

Study Guide

THE VELVETEEN RABBIT

A New Family Musical

Book and Lyrics by
Anya Saffir & Cormac Bluestone

Music by Cormac Bluestone

Musical Direction by
Cormac Bluestone

Directed by
Anya Saffir

Choreographed by
Alison Beatty

Director of Education
Heather Baird

Education Associate
Tyler Easter

Education Coordinator
Fran Tarr

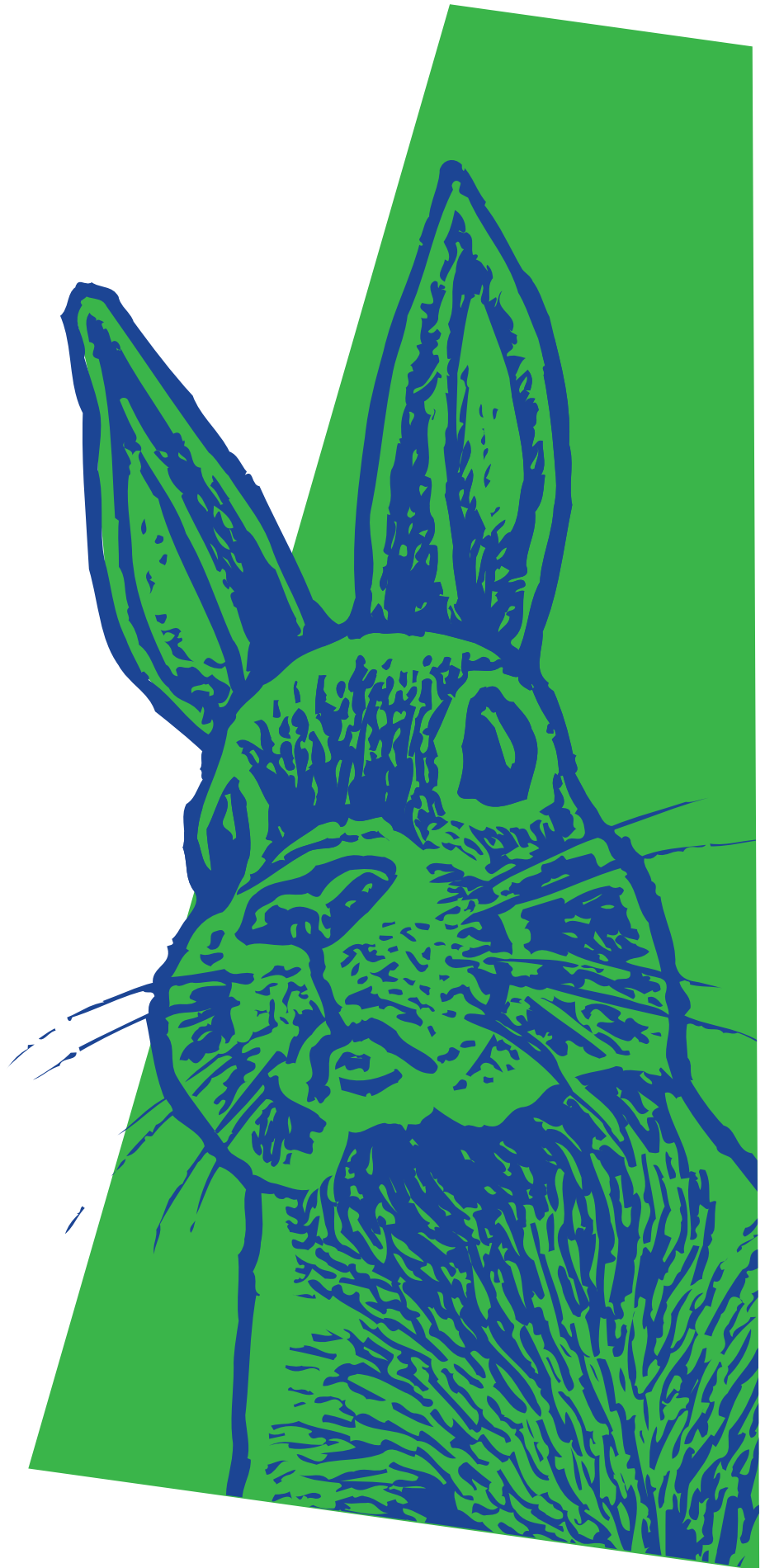


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Atlantic Theater Company,
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Section 1:
The Play
Characters,
Setting,
Themes



TEACHER OBJECTIVE

To introduce students to the characters, settings, and story of *The Velveteen Rabbit*.

STUDENT GOAL

To understand that the actors will simply and truthfully create the story of the play.

SETTING

The Boy's Bedroom

The Nursery

The Garden

The Woods Nearby

THEMES

Transition

Seasons

Friendship

Wisdom

"Real" vs. "Make-believe"

Growing Up

The Secret Life of Toys

CHARACTERS

The Velveteen Rabbit

The Boy

Ensemble Roles Played By The Chorus:

Mother

Father

Nana

Tug Boat

Porcelain Doll

Wooden Lion

Toy Soldier 1

Toy Soldier 2

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The Skin Horse

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Wild Rabbit 2

Wild Rabbit 3

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Wild Rabbit 5

The Doctor

The Fairy Of Nursery Magic

Section 2:
Cast & Creative
Cast, Creative
Team, and Crew
Biographies





ANYA SAFFIR
(Director, Playwright)

Directing credits include *Much Ado About Nothing* at The American Repertory Theater Institute, *American Sojourns: Three Plays by Thornton Wilder* at The Moscow Art Theater, an all-male *Romeo and Juliet* at American Theater of Actors, Brecht's *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* with Pipeline Theatre Company (ITBA award for Outstanding off-Broadway Show), *Hamlet* with Orpheus Productions (NY Innovative Theater Award nomination for Outstanding Direction), *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs* for Atlantic for Kids and Chekhov's *Three Sisters* with Muse Theater Company. Anya has served as Artistic Associate at Classic Stage Company, Adjunct Professor at Tisch School of the Arts at NYU and is a longtime faculty member at Atlantic Acting School where she teaches Chekhov scene study and has directed *Twelfth Night*, *Pericles*, *The Winter's Tale* and *As You Like it*, among others. She is a regular contributor on Shakespeare topics for NPR's *The Takeaway* with John Hockenberry. *The Velveteen Rabbit* is her 11th collaboration with composer Cormac Bluestone.

CORMAC BLUESTONE
(Musical Director, Playwright, Composer)

Cormac Bluestone has worked for eight seasons composing musical numbers, lyrics and additional score for the television show "It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia" including the musical episodes, *Nightman Cometh* and *Franks Little Beauties*. Mr. Bluestone most recently completed the score for the upcoming feature film, *Loserville*. He has also scored the feature films *Tenured* (Tribeca Film Festival World Premiere) and *Gutboy*. In 2011, Mr. Bluestone won the Innovative Theater Award for "Outstanding Original Music" (second nomination in the category) for the award winning theater production of *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, directed by Anya Saffir (ITBA award for Outstanding off-Broadway Show). As a Sound Designer, he has worked at Atlantic Theater Company (*Good Television*, dir. Bob Krakower), The American Repertory Theater Institute, The Moscow Art Theater and most recently, his third season with *The Potomac Theater Project*, designing the critically acclaimed *Scenes from an Execution* starring Jan Maxwell.

