

# BUNNICULA

Music by **John Klein**  
Book by **Chris Jeffries**

based on the book by  
**James & Deborah Howe**

# STUDY GUIDE

PROVIDED BY



# PERFORMANCE DATES & TIMES

## SCHOOL PERFORMANCES:

- Feb 4th - 7th @ 10am
- Feb 6th & 7th @ 10am & 12:30pm
- February 11th - 14th @ 10am
- February 18th-21st @ 10am
- Feb 20th & 21st @ 10am & 12:30pm
- February 25th-28th @ 10am

## PUBLIC PERFORMANCES:

- February 15th & 16th @ 2:30pm
- February 22nd @ 2:30pm & 7:30pm



# HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This classroom guide for Bunnacula is designed for Alabama students ranging from grades K-12. It offers activities to help you integrate classroom activities into English Language Arts (ELA), Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Music, and Theatre curricula.

All activities in this guide are linked to the Alabama State Department of Education content standards.

The standards that are represented in Bunnacula are:

SCI.3.6.1:	SCI.5.15.1:	ELA 3.3.3:	ELA 5.3.4:
SCI.3.6.2:	SCI.5.15.2:	ELA 3.3.4:	ELA 7.3.1:
SCI.3.6.3:	SCI.5.15.3:	ELA 3.3.5:	ELA 7.3.2:
SCI.3.10.1:	ELA 3.1.1:	ELA 4.12.2:	ELA 7.3.3:
SCI.3.10.2:	ELA 3.1.2:	ELA 4.12.4:	ELA 7.3.4:
SCI.5.14.1:	ELA 3.1.3:	ELA 5.3.1:	ELA 7.3.5
SCI.5.14.2	ELA 3.3.1:	ELA 5.3.2:	
SCI.5.14.3:	ELA 3.3.2:	ELA 5.3.3:	

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# A NOTE TO FELLOW EDUCATORS

Greetings!

We are excited for you and your students to attend *Bunnacula*, with music by Chris Jeffries, book by John Klein, and based on the books by James & Deborah Howe, at the Birmingham Children's Theatre. We invite you to use this packet in your classroom to prepare for and reflect on your upcoming visit.

This packet is designed to assist you in introducing the play's plot, characters, settings, language, and themes to your students. We encourage you to use these activities prior to the show to guide your students to a better understanding and enjoyment of what they will see at the theatre, and also after you visit to reinforce the show's themes and tie them into the STEM curriculum.

Thank you for helping to extend the learning process beyond theatre walls and for instilling an appreciation of the arts in the lives of Birmingham children.

See you at the theatre!

*Birmingham Children's Theatre*

# YOUR ROLE AS THE AUDIENCE

Dear Audience Members,

Birmingham Children's Theatre is excited to welcome you as a member of our audience! Theatre is a world of imagination and fun, where the impossible comes to life. The audience is an extremely important part of our storytelling, so before you attend a performance we want to share a few theatre etiquette guidelines with you.

Do:

- Feel free to laugh, gasp, and applaud!
- Participate when asked
- Arrive on time (30 min early is a good goal)
- Turn off and put away ALL electronics
- Sit in your assigned seating (an usher will help you)

Don't:

- Talk, wave, or shout during the performance
- Eat or drink

Thank you for playing your part! We are excited to share our production with you!

*Birmingham Children's Theatre*

# PLOT SUMMARY

In this hilarious musical, the Monroe family animals, Chester the cat and Harold the dog, tell the tale of a mysterious bunny who comes to live in their house. It was a dark and stormy night (of course) and the Monroes have just returned from the movies where they have seen a vampire flick. While there, they found a bunny sitting in one of the seats. They had to bring him home; they couldn't just leave him there! Chester and Harold are not thrilled with this new addition to the family. The rabbit is given the name Bunnacula and is there only a short time before dreadful things begin to happen. A tomato in the kitchen turns white. Soon other vegetables begin to lose their colors! The Monroes assume that the veggies have gone bad or that maybe they need to change grocery stores. Chester, through her fine detective work, figures out that the rabbit is a vampire and she tries several ways of stopping him from destruction. But depriving Bunnacula of his vegetables makes him lethargic and sad. It is Harold who makes everyone understand that Bunnacula must have his veggie juice in order to survive. In the end Chester and Harold find room in their hearts for a very special bunny. Based on the books that have delighted millions of children since 1979, Bunnacula lives on in this silly, only slightly scary romp..



