



We Educate, Entertain and Enrich
the lives of children through
the magic of professional theatre.

Dear Principal, Teacher and Parent:

Thank you for allowing your children the opportunity to experience live theatre. Studies consistently show that students exposed to the Arts score higher than the median, demonstrate higher self esteem and confidence and have a higher awareness of other cultures and races.

The theatre is a collaborative process, which the audience is a huge part. In addition to the study guide prepared for the specific show you will see, we offer you some general ACTivities to share with your students before, during and after the performance.

Pre-performance ACTivities:

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 the play takes place, this may be one or several locations.

Time: when does the play take place, is it supposed to be today, perhaps the past or even the future.

Character: a person who is apart 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: the written sentences that an actor says to them self or the audience during a play.

Fantasy: an imaginary world.

Realistic: something that seems like it could really 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.



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Show Terms:

Staging: the way the director has the actors move around on the stage.

Dance: movement that is choreographed (or planned) to work (or go) with a rhythm (or beat).

Lighting: the way that you are able to see the play with light. Many times the lighting will change in color, how bright they are and when they turn on and off.

Set: the backdrop of the stage that lets you imagine where the play takes place.

Costume: the clothes that the actors wear to help you know what character they are playing.

Music: it 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 “no where.”

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 Birmingham Children's Theatre representative greets you.

When you enter the lobby, please wait to be seated.

Use the handrails when going up and down the stairs in the theatre.

Please, no screaming when the lights go down.

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 turn off all cell phones and beepers (this goes for your teachers too!)

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.



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Post-performance ACTivities

Suggested questions to engage your students:

What did you learn from the play?

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?

Why do you think the set looked like it did?

How did the costume help the actor play their character?

Did the music and sound create a certain location?

What seemed the most real to you about the play and why?

How did the actors show you the characters' feelings?

It is our goal to provide a magical and educational theatre experience that is directly applicable to your students and classroom. Please let me know if you have suggestions or comments in helping us achieve this. I may be reached at 205-458-8182 or education@bct123.org.

Now, let the show begin!

Dane Peterson

Director of Education

Birmingham Children's Theatre