ALISON BEATTY
(Choreographer)

As a proud alumna of the Atlantic Acting School and NYU's Tisch School of the Arts, Alison Beatty has been the ATC School Artistic Director for the past 6 years. She has had the pleasure of directing and/ or choreographing several ATC for Kids shows, including: *The Velveteen Rabbit*, *Camp Kappawanna*, *Ivy and Bean the Musical* (ATC, First Nat'l Tour), *Tilly the Trickster*, *The Hundred Dresses*, *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs*, *Miss Nelson is Missing*, *No Dogs Allowed*, *Really Rosie*, *Strega Nona*, *The Big Stew*, and *You're A Good Man, Charlie Brown*.

BROOKS CLINE

(Chorus/Father/Toy Soldier)

Brooks is beyond excited to be a part of the wonderful team behind *The Velveteen Rabbit*— and can't wait to bring this remarkable story to life for you today. He's a 2015 graduate of the Atlantic Acting School/NYU Tisch, where he had a great time playing characters like Lopakin in *The Cherry Orchard* and Joe Cardin in *The Children's Hour*. He's also had a blast with more playful parts like the Munchkin Mayor in *The Wizard of Oz* and Charlie Brown in *You're A Good Man, Charlie Brown*. Getting the chance to join an Atlantic company production for the first time and share this rousing classic seemed like the perfect balance. A million thanks to Mom, Dad, and big bros Matt & Jesse – for everything – he's got nothing but love. Hope you all enjoy the show very much, and have fun!

JESSIKA DOYEL

(The Velveteen Rabbit)

Jessika Doyel is a theater artist and educator from Nashville, Tennessee. Proud alumna of the Atlantic Acting School. Performing credits include *Reckless* (Atlantic Acting School), *The Visit* and *The Children's Hour* (Belmont University) among others. Producing credits include Abby Rosebrock's *Singles in Agriculture* (The Brick/Dixon Place), developmental workshops of Nate Weida's folk opera, *I's Twinkle* at Judson Church as well as numerous second stage events with Pipeline Theatre Company. Directing and assisting credits include: *TEN* (Partial Comfort Productions), *The Ash Girl* (Pipeline), *Orange Flower Water* (Atlantic Stage 2), *And Miles to Go* (dir. Hal Brooks). Jessika is on staff at the Atlantic and serves as an Artistic Associate with Pipeline Theatre Company. Her favorite times are spent fostering the work of new playwrights, writing letters, and dreaming about making silent films with James Thierree.

PAUL EDDY

(Chorus/Mechanical Toy/Wild Rabbit)

Paul Eddy is an actor/musician from Georgetown, KY who is so excited to be back at Atlantic for Kids. Other shows with Atlantic include *Camp Kappawanna* by Lisa Loeb, *Jackie and Me*, and *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs*. He's also recently been in *Day 392* by Amy E. Witting (Kennedy Center), Jeff Nichols' movie *In the Radiant Sun* by Rachael Lambert and *Artaud Artaud* (Signature Theater). You can also catch him being fooled on Colby Day's Michelob Ultra failed Super Bowl commercial or playing and singing songs around the city. He is a proud graduate of the Atlantic Summer Intensive Training Program and holds a BA from Georgetown College.

ANYA GIBIAN

(Chorus/Mechanical Toy/Wild Rabbit)

Anya Gibian is an actor, singer, and circus artist living in Brooklyn. She loves working on new and developing work, most recently originating the title role in Little Did Productions' world-premiere puppet opera *Solina* (FringeNYC). Previous New York credits include *#serials@theflea*, and *The Mysteries* (The Flea Theater). Anya is co-founder of ParaCosm Theatrics with Juliana Kleist-Mendez. www.anyagibian.com

MICKELE HOGAN

(Chorus/Mother/Toy Soldier/The Fairy of Nursery Magic)

Mickele Hogan is blessed to be a part of bringing the beloved story of *The Velveteen Rabbit* to the stage with this incredible cast and crew. She is a founding member of the Joust Theatre Company where she recently played the role of Julia in the debut of Dipika Guha's *The Rules*. She continually performs in the city and around the US with the Broadway Dreams Foundation where her credits include: *Rockers on Broadway* and *Xanadu*. Other credits include: Procne in *The Love of the Nightingale* and the starring role in the feature film *Message of Hope*. She is a recent graduate of NYU Tisch School of the Arts where she trained with the Atlantic Acting School. Her credits include *Metamorphoses*, *Spring Awakening*, *As You Like It* and *Chamber Music*. She would like to thank God, her family, and friends for all their love and support.

DANIEL BRIAN JONES

(Chorus/Tug Boat/The Doctor)

Daniel Brian Jones co-operated Farm Theater Projects, which produced nine original works spanning dance, music, and theater. His writing has appeared in *Chronogram* and *Whirlwind* magazines. Music: *Harmonium Songs* (a cycle of settings of poems from Wallace Stevens's *Harmonium*), *Little Room*. Upcoming: the theatrical world premiere of John Ashbery's *Litany* with new group Small Theaters Around the Country. He edits FOLDER Magazine. NYU, Atlantic www.danielbrianjones.com.

SAM GONZALEZ

(Chorus/Wooden Lion/Wild Rabbit)

Sam Gonzalez is very excited to be a part of his first production with Atlantic for Kids! He is an alum of the Atlantic Acting School where he starred in several productions including *As You Like It* and *Spring Awakening*. He would like to thank his brother and his friends for their continued support and the cast of *Velveteen* for making this a beautiful experience.

MCLEAN PETERSON

(Chorus/Nana)

McLean Peterson is thrilled to be back at the Linda Gross for her second Atlantic for Kids production. Past New York credits include: *The Parlour* (Soho Rep-Walkerspace), *Bible Stories* (Bailout Theater), *BOATS AND* (ANT Fest), and *Ivy & Bean the Musical* (ATC, First Nat'l Tour). Film: *The First Of Our Friends to Get Married*. She is a founding member of the Joust Theatre Company and a breakfast enthusiast. Much love to Mom, Dad, her three M's, and her super star cast mates. www.mcleanpeterson.com

HUGH C. SMITH

(Chorus/The Skin Horse)

Hugh C. Smith is a recent graduate of The Theater School at DePaul University in Chicago class of 2015. Since graduating, he has performed in *Clarence*, *The Cannibal* at The Bowery Poetry Club and *Bible Stories* at Judson Memorial Church. Some of his favorite credits at DePaul are *The Duchess of Malfi* and *The Last Days of Judas Iscariot*.

