



Center for the Arts Presents:

The Velveteen Rabbit

Based on the book by Marjorie Williams

The Velveteen Rabbit

STUDY GUIDE

Dear Teacher,

We have created the following study guide to help make your students' theater experience with *The Velveteen Rabbit* as meaningful as possible. For many, it will be their first time viewing a live theatrical production. We have learned that when teachers discuss the play with their students before and after the production, the experience is more significant and long-lasting. Our study guide provides pre- and post-production discussion topics, as well as related activity sheets. These are just suggestions; please feel free to create your own activities and areas for discussion. We hope you and your class enjoy the show!

Background

Our play is based on *The Velveteen Rabbit* by award-winning author Margery Williams. The book was written in 1922 and has become a children's classic.

The Story

- A young boy receives a stuffed rabbit in his Christmas stocking. He plays with it for a while until other presents arrive. Then the rabbit is left in his room forgotten.
- The rabbit soon meets a wind-up mouse in the boy's room who tell the rabbit that he is not "real" because he can't do anything like move or make noise. Another toy, a skin horse, explains that "real" isn't about being mechanical because those toys break. Real is what happens to a toy when a child loves it for a long, long time, not just as a plaything, but with real love.
- One day the boy's Nana gives him the rabbit to sleep with when he can't find his China Dog. The boy and the rabbit become inseparable, playing together every day. The rabbit becomes more worn and shabby as the boy plays with and loves him. When Nana describes the rabbit as a toy, the boy answers that he isn't a toy, he's "real." The rabbit is overjoyed to be made real by the boy and finally understands what the skin horse meant.
- Outside one day the rabbit meets two real, live rabbits and talks to them. They tell him that he is not real because he cannot run and play and eat like they can. But the rabbit is still loved by the boy and that's all he cares about.
- The boy becomes very sick with scarlet fever and holds onto the rabbit throughout his illness. When his fever finally ends, the doctor tells Nana that all the bedding must be burned, including the rabbit to rid the house of germs. As the rabbit sadly waits to be burnt, a real tear falls from his eye. The Nursery Fairy appears. She turns the rabbit into a real rabbit because he has been loved by the boy. One day the boy comes out to play and notices that a wild rabbit looks like his old toy. They have a special moment of recognition between them and then live happily ever after.

Before Seeing the Play

You may want to read *The Velveteen Rabbit* and review the plot and characters with your students. It is also available online with original artwork at

<http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/williams/rabbit/rabbit.html>

1. Discuss favorite toys with the students. Which ones have you had the longest? Do you forget about old toys when you get new ones? Do old ones look different than new ones? How?
2. Discuss stories where toys come alive (Toy Story, Pinocchio, Winnie the Pooh, Nutcracker, etc.) What are some common themes? Which toys of yours would you like to come alive? What would you do if they did?

After Seeing the Play

1. Ask your students how the play was different from *The Velveteen Rabbit* book you read. How was it the same? Discuss the costumes. How did the actors portray rabbits and toys?
2. How did the rabbit feel when he met the real rabbits? Why did he pretend he really had hind legs?
3. How did the Velveteen Rabbit become real at the end of this story? If the boy never got sick, do you think the Velveteen Rabbit would have become real?
4. What was the difference between what the skin horse said was “real” and how the fairy made the rabbit “real” at the end of the story? Are they both real?
5. Was there a time in your life when you felt changed or transformed? Different from others around you? Describe it to the class or write about it.

Activities

Creative Dramatics

Let your students pick a favorite toy and create a scene where that toy comes to life.

- Have other students try to guess what toy it is just by the dialogue and actions.
- Create pairs or small groups to create a scene together and present it to the class.
- Encourage the students to bring in props or costumes to enhance their scenes.

Creative Writing

1. Fill in the words- use the attached sheet to complete the sentences using the words in the text box.
2. Give students writing prompts to complete the sentences or begin a paragraph or story:
 - My favorite toy is _____ because....
 - A special moment I had with my toy was when...
 - One day my toy _____ came to life...
 - If I was a toy, I would want to be a _____...

Show and Tell

Allow students to bring in a favorite toy to share with the class.

- Tell the history of the toy: how long have you had it, where did it come from, does it have a name?
- Why is it your favorite toy?
- If your toy came to life, what would happen?

Art Project

1. After seeing the play, encourage students to notice how through pictures you can see the rabbit become more shabby and worn in appearance.
2. On white construction paper, ask students to draw two Velveteen Rabbits using Colored Pencils. Make one rabbit look brand new, clean and crisp. Make the second one look shabby. The bow around his neck could look perfect or torn and tattered, for example.
4. Students fold a large piece of white construction paper in half. With colored pencils, draw a setting when the rabbit was a new toy in the playroom. Show a second scene when he was shabby, worn, and sad after being discarded. Fill in drawings using colors.
5. Attach each rabbit to a small piece of foam or cardboard. Glue the rabbits onto the background. Air-dry before displaying.
6. Provide an opportunity for students to share their illustrations and describe the connections to the story.

Internet Resources:

Read the original story: *The Velveteen Rabbit*.

<http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/williams/rabbit/rabbit.html>

Rabbit crafts and coloring:

<http://www.dltk-kids.com/animals/rabbits.html>

Comprehension Quiz

1. What is the subtitle of *The Velveteen Rabbit*?

Answer: Or How Toys Become Real

2. When did the boy receive the Velveteen Rabbit?

Answer: At Christmas

3. Which toy tells the rabbit about being real?

Answer: The Skin Horse

4. What does the Velveteen Rabbit see when they boy brings him outside?

Answer: Real rabbits

5. What disease does the boy catch?

Answer: Scarlet Fever

6. What does the doctor say must happen to the rabbit after the boy recovers?

Answer: He must be burnt to get rid of the germs.

7. What happens when the rabbit sheds a tear?

Answer: A fairy appeared.

8. What does the fairy do to the rabbit?

Answer: She turns him real.

Name: Date: _____

The Velveteen Rabbit

Complete the sentences using a word from the text box:

real	fever	loved	fairy	skin
velveteen	burn	hind	rabbit	tear

1. A boy got a stuffed _____ for Christmas.
2. The rabbit was covered in _____ fabric.
3. The _____ horse told the rabbit about becoming real.
4. The boy _____ the rabbit very much.
5. The real rabbits said the toy rabbit had no _____ legs.
6. The boy became sick with scarlet _____.
7. To get rid of the germs, the doctor said to _____ the rabbit.
8. The rabbit shed a _____ when he thought about his life with the boy.
9. A _____ appeared in the garden to help the rabbit.
10. The fairy made the rabbit _____.

Review of *The Velveteen Rabbit* By: _____

I give this play (circle the number of stars): 

My favorite part of the play was _____

I liked this part of the play because _____

My favorite character was _____

He/she was my favorite because _____

I think everyone should go see this play because _____