# THEATRE

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### BEFORE THE PERFORMANCE:

1. Bunnacula is a stage play.

What is a stage play?

- How is a play similar to a TV show or movie?
- How is it different?

2. Who Performs the parts (roles) in a play?

- What kinds of skills do you think performers need to have to perform in plays?
- Who else works on plays?  
(Remember: you may not see them on stage!)

### DURING THE PERFORMANCE:

1. When you watch a play, you are a member of the audience.

What kinds of things should you do as an audience member?

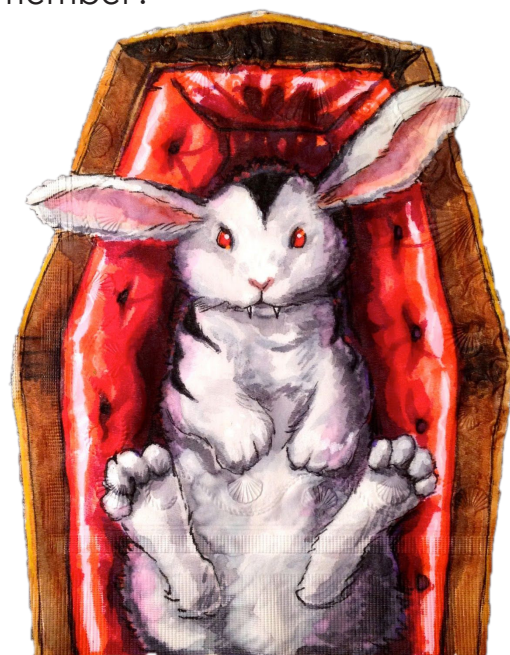
Examples:

- Pay attention
- Laugh when something funny happens
- Clap if you enjoy something

2. What kinds of things should you not do as an audience member?

Examples:

- Talk to your neighbor
- Use a cellphone during the performance
- Yell at the actors (unless they ask you to!)





# THEATRE

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS CONT.

### AFTER THE PERFORMANCE:

1. What did you think of the play?
  - If you'd read Bunnacula beforehand, how was the book similar to the play?
  - How was it different?
2. Describe the performers in the play.
  - What did they do to make their characters special (different from other characters)?
  - How did they use their bodies to play their characters (using voice, movement, etc.)?
  - Did you see anyone else who worked on the play besides the performers on stage?
3. Describe the characters' costumes.
  - What did each character's costume tell you about that character?
  - Did any of the performers change costumes?
  - If so, why do you think they needed to change costumes?
4. Describe the set of the play.
  - Did it have a lot of locations?
  - Did it look like a place you've been before?
  - How did different lighting change how the set looked for different scenes?
5. Did the play have music in it?
  - If so, was it only in the background, or did it help tell the story?
  - What instruments did you hear in the music?
6. If you were going to direct Bunnacula, how would your production be different than the play you saw by BCT?

# ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

## BCT MUST READS

For each of our productions at BCT, we choose a few themes related to the show. Then, we create a list of BCT Must-Reads based on those themes.

Themes are the main ideas behind a book or other literary work. Bunnacula has several themes of varying importance, including friendship, courage, and acceptance.