GREG SULLIVAN

(Chorus/Toy Soldier/Wild Rabbit)

Greg Sullivan is thrilled to be a part of *The Velveteen Rabbit* and honored to be welcomed into the Atlantic Theater family. He is a New York based actor, voiceover artist, singer, and dancer. He received his B.A. in Drama from Vassar College and trained at the Moscow Art Theater School through the National Theater Institute. He was last seen performing the roles of Anderson Cooper/Hillary Clinton in the new musical *PALIN: the Live Televised Musical Campaign*, and Yerkov in the midtown festival's award winning show *Warp Speed: The Sci-Fi Parody Musical*. Other recent credits: *Joly* in *Les Misérables* (WPPAC), *Woof in Hair* (WPPAC), and *Boy* in the premiere of *The Magic Fish* (Half Moon Theater). Extra special thanks to my friends, family, and floof.

MINA WALKER

(Chorus/Porcelain Doll/ Wild Rabbit)

Mina Walker was born and bred in New Orleans, LA and has lived in New York for 3 years. She is currently finishing her last semester at NYU and has just finished her training at the Atlantic Acting School. She has performed in several Atlantic Acting School productions including *Macbeth* and *The Trestle at Pope Lick Creek* and she is so excited to start her professional career as a part of Atlantic for Kids.

WESLEY ZURICK

(The Boy)

Wesley Zurick is an alum of the conservatory at the Atlantic Acting School. He is thrilled to be returning to the Linda Gross Theater for his third show with Atlantic for Kids. Other recent credits include *Il Nuovo Teatrino delle Meraviglie* (San Vittore Globe Theatre), *Boats And* (ANT Fest), *The Trestle at Pope Lick Creek* (Playhouse on Park), *Gods and Kings* (Other Mirror Theatre), and *I's Twinkle* (Pipeline Theatre Company). Best Director of the Strawberry Theatre Festival 2013 for his play, *How to Cowboy*. In his spare time he is a playwright, and composer. He is also a teacher/music director at the Atlantic Acting School.

KRISTEN ROBINSON

(Scenic Designer)

Selected Credits Include: *And A Nightingale Sang*, *The Liar*, *Nora* (Westport Country Playhouse), *Three Translations of Uncle Vanya: Acts 1&2* (The Invisible Dog), *Sisyphus* (Experiments in Opera at Abrons Art Center), *All That Dies and Rises* (M-34), *Rapture Blister Burn* (The Wilma Theater), *Last Days of Mankind* (Bard College, Fisher Center for the Performing Arts), *My Friend's Story* (International Festival of Arts and Ideas), *American Night the Ballad of Juan Jose* (Yale Repertory Theatre), *The Princess Play's 2&1* (New Haven, site specific project): Yale School of Drama MFA, Princess Grace Theatre Fellowship: Pierre Cardin Award, 2013. Her work on *Nora* has been featured in *Chance Magazine* issue 4, Barrymore Award Nominee. www.kristenrobinsondesign.com

KATJA ANDREIEV

(Costume Designer)

The True Story of the Three Little Pigs, *Tilly the Trickster*, *Really Rosie*, *Holes*, *No Dogs Allowed*. Atlantic Acting School: *After the Fall*, *The Children's Hour* (dir. Paul Schnee), *Mad Forest*, *The Tempest*, *Cloud 9* (dir. Michael Tara Garver), *Reckless*, *Twelfth Night*, *Our Town*, *The Rimers of Eldritch* (dir. Paul Urcioli). Atlantic Theater Company: *the 10x25* (dir. Neil Pepe, Christian Parker, Scott Zigler et.al). She designs with high school students through Atlantic Staging Success. Also with Anya Saffir: *Much Ado About Nothing* (American Repertory Theater Institute), *Romeo and Juliet* (Tragedians of the City/Northwest Passage), *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* (Pipeline Theatre Company), *Hamlet* (Morpheus Productions). Upcoming projects: *Regina* (The Bronx Opera). She thanks the cast and production team for their patience and her parents for reading bedtime stories when she was small.

SOLOMON WEISBARD

(Lighting Designer)

Solomon Weisbard is Brooklyn-based and Oregon-born. Recent: *This Golden State* (Magic); *Macbeth* (Arden); *Rite of Spring* (Martha Graham); *Soldier's Tale* (With Michael Cerveris - Yale / Carnegie Hall); *Stones in his Pockets* (Yale Rep); *Coronation of Poppea* (Princeton Opera); *Men on Boats* (Clubbed Thumb); Daniel Alexander Jones' *The Integrator's Manual* (La Mama, Fusebox); Faust, *Barber of Seville* (Tri-Cities Opera); *The Homecoming*, *Cedars*, *Lion in Winter*, *A Class Act* (Berkshire Theatre Group); Christina Anderson's *Hollow Roots* (Public / Under the Radar); *The Pavilion* (Barrow Group); *Jitney*, *Christmas Carol* (Drammy Nomination, Portland Playhouse); *The Film Society* (Keen / Theatre Row); *White's Lies* (New World Stages). Numerous sound, light, and movement works with rising and established composers, choreographers and theatre-makers. MFA: Yale School of Drama. Member: USA 829. www.solweisbard.com

KATEY PARKER

(Puppetry)

Katey Parker is an actor and puppeteer based in New York. Her puppetry experience includes *Master Peter's Puppet Show* at the Castleton Opera Festival with The Puppet Kitchen, *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* with Pipeline Theater Co., *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs* with Atlantic for Kids and the "Make it a Puppet!" series with Brooklyn indie band The Pop Ups.

LIZ HAROIAN

(Production Stage Manager)

Liz is very excited to be a part of this beautiful show! She's spent the past three years traveling the country working as the stage manager on numerous different productions. Favorite credits include: *The Light Princess* (ART, and New Victory Theater), *Iphigenia and Other Daughters* (The Juilliard School), *Much Ado About Nothing* (ART IATT), *Richard III* (The Juilliard School). Much thanks to our hard-working, patient, and beautiful actors who perform their hearts out every morning. Amid all the chaos, remember to have fun!

**Section 3:
Your Students
As Audience**

Theater Vocabulary,
a Letter from the
Velveteen Rabbit—
Jessika Doyel,
Margery Williams
Bianco



“Plays should tell simple, honest stories.”

—David Mamet, American playwright & noted actor, William H. Macy, founders of Atlantic Theater Company



The following activities will assist your students in understanding the intentions of the playwright to tell a simple story.

THEATER VOCABULARY

Teacher Objective

To be able to discuss theater through a common, shared vocabulary.

Student Goal

To understand that the most effective way to discuss theater and new ideas is through a shared vocabulary.

Action: The events that move along the story of the play and which influence the characters within the play.

Characters: Individuals the audience learns about from their actions and reactions.

Ensemble: A group of performers working together to create a complete production.

Dialogue: The exchange of speech between two characters which reveals the feelings of the character as well as the story of the play.

