPods, iPads, Tablets, Blackberries, Pagers, etc.**
- **Actors love to hear applause! Show your appreciation by clapping at the end of the play.**
- **After the performance is over, please remain seated until your school is dismissed.**

Post-performance activities

Suggested questions to engage your students:

What was your favorite scene from the play?

What did you learn from the play?

Did you have a favorite song? Dance Number? What made it (those) stand out?

Which character(s) did you think was (were) good? Which was (were) bad? Did that change from the beginning to the end of the play?

Was there a character in the play that reminded you of yourself? Who was it and why?

How did the scenery help the actors tell the story?

Did the costume help the actor play their character? How?

Did the music and sound create a certain feeling? Did it tell you anything about the location, or the place the actors were going or had arrived? Why?

What seemed the most real to you about the play and why? Was there a certain character(s) that reminded you of someone you know in real life? Who and why?

How did the actors show you the characters' feelings?

Was there anything in the story that surprised you?

Was there anything in the story that gave you clues as to what would happen next?

If you could play any role in the show, which character would you want to play? Why? Are there any characters you would not want to play? Why or why not?

Theatre Terms WORDSEARCH

E M J U R E N G I S E D E M U T S O C B
P R S B P O R P A B X D E F E P G A H T
M I T C A Q J U M S G J G I U Q W C A R
M R C A R C D M F D C P M O M M S T R E
Q F O C E I K T C C G N I U D B O O A H
B M A N T H P S E T D E S I G N E R C P
Y S T I E N T T T Y D I D M Z M C B T A
T A O K H V A L R A C U N S T P F M E R
T N R B Z Q E K A A G Y F R E H Q P R G
R O T C E R I D L C O E E E M Y O S J O
O F P S T Z F D E G I C N C U L H L N E
L R N A G U I T V F N S B B T I C L D R
S C E N E R Y U E A T K U M S G G T H O
G H U C E N D S M S Z S K M O M C K N H
T T O C U Z Y R L A O T P B C Y G O Y C
J B T Y U D O D D B S S I U W E L H K R
X O K Q N F O C A T R K T Q A R I X F C
R E F B R T F R Q T D W M U D O M W E E
U X N E W P U A P G B V X Q A X A P N M
D W P F G Q I D R J N R Z V Z Y N O F F

Words to look for: actor, audition, backstage, cast, character, choreographer, costume, costume designer, director, musical director, musical theatre performance, producer, prop, scenery, script, set, set designer, theatre

The World of Books Vs. Live Theatre

An Activity

Most of us are familiar with iconic Disney Channel movie, *High School Musical*. However, the musical play gives the audience a different experience and requires different skills from the artists involved in creating the production.

In the following activity, students will create their own scenes to gain a better understanding of the components involved in creating a play.

Materials Needed

- A Pencil/Paper (Costumes and Props if desired).

Instructions

- Divide students into small groups of four or five.
- Have students choose a scene from a well-known book to perform as a dramatic or comedic scene. (For younger students, it may work better to divide up scenes from one well known movie and assign those to the different groups.)
- Once they have chosen a scene, have students write down the script of the scene and assign roles within their groups. Give students about thirty minutes to write their scripts and practice their scenes.
- Once everyone is ready, have the groups perform their scenes for the class. After each scene, ask the students in the audience to compare and contrast the scenes to the inspiring story or movie.

Letters in Character - A Writing Activity

The first part of the following activity gives students the opportunity to interact with the characters and plot points of the story. The second half of this activity allows students to get inside the character's head and understand the story from his or her perspective.

Materials Needed:

- Paper and pens/pencils

Instructions:

- Have your students choose a character from the play, and, using any of the following prompts, write a letter to them:
 - o What advice would you give the character (at this point in the story)?
 - o What is something important that you want this character to know right now?
 - o Tell this character about an event in the story that hasn't happened yet.
- Once everyone has finished, collect the letters and redistribute them to other students in the class.
- Each student must imagine that they are the character that the letter is addressed to, and respond to it from his or her perspective.
- Optional performance opportunity: your students could also write these responses in the form of a monologue and perform them for the class.
- Afterwards, take a moment to debrief with your students: which part of the activity did they like the best? Why? Did they feel they gained any further insight of the characters in the play? How? Ask students to give examples.

Activities and Questions for Discussion for elementary and middle school students

1. Compare and contrast two different characters: How are they different? How are they similar?
2. Which character was your favorite? Why?
3. Which character did you like the least? Why?
4. What was the main conflict in the story? How was it resolved?
5. What was the most exciting part of the show?

Classroom Activities

A LITTLE LESS NOISE: Teacher selects an environment (city, jungle, and playground) and each student decides what sound they will make. Teacher uses signal and conducts the group like an orchestra to make the noises louder, softer, faster slower, etc. (K-3rd grade)

PICTURE THE CASTLE: We all have a magical place in our own imaginations where time stands still and everything is just the way we want it to be. If you had your own magical world what kinds of things are there? Draw a picture of what your world looks like as you see it. (1st-4th grade)

LET'S TELL A STORY: Students sit in circle and work together to create a story. As they take turns, each student ends their part with "And Then..." or alternating with But(introduces conflict)/So(solves problem) (2nd Grade +)

WHERE I BELONG: Describe a room that you feel at home in, your bedroom, your classroom, or another place that makes you feel safe and comfortable. Draw a floor plan (which is a "Bird's Eye View") of all the things that are in this place. Why do you feel "at home" there? (3rd grade+)

PLOT POINTS: Break the class up into groups of 5 students. Give each group 10 minutes to decide the main ten plot points or events in the story) creating tableau pictures to represent each of their plot points. They will need to play many characters and be creative about body language to communicate the ideas they choose. Have them rehearse the tableaus in sequence, shifting to the next every ten seconds. This creates a snapshot version of the story. Have groups present their version of the plot points to the rest of the class. This exercise promotes discussion of the main events or plot points in the play. The discussion can develop into a critique of how these points were presented in the production. Discuss the clarity and emphasis of production choices. (3rd grade+)

TECHNOLOGY: Using popsicle sticks, cardboard and/or other art supplies, design and construct a model of a the scenery from the show(4th grade +)

WRITE A SEQUEL: Write a sequel to the show entitled "The Mystery at East High" and include all your favorite characters (5th grade+)

Tell us what you think!!!

Actors in a live performance are very attuned to the audience and are interested in the students' reactions to the play. Ask students to draw pictures and write letters to the actors about the show and about the characters they played.

Send these letters to:

Cookeville Children's Theatre

46 South Cedar Ave.

Cookeville, TN 38501

or email to: info@ccttheatre.org

Thanks for being a part of our show!