Other Books by James Howe:

### JUVENILE FICTION

- Bunnacula: a Rabbit Tale of Mystery
- Bunnacula Strikes Again!
- Celery Stalks at Midnight
- Dew Drop Inn
- Eat Your Poison, Dear
- Howliday Inn Morgan's Zoo
- The New Nick Kramer: Or My Life As a Babysitter
- Nighty-Nightmare
- Pinky and Rex series
- Rabbit-Cadabra!
- Return to Howliday Inn
- Sebastian Barth Mysteries
- Stage Fright
- Teddy Bear's Scrapbook
- Totally Joe
- What Eric Knew

### YOUNG ADULT FICTION

- The Misfits
- Watcher
- 13: Thirteen Stories That Capture the Agony and Ecstasy of Being Thirteen

### PICTURE BOOKS

- Horace and Morris, but Mostly Dolores
- There's a Dragon in My Sleeping Bag
- There's a Monster Under My Bed
- I Wish I Were a Butterfly



# ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

## BCT MUST READS CONT.

Read them as a class or let students choose two or more to read.  
Then use these questions for discussion or book reports:

### THEME:

How did the different themes show in each book? Explain.

### SETTING:

Describe the settings of each book.

- What details can you remember?
- Were the settings similar to a place you know or a place you've visited?
- How were the settings similar to each other? How were they different?

### CHARACTERS:

1. Who were the main characters of each book?
2. Did any characters show up in more than one book?
3. Were the characters of one book similar another book's characters in any other ways?
4. How were the characters related to the theme? Explain.

### PLOT:

1. What did the main characters of the books want most?
2. Did anyone or anything stand between the main characters and their goals?
3. Did the main characters get what they wanted? How?
4. How were the plots of the books similar? How were they different?



# HISTORY

## DRACULA...VAMPIRE...BUNNICULA?!?

In *Due* to Chester's obsession with horror tales and his insistence that the bunny the Monroes bring home is a blood-sucking monster, *Bunnica* is chock-full of references to vampires and methods for vanquishing them. Discuss the following with your students:

### *Who is Dracula?*

Dracula is the central character in the novel *Dracula*, by Irish author Bram Stoker, written in 1897. Stoker was inspired by reading the accounts of Vlad Tepes, or Vlad the Impaler, a Romanian count from the 1400s. Vlad's father belonged to the secretive group Order of the Dragon (or Dracul, in Romanian). Tepes, being the son of a Dracul, was titled Vlad Dracula. Historical reports of Vlad depict him as a terrible, cruel man who, by some accounts, killed tens of thousands of people during his lifetime. For hundreds of years it was said that Vlad Tepes was a vampire, but it was Stoker who created the foundation of the Dracula we know today. Dracula is depicted as a tall, old man wearing black, with a long white moustache and two pointy sharp teeth that stick out from his mouth, over his bottom lip. Since Stoker's book was written, dozens of Hollywood movies and television shows based on Dracula, or inspired by its depiction of vampires, have generated. These movies and shows have changed the popular ideas of what a vampire is. Notably the most influential Dracula film was the 1931 movie *Dracula*, starring Hungarian actor Bela Lugosi. Lugosi's dialect—"I vant to suck your bluhd"—and physical representation of Dracula, complete with slicked-back black hair and a receding hairline, inspired the Halloween costume-version of vampires today.

### *What is a vampire?*

For thousands of years there have been stories told all over the world of blood-sucking monsters. Today, we usually think of a vampire as Bram Stoker's character Dracula and the movies, plays, and television programs that followed. This has led to the creation of many fun "Dracula" characters, such as The Count on Sesame Street, or Count Chocula, of cereal fame. Here are references to how vampires are most commonly depicted:

- Vampires are 'undead' humans who are cursed to roam the earth drinking blood.
- Vampires have two pointy teeth, with which they bite people in the neck.
- Vampires wear formal evening wear (usually a fancy tuxedo-like suit) and a large black cape with a high collar.
- Vampires sleep in coffins during the daytime and come out only at night.
- Vampires have the ability to turn into bats.
- Vampires cannot be seen through their reflection in a mirror.
- Vampires traditionally live in old, abandoned castles in Transylvania.