Monologue: A speech by one actor on stage which is intended to reveal the inner thoughts of the character the actor plays.

Character Arc: The change produced in a character by the events and other characters in the play.

Musical Theater: A twentieth century creation where writers and musicians collaborate to create a play which features song, dance and drama.

Mood: The overall feeling the play evokes.

Costume: The clothes, boots, etc., worn by the actors based on their character.

Prop: Objects used by an actor to enhance their character. For example, wine glasses at a bar for drinks.

Set: The constructed environment of a play within which the action takes place.

Sound: Noises and music used in the play.

A LETTER FROM THE RABBIT

Teacher Objective

To introduce the students to professional New York City actors, their process and motivation.

Student Goal

To understand that actors need an enthusiastic, informed audience to view their work.

Materials

Chalkboard, chalk, paper, pens, the webbing and discussion triggers.

Dear friends,

I am so very excited that you're here today and we get to share this story with you. My name is Jessika and I have the delight of playing The Velveteen Rabbit.

I've loved this story for a very long time and, like the Boy, some of my best friends as a child were toys that would protect me from thunderstorms, or hide in treehouses with me and to whom I could tell all of my secrets—even those I couldn't tell my sister. My favorite toys were a skunk named Stinky and a shabby blanket named Dipey who slept in the top bunk of my bunk-bed with me every night. Even now that I'm all grown up, I love them very much. Maybe you have a toy or blanket that you love very much as well?

Last year, I did a workshop of *The Velveteen Rabbit* where the writers (Anya and Cormac) asked some actors to learn a bit of the music from the show and read the play out loud in front of a small audience so they could hear the story aloud for the first time. Since then, the songs and play have changed and grown even in rehearsal these past few months!

Some of my favorite things about being in this show are being able to spend time laughing and pretending with some of my dearest friends—sometimes people won't tell you this, but if you're very lucky, the people you act with become like a family, and if that happens, you feel terribly glad and loved, even if you are shy and have stage fright—which I sometimes do. In rehearsals, we sing and learn dances (which you'll see and hear in the show) and joke around with each other, but work very hard too. Sometimes, we get to wear our costumes in rehearsals—one of my favorite days was when Katja, our costume designer, made a pair of rabbit ears and when she put them on me for the first time it looked like I had real rabbit ears coming out of my hair!

I hope you all enjoy the show and remember...nursery magic is strange and wonderful, nothing that is REAL is ugly, except to people who don't understand. Once you are REAL, it lasts for always.

—Jessika



MARGERY WILLIAMS BIANCO

Atlantic's production of *The Velveteen Rabbit* is an adaptation of a famous and beloved book written by Margery Williams Bianco in 1922.

From: *Pennsylvania Center for the Book*
By: Omotayo Banjo

Over her lifetime, Margery Williams Bianco published a compilation of over 25 novels and children's books. Born in London on July 22, 1881, Margery Winifred Williams was born to a barrister [a type of British lawyer] and famous classical scholar. As a young child, Bianco had a vivid imagination and would create different personalities for each of her toys. But her father stressed the importance of reading for her and her older sister. He believed reading was the primary source of education for children under the age of ten. Because of her father's coaching, Bianco grew up with a love for reading and soon developed a passion for writing, using personalities from her childhood. Bianco's father died when she was seven years old. When she was nine years old, her family moved to the United States, first to New York, then settling on a farm in Pennsylvania. Bianco attended the Convent School in Sharon Hill, Pennsylvania, until she was seventeen years old. By this time, Bianco had decided to become a writer even though her stories had previously been rejected. Nonetheless, Bianco managed to write children's stories for a London firm that published Christmas books. In 1902, Bianco published her first novel for adults, *The Late Returning*. She published a few early adult novels afterward; however, Bianco had little success with them.

In 1904, Bianco married a book department manager, Francisco Bianco. The couple lived in London for three years, where Bianco gave up writing so that she could raise their two children, Cecco and Pamela.

Adaptation: An altered or amended version of a text, musical composition, etc., (now esp.) one adapted for filming, broadcasting, or production on the stage from a novel or similar literary source.

Bianco and her family traveled back and forth across Europe and finally settled in Turin, Italy, where her husband fought for the Italian army in World War I.

While staying home with her children, Bianco became really interested in the work of Walter de La Mare, a poet she believed wrote clearly from a child's point of view. She so greatly admired his work that she later wrote an essay, "De La Mare," in honor of him. By 1921, Bianco and her family settled in the United States and Bianco returned to writing. This time, however, Bianco turned to her children and reminisced about her own childhood. She found inspiration in watching her children play with toys and animals.

This inspiration soon led her to write her most popular book, *The Velveteen Rabbit or How Toys Become Real* in 1922. In this book, she creatively expressed William de la Mare's literary concepts of wonders and miracles through a child's point of view. In *The Velveteen Rabbit*, a young boy received a toy rabbit as a Christmas gift. Initially, the young boy dismisses the gift but later becomes fond of the rabbit, so much so that it becomes real to the child. When the young boy fell ill with scarlet fever, his family decided to burn the rabbit to keep the illness from spreading. By that time, however, a fairy turns the rabbit into a real animal and he becomes alive. *The Velveteen Rabbit* was well-received, although some critics believed that the children's book was "too sentimental."

The tale of the rabbit who comes alive still lives on in adaptations of the story in audio, video, and film.

In 1925, Bianco published *Poor Cecco* and 1927's *The Skin Horse*. Consistent with her two later works and fascination with toys and miracles, these novels told stories of animals that possessed human traits and emotions. In 1927, Bianco wrote a short story, *The Little Wooden Doll*, a story about a doll who had been abused by two children and was restored by a third child. Although most reviewers praised Bianco's ability to create such lifelike characters, some criticized their persistently sad themes. Bianco, however, believed that most beautiful stories came out of sad tales because they depicted the essence of growth and change.


Later in her life, Bianco began to write young adult novels. Again focusing on characters who lived lives different from normal success, she received a Newbery Medal in 1937 for *Winterbound*, a story about two teenage girls who are forced to take care of their family while their parents are called away without warning. In *Other People's Houses*, she wrote about a young girl who chose to earn a living for herself in New York instead of going to college. And in 1944, Bianco wrote *Forward Commandos!*, a story that included an African-American character. During this time, portraying an African-American character was uncommon and it was different for Bianco, in that she rarely used male characters in her books.

Bianco fell ill the year that *Forward, Commandos!* was published. After three days in the hospital, Margery Williams Bianco died on September 4, 1944.

Section 4:
Your Students
As Actors

Warm-up Game,
Reading a Scene
for Understanding,
Character Analysis





“Actors should remain truthful to the story and their character.”

- David Mamet, American playwright & noted actor, William H. Macy, Founders of Atlantic Theater Company

The following activities are designed to assist your students in understanding the actor's *“job.”* Like every job, even acting has its *“tools.”*

WARM-UP GAME: “RABBIT”

Step One

Kids stand or sit in a circle. One by one each student chooses an animal name. No student may choose the same animal name as a student who went before them.

Step Two

Go around the circle saying each name twice.

Step Three

Start calling each other by the animal names. When the student whose animal name has been called hears their animal, they repeat their own name and then call out “to” another animal in the circle.

For example: If student 1 is “Bear,” student 2 is “Rabbit,” and student 3 is “Puppy”... student 1 might call out “Bear to Rabbit!” It would then be student 2’s turn to call out, perhaps, “Rabbit to Puppy!” and so on...

Step Four

After everyone has gotten acquainted with each other’s animal names, everyone hides their teeth from sight. Now everyone continues the game talking like little old ladies and gentlemen. They continue the game speaking while trying to hide their teeth with their lips, making them sound very funny when they speak.

Step Five

Uproarious laughter ensues.

Step Six

Students can also do the same game with sound and movement for each student instead of hiding teeth. In that case, each student would pick a motion to go with their animal and go around the circle calling each other by animal name and movement.

READING A SCENE FOR UNDERSTANDING

GRADES 4 & 5

Teacher Objective

To introduce the Practical Aesthetics “tools” for breaking down a scene. To understand the character and the story of the scene by relating the character’s action to the student’s own life.

Student Goal

To understand that an important part of creating a simple, honest character involves knowing what that character “wants.”

Materials

Copies of the scene from *The Velveteen Rabbit*.

A scene from *The Velveteen Rabbit*:

The Velveteen Rabbit **What is REAL? Does it mean having springs and wind-up things, or mapping the stars?**

The Skin Horse **Real isn't how you are made or what you've done. It's a thing that happens to you. When a child loves you for a long, long time, not just to play with, but REALLY loves you, then you become real.**

The Velveteen Rabbit **Does it hurt?**

The Skin Horse **Sometimes. When you are Real you don't mind being hurt.**

The Velveteen Rabbit **Does it happen all at once, like being wound up, or bit by bit?**

The Skin Horse **It doesn't happen all at once. You become. It takes a long time. That's why it doesn't happen often to people who break easily, or have sharp edges, or who have to be carefully kept. Generally, by the time you are Real, most of your hair has been loved off, and your eyes drop out and you get loose in the joints and very shabby. But these things don't matter at all, because once you are Real you can't be ugly, except to people who don't understand.**

The Velveteen Rabbit **I suppose you are real?**

The Skin Horse **The Boy's Uncle made me Real. That was a great many years ago; but once you are Real you can't become unreal again. It lasts for always.**

(The Velveteen Rabbit sighs)

The Velveteen Rabbit **It could be a long time before this magic called Real happens to me...**

CHARACTER ANALYSIS

Teacher Objective

To introduce the Practical Aesthetics “tools” for breaking down a scene. To understand the character and the story of the scene by relating the character’s action to the student’s own life.

Student Goal

To understand that an important part of creating a simple, honest character involves knowing what that character “wants.”

Materials

Copies of the scene from *The Velveteen Rabbit*.

CHARACTER ANALYSIS WORKSHEET

Here are your “tools” for understanding your character:

IF YOU'RE PLAYING RABBIT...

IF YOU'RE PLAYING SKIN HORSE...

What is my character literally doing?

The Rabbit is literally talking to the Skin Horse about what “real” means.

The Skin Horse is literally telling the Rabbit what “real” means.

What does my character want?

The Rabbit wants the Skin Horse to tell him the secret of the universe.

The Skin Horse wants the Rabbit to see the world the way it really is.

What is the action I'm going to play?

To get someone to take me under their wing.

To get someone to accept a beautiful gift.

The As-If...

It's as if I get fired from my job and evicted from my apartment, and I have to ask my dearest friend, Patrick, to let me stay in his house.

It's as if I get a promotion and I buy my Mom a car so she can drive to work instead of taking the bus ... I have to get her to accept the gift/let go of her pride!

**Section 5:
Your Students
As Artists**

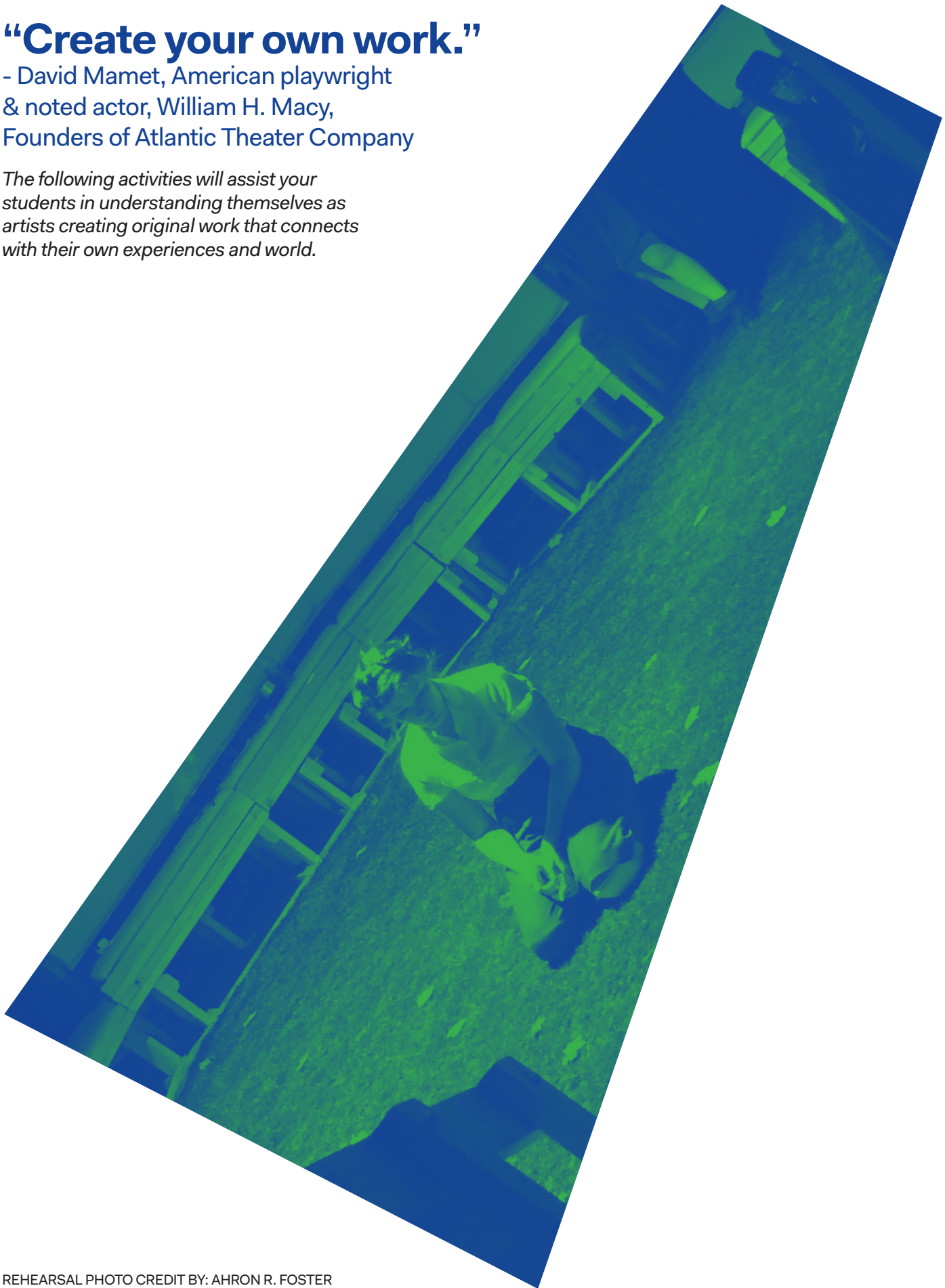
Explode the
Moment!, Diction
and Dramatization,
Postcard Activity,
Thumbs Up or Thumbs
Down?—Student
Review, Adaptation:
Puppet Theater,
Critical Thinking—
Comparison/Contrast,
Sing, Sing, Sing!
Activity, Discussions
and DOE Blueprint,
STRAND Benchmarks