# SCIENCE/HEALTH

## PET FOOD LIST

In the story, Bunnicula, Harold and Chester eat foods that can be extremely toxic to pets in real life, especially dogs. While the Monroe family animals stay happy and healthy on their unusual diets, regular dogs and cats can get very sick from eating an improper diet. Here are some examples of what foods to avoid feeding dogs and cats. Please share with your students and ask them not to share these “people foods” with them:

### *Foods to Avoid: For Dogs & Cats*

- Baby food
- Bacon
- Chocolate, including chocolate cupcake
- Coffee, tea and other caffeine
- Grapes and raisins
- Macadamia nuts
- Milk, cheese, and other dairy products
- Moldy or spoiled food, garbage
- Mushrooms
- Onion and garlic (raw, cooked, or powder)
- Raw eggs
- Raw fish
- Salt
- Yeast dough

Discuss with your students other pets they have, and what kind of food they should avoid feeding them.

# SCIENCE

## VEGGIE MATCH-UPS

What do these vegetables have in common?

1. Arugula
2. Bok Choy
3. Carrots
4. Celery
5. Cucumbers
6. Endive
7. Garlic
8. Lettuce
9. Onions
10. Parsnips
11. Tomato
12. Zucchini

Give up? They are all mentioned in *Bunnica* (and some of them even figure into the plot!). Although you've probably heard of—and maybe even eaten—most of these veggies, some you may not recognize. Try matching each vegetable with its correct description below.

- \_\_\_\_\_ a. These contain more sugar than any other vegetable, except beets.
- \_\_\_\_\_ b. Also called "rocket," this is a leafy relative of cabbage and broccoli.
- \_\_\_\_\_ c. Serve it steamed, fried, sautéed, grilled, stuffed or baked into bread or muffins.
- \_\_\_\_\_ d. Its Chinese name literally means "white vegetable"—how appropriate!
- \_\_\_\_\_ e. Every part of this is edible—leaves, roots, stems and seeds.
- \_\_\_\_\_ f. The botanical name of this juicy fruit means "wolf-peach."
- \_\_\_\_\_ g. These are loved by pigs, horses, and cattle (as well as some people).
- \_\_\_\_\_ h. California is the leading U.S. producer of this popular favorite.
- \_\_\_\_\_ i. Better have a hankie handy when cutting into these smelly things.
- \_\_\_\_\_ j. These were first brought to America by Columbus, who was "cool as a..."
- \_\_\_\_\_ k. Other names for this prickly leaf are chicory, escarole, and witloof.
- \_\_\_\_\_ l. Gilroy, CA is the Capital of the World as far as lovers of this are concerned.

# THEATRE ARTS

## CHARACTER CREATIONS

How much do you know about a character? In most plays, playwrights provide limited detailed character information, which can make it challenging for actors and actresses to create believable characters. In reality, it is impossible for the playwright to provide all of the character information, because of how lengthy it would be. But this also gives more freedom of interpretation, allowing the director and actors make their own discoveries, and the play to change and grow from production to production.

The following exercise is often used by actors and actresses to help them complete their characters.

Pick a character from *Bunnicula* and answer the following questions. (Characters: Bunnicula, Chester, Harold, Pete, Toby, Mr. Monroe, and Mrs. Monroe.) There is no correct answer for each question, but try to answer the questions according to what you already know about your character. Feel free to make up the answers.

1. How old are you? \_\_\_\_\_
2. How would you describe your personality? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Where do you live? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Who do you live with? \_\_\_\_\_
5. What is your favorite color? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What is your favorite food? \_\_\_\_\_
7. What makes you happy? \_\_\_\_\_
8. What makes you sad? \_\_\_\_\_
9. What kind of music do you like? \_\_\_\_\_
10. What do you like to do for fun? \_\_\_\_\_
11. What is your relationship to the people in the play? \_\_\_\_\_
12. How did you feel when Bunnicula first appeared in your house? \_\_\_\_\_
13. If your character is Bunnicula, how did you feel when you first arrived at the Monroe's?  
\_\_\_\_\_

# ARTS

## YUMMY CUPCAKES WITH A BUNNICULA TWIST!

A chocolate cupcake is one of Harold's favorite foods. Even though a dog should never eat anything with chocolate in it, you definitely can enjoy several of these cupcakes with a twist! How about a chocolate-zucchini cupcake?!