“Create your own work.”

- David Mamet, American playwright
& noted actor, William H. Macy,
Founders of Atlantic Theater Company

*The following activities will assist your
students in understanding themselves as
artists creating original work that connects
with their own experiences and world.*



EXPLODE THE MOMENT

GRADES 4 - 6

Teacher Objective

To engage students in lively writing on the topic of change/transformation.

Student Goal

To create a piece of writing about a personal experience with how the changing seasons affect people, animals—everything.

Materials

Paper for writing, a copy of the “Explode The Moment Planning Sheet” (next page), pen or pencil.

One tool in a writer’s toolkit is the “explode the moment,” in which the writer slows down the action of a particular moment to describe it in detail.

Step One

Ask students to think of a moment when they felt differently because a new season had arrived.

Step Two

Instruct students to think on that experience for a moment and remember the details. Tell them to think of specific things they heard, saw, said, felt, thought, and did.

Step Three

Have students fill out the worksheet. Encourage students to think of at least two examples for each category.

NOTE: It is alright if one or two categories has only one detail—each should have at least one, most two, and in general as many more as they’d like.

Step Four

Once students have finished the worksheet, tell them to start writing. Encourage them to use all of the details from the worksheet and to dive in with strong detail. For example, instead of “One time I awoke to find...” they might try starting with a quote or with something they saw, felt, or thought.

Step Five

For additional writing practice, have students revise their work to ensure that every sentence is active and the writing is rich and descriptive.

Step Six

Put together an anthology of student stories.

PLANNING SHEET

I saw...

I heard...

I felt...

I thought...

I said...

I did...

EXPLODE THE MOMENT!

A blank sheet of lined paper with a vertical red margin line on the left and horizontal blue lines for writing. The paper is otherwise empty.

DICTION AND DRAMATIZATION

GRADES K-3

Teacher Objective

To develop an understanding of the relationship between the written word and the action of a play.

Student Goal

To gain insight into how plays are constructed.

Materials

Large sheets of paper, markers, the synopsis of *The Velveteen Rabbit*, and an open space for “acting-out” the dramatization.

Step One

Read the synopsis aloud to the class. Discuss how the Rabbit and the other toys deal with their everyday situations.

Step Two

Select one of the themes from *The Velveteen Rabbit*, such as the changing of the four seasons or “real” versus “make believe.”

Another possibility is to let the students create their own personal movie script of their lives

Step Three

Ask the students to create a story based on one selected theme while the classroom teacher writes the story on a large sheet of paper for all the students to see.

NOTE: There should be one main character who is on a journey or adventure with a clear goal at the end, and a character who keeps the main character from completing that journey. The main character's friends help to complete that journey and achieve the goal.

Step Four

When the story is complete, assign one student to act each role in the story.

Step Five

Read the story aloud from the paper while the student “actors” improvise the action and the dialogue of each character in front of the class.

NOTE: Encourage the students to contribute dialogue to the story as it is created. Pause while the student “actors” improvise the action and dialogue in the “Acting.”

POSTCARD ACTIVITY

GRADES K-2

Teacher Objective

Develop students' critical thinking skills.

Student Goal

To draw the details from their favorite visual moment in the play and to write a personal response.

Materials

Pens, pencils, crayons, markers, and copies of the post card design (on the next page).

Motivation

Discuss the play with your students. Ask them to select their favorite "moment" in the performance.

Step One

On the front of the card, draw your favorite scene from *The Velveteen Rabbit* with as much detail as possible – Color, design, background, etc. Fill the entire front of the postcard with your drawing.

Step Two

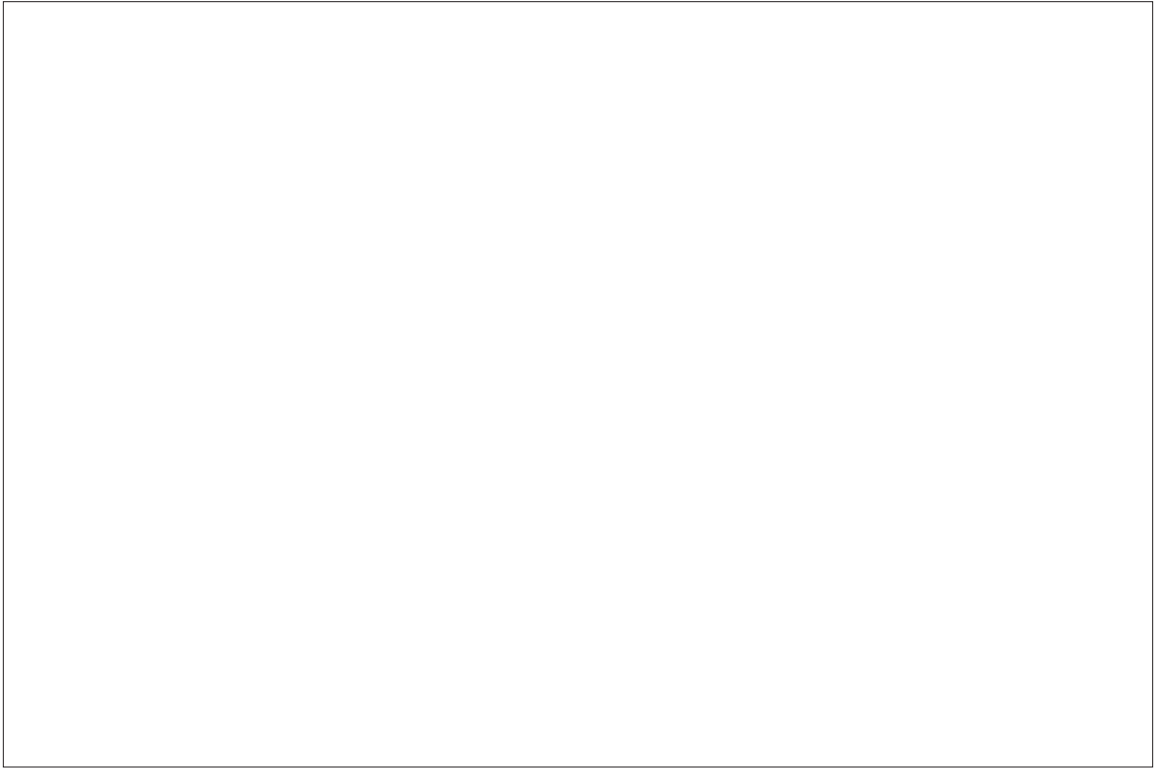
On the back of the card, write to a friend or family member about your feelings concerning the scene on the card's front.


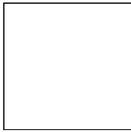
Another possibility is to let the students create their own personal movie script of their lives

Step Three

Address the post card to the friend or family member.

NOTE: Small groups may arrange their post cards in the sequence in which their drawn scenes appeared in the play.



	 <p data-bbox="846 1142 1057 1199">Atlantic Theater Company 76 Ninth Avenue, Suite 537 New York, New York 10011</p> 
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THUMBS UP OR THUMBS DOWN?

GRADES 4 - 6

Teacher Objective

To introduce the critical thinking skills involved in expressing one's personal opinion.

Student Goal

To understand that the 4Ws can be used to critically describe an artistic experience. To enhance the literacy skills of the 4Ws and sequencing in writing.

Materials

Paper, pen, copy of *The Velveteen Rabbit* program, and the worksheets (on the next page).

THUMBS UP OR THUMBS DOWN?

Who:

What:

Where:

When:

List some images that first spring to mind when you think about the play:

List some words or phrases that will remind you of points you want to make:

What did you think of the play? What was your opinion?

How do you think the costumes, lights, and music affected the performance?

How might you start your paper?

ADAPTATION: PUPPET THEATER

GRADES 3 - 5

Teacher Objective

Develop the student's critical thinking skills through a creative activity.

Student Goal

To draw the details from their favorite character, toy or visual moment in the play and to create a personal response.

Materials

Pens, pencils, crayons and markers, scissors, glue, 8 x 11 tag board, multi-colored construction paper, the definition of "Adaptation" from Section 3, and copies of the Puppet Template provided.

Motivation

Discuss the play with your students, asking them to select their favorite character, toy, or moment in the performance. Examine how each student can transform that image into their own variation/creation and then use the puppets to adapt the story of *The Velveteen Rabbit*.

Step One

Cut out the Puppet Template and trace around it on 8" x 11" tag board that has been folded in half horizontally. Cut out the Puppet.

Step Two

Use the puppet as a template to trace out its "costume" onto pieces of the multi-colored construction paper. Will the Puppet need Bunny ears and tail? Lion eyes? A Pinocchio nose? A princess gown? Wooden legs? Let your imagination run wild!

Step Three

Place glue on the Puppet, and then place its "costume" pieces onto the tag board Puppet to avoid getting glue in the wrong spots.

Step Four

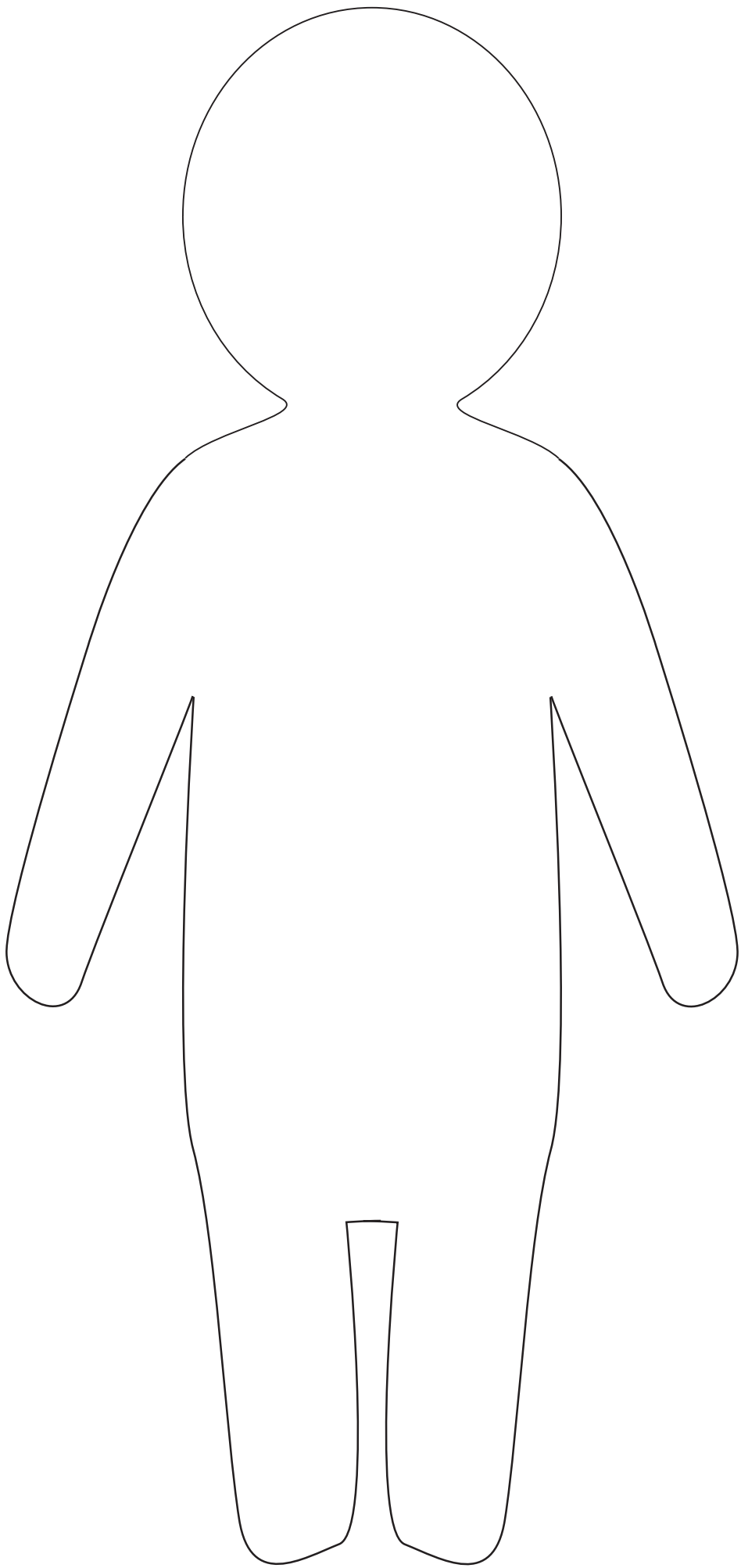
When the Puppet is complete, cut a strip of tag board to serve as its handle. Glue this strip to the back of the Puppet.