### INGREDIENTS:

- 2 (1 ounce) squares unsweetened chocolate, melted
- 3 eggs
- 1 3/4 cups packed brown sugar
- 1 cup vegetable oil
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 2 cups grated zucchini
- 3/4 cup chopped walnuts
- 1 (16 ounce) can chocolate frosting
- 1/2 cup walnut halves

### DIRECTIONS:

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F.
2. In a large bowl, beat eggs with sugar for about 10 minutes or until thickened and pale. Blend oil and cooled chocolate into the beaten egg mixture.
3. In a small bowl stir together flour, baking powder, baking soda and salt; stir flour mixture into egg mixture until just blended. Stir in zucchini and chopped nuts.
4. Using an ice-cream scoop, spoon batter into 24 paper-lined or greased muffin cups, filling the cups 2/3 full.
5. Bake for 20 minutes or until fork or toothpick inserted in a cupcake's center comes out clean. Let cool in pans on rack for 10 minutes. Remove from pans; let cool completely. Spread with chocolate frosting and garnish with walnut halves.



# MATH

## WHAT TIME IS IT?

Many people believe that dogs can tell the time, not by using a clock but by using their memories. Dogs have been known to show up at their master's door every day at the same hour, to return home to their master, just like Harold. Harold is not your ordinary dog, however—he wants to learn how to use a clock and measure time. Please help him learn about time by solving the questions below:

1. The Monroes went to see Dracula at a movie theater. The film began at 5:50 P.M. and was over by 7:45 P.M. How long was the movie Dracula, in minutes?

2. While defrosting the steak, Mrs. Monroe went to pick up Mr. Monroe at the college. It took Mrs. Monroe 47 minutes round trip. She left home at 6:30 P.M. When did she get home again? 3. How long did Bunnica sleep if he went to bed at 9:40 A.M. and woke up at 7:20 P.M.?

4. The Monroes left home at 4:42 P.M. to drive to the pet store. The drive took them 23 minutes. What time did they arrive?

5. Harold played with Pete for 14 minutes, walked with Toby for 36 minutes and sat in the kitchen with Mrs. Monroe for 45 minutes. What was the total time that Harold spent that day with the Monroes?

6. It is now 10:45 A.M. Chester started to put garlic around the house 35 minutes ago. What time did he start his job?

7. Mrs. Monroe made some homemade cupcakes. She began making them on Saturday morning at 8:29 A.M. She finished baking the cupcakes by 9:33 A.M. How long did it take her? 8. Harold and Chester were on night patrol from 9:45 P.M. to 5:55 A.M. How long was the night patrol?

8. Harold & Chester were on night patrol from 9:45 P.M. to 5:55 A.M. How long was the night patrol?

# POST SHOW

## DISCUSSION

1. Which character in the play did you like best? Which part of the show was your favorite? What did you find surprising about the play? Explain your choices.

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2. What led Chester to think that Bunnacula was a vampire? What influenced him more—Bunnacula's look or his actions? Were his concerns valid? Why or why not?

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3. What did Chester do to protect his family? How did the Monroes react to Chester's unusual behavior? What would you do if your pets suddenly acted strange?

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4. Although Bunnacula did not talk in the play, how do you think he felt when Chester treated him like he was evil?

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5. What would you do if you were Harold? Would you help Chester or Bunnacula? Why?

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6. What happened to Harold that made him so upset that he stopped believing in his best friend Chester?

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7. During the play, the Monroes' pets all talk to each other and can understand each other. Do you think animals are able to talk to each other in a way that we don't understand?

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BIRMINGHAM  
CHILDREN'S  
T H E A T R E

## **THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT!**

QUESTIONS? CONTACT DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, JESSIE KISOR

**[jessie@bct123.org](mailto:jessie@bct123.org)**