Step Five

Ask the students to review the definition of adaptation so they can create their own puppet show adaptation of *The Velveteen Rabbit* incorporating their puppets as the characters.

Step Six

Share Adaptation Puppet Theater with the class!



CRITICAL THINKING: COMPARISON/CONTRAST

GRADES 3 - 5

Teacher Objective

Develop the student's critical thinking skills through diagramming and their ideas.

Student Goal

To draw on details from the play and to draw conclusions about the concept of "real" versus "make believe."

Materials

White board/chalk board, etc.

Motivation

Discuss the play with your students, focusing on the REAL versus MAKE BELIEVE theme in the performance.

Step One

Draw a Venn diagram on the board.

Step Two

Ask the students to reflect on the thoughts and ideas *The Velveteen Rabbit* triggered in their minds about what being "real" means. Capture their opinions onto the Venn diagram.

Step Three

Ask the students to reflect on the thoughts and ideas *The Velveteen Rabbit* triggered in their minds about what being "make-believe" means. Capture their opinions onto the Venn diagram.

Step Four

Guide the students through discovering where being "real" and being "make-believe" overlap? Why are these ideas true?

SING, SING, SING!

***The Velveteen Rabbit* is an amazing new musical. The creative team and Atlantic for Kids believe the music should stay with the students long after the plays ends.**

The accompanying copy of “*The Wild Rabbit Dance*” is for your in-classroom use – Sing . . . Sing . . . Sing while reinforcing the following vocabulary words:

A Capella: Music that is sung without accompaniment.

Chorus: An organized band of singers, a choir; spec. the collective body of vocalists who sing the choral parts in an opera, oratorio, etc.

Soloist: One who sings or performs a song or songs alone.

Chamber Music: Originally music intended for performance in a private room, as opposed to a concert hall, church, etc.; (subsequently) any music composed for a small group of musicians and typically played with a single instrument to a part

Barbershop Quartet: Designating music of simple or ‘close’ harmony, esp. for a male vocal quartet, or a musical ensemble playing or singing such music.

THE VELVETEEN RABBIT

WILD RABBIT DANCE

LYRICS BY CORMAC BLUESTONE AND ANYA SAFFIR

MUSIC BY CORMAC BLUESTONE

PRESTO

SOPRANO

PIANO

DANCE AND DANCE A WILD RAB - BIT DANCE A PROUD LI - TLE PRANCE OUR

5

S.

PNO.

RAB - BIT DANCE IN ONE LI - TLE GLANCE, WE GET IN OUR STANCE AND JUMP SO HIGH A WILD RAB - BIT DANCE

Q C F Bb F Bb F C F

10

S.

PNO.

RUN PLAY AND AM - BLE SKIP HOP AND AM - BLE ROMP AND STOMP AND TIG THROUGH THE BRAM - BLE

F F Bb D

14

S.

PNO.

DANCE AND DANCE A WILD RAB - BIT DANCE A PROUD LI - TLE PRANCE OUR RAB - BIT DANCE IN

Q C Q C Q A D

THE VELVETEEN RABBIT.
"WILD RABBIT DANCE".
LYRICS BY CORMAC BLUESTONE AND ANYA SAFFIR
MUSIC BY CORMAC BLUESTONE

18

S. ONE LI - T TLE Q LANCE. WE GET IN OUR STANCE AND JUMP SO HIGH A WILD RAS - BIT DANCE

PNO. G C G C G D. G

22

S. WE SOUND AND RE-SOUND ON OUR STOM-PING GROUND WHEN NIGHT FALLS TO-GE-TH ER WE'RE SAFE AND SOUND

PNO. *p* *f*

28

S. DANCE AND DANCE A WILD RAS - BIT DANCE A PROUD LI - T TLE PRANCE OUR RAS - BIT DANCE IN ONE LI - T TLE Q LANCE. WE

PNO. C G C G A D G

33

S. GET IN OUR STANCE AND JUMP SO HIGH A WILD RAS - BIT WILD RAS - BIT RAS - BIT DANCE

PNO. C G C G D. G

DISCUSSIONS AND DOE BLUEPRINT

Partner Discussions:

When students have the opportunity to discuss a theater production with others, they discover connections that they may not have made to the story and also aspects of the story they might have missed or misinterpreted.

Having partner discussions not only brings a social component to experiencing live theater but also supports comprehension.

Use the following process to set up an effective partner discussion.

- Face your partner. Be sure you are both on the same level (sitting on the floor or at desks).
- Decide who will go first in sharing his/her connections and insight into the story.
- Place your program under a chair or behind you if you are the listener. This prevents distractions and allows you to be focused on listening to your partner.
- Tell a little about the play. Talk about a scene or character that was interesting or funny. Also share any portion of the play that confused you.
- Share a part of the play where you changed your thinking about the story or about a character.
- Describe details and traits of one of the characters.
- Once you are done, ask your partner if s/he has any questions.

Correlates to Common Core Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration, 1-3.1A, 1-3.1D

STRAND BENCHMARKS

Theater Making: Acting

Benchmark: Students increase their ability as imaginative actors while continuing to participate as collaborative ensemble members. Students demonstrate the ability to reflect on and think critically about their own work.

Theater Making: Playwriting/Play Making

Benchmark: Students refine their ability as playwrights to express point of view and personal vision.

Developing Theater Literacy

Benchmark: Students develop skills as critics by analyzing the critical writings of others.

Making Connections through Theater

Benchmark: Students demonstrate a capacity for deep personal connection to theater and a realization of the meaning and messages of theater.

Working with Community and Cultural Resources

Benchmark: Students invigorate and broaden their understanding of theater through collaborative partnerships with theater professionals.

THE ATLANTIC LEGACY

Inspired by the Group Theater, Stanislavsky, and a passion for ensemble acting, David Mamet and William H. Macy formed the Atlantic Theater Company with a select group of New York University Undergraduate drama students. Since its inception in 1985, Atlantic has produced more than 100 plays and garnered numerous awards, including: 12 Tony Awards, 15 Lucille Lortel Awards, 16 OBIE Awards, six Outer Critics Circle Awards, seven Drama Desk Awards, three Drama League Awards, three New York Drama Critics Circle Awards and the Pulitzer Prize for Drama. Noted productions include: *Spring Awakening*, *Port Authority*, *The Lieutenant of Inishmore*, *The Beauty Queen of Leenane*, *Boy's Life*, and *American Buffalo*. The Atlantic Theater Company's mission is to produce plays simply and truthfully, utilizing an artistic ensemble. Atlantic believes that the story of the play and the intent of its playwright are at the core of a successful theatrical production.

The Atlantic Acting School fosters new generations of actors by passing on the tools learned from Mamet and Macy and by preparing students for all aspects of a career in film, television and theater. The Atlantic offers studies through New York University, a full time conservatory program, part-time programs and summer workshops. Atlantic for Kids offers acting classes in an after school setting as well as summer programs for children ages 4 to 18.

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