



Dr. Seuss'  
How The  
**GRINCH**  
STOLE  
CHRISTMAS!  
THE MUSICAL

An Educational  
Teacher's Guide

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All Photos are of the Original Broadway Cast. All photos were shot by Paul Kolnik. TM & © 1957, 2010 Dr. Seuss Enterprises, L.P.





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National Standards for Arts Education as developed by the Consortium for National Arts Education Associations (under the guidance of the National Committee for Standards in the Arts), please visit:

<http://www.artsedge.kennedy-center.org/teach/standards/>

To read the New York State Learning Standards for the Arts as developed by the New York State Academy for Teaching and Learning, please visit:

[www.nysatl.nysed.gov/artsand.html](http://www.nysatl.nysed.gov/artsand.html).

To read the New York City Theater Blueprint for Teaching and Learning in the Arts developed by educators and representatives from the arts and cultural community of New York City, please visit

<http://schools.nyc.gov/projectarts>.

# INTRODUCTION

This guide, designed to easily implement in the weeks before you attend the performance, provides jumping off points for discussion and suggested activities that you can adapt to the needs of your class. We have also included exercises to use after seeing the show to help you bring together all your class discussions from prior to the performance.

Arts Education benefits every student by cultivating the whole person. In developing literacy, intuition, reasoning and imagination into unique forms of expression and communication, students learn to see education and learning as fun and interesting throughout their lives. Founded in 1960, Group Sales Box Office is New York's leading theatre ticket company dedicated to serving your needs. Not only can we obtain the best price, we also have the best grasp of the needs of your group and your teaching goals.

We hope this guide enhances your teaching experience and your students' enjoyment of **DR. SEUSS' HOW THE GRINCH STOLE CHRISTMAS! THE MUSICAL**.



Actors: Patrick Page, Nicole Bocchi & Company

## ABOUT THE BOOK

The book *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* was published in 1957 and was an immediate success. It consists of rhyming couplets and has black and white illustrations by the author, who uses only red and pink as accent colors.

In the story a grumpy creature with a heart “two sizes too small” is disgusted by the Christmas celebrations in the town below him. He decides to keep Christmas from coming to the Whos in Whoville by dressing up as Santa Claus - with his dog, Max, as a reindeer - and during the night pilfering every bit of Christmas from their homes. All the decorations, presents and food are stuffed into his sleigh leaving the town barren. The next morning Christmas arrives anyway and he realizes the holiday “does not come from a store.”



Actors Clockwise: Patrick Page, Nicole Bocchi, John Cullum, Rusty Ross

# ACTIVITIES AND DISCUSSIONS

- **Diagram the plot.** The plot is the easiest way to talk about a story; it is how the story unfolds. If the story is what happens, the plot is how the story happens. A good plot should be logical, with no unjustified turns and no deliberately misleading information. It should also have some level of suspense to keep the audience interested and make them wonder what will happen next. The Plot itself is made up of 6 pieces:

**Exposition** - the information the audience needs to know in order to understand the story (time and place or what happened before the audience joined the story)

**Conflict** - the problem the main character must overcome. We learn about the characters' inner selves through their actions and decisions made in response to the conflict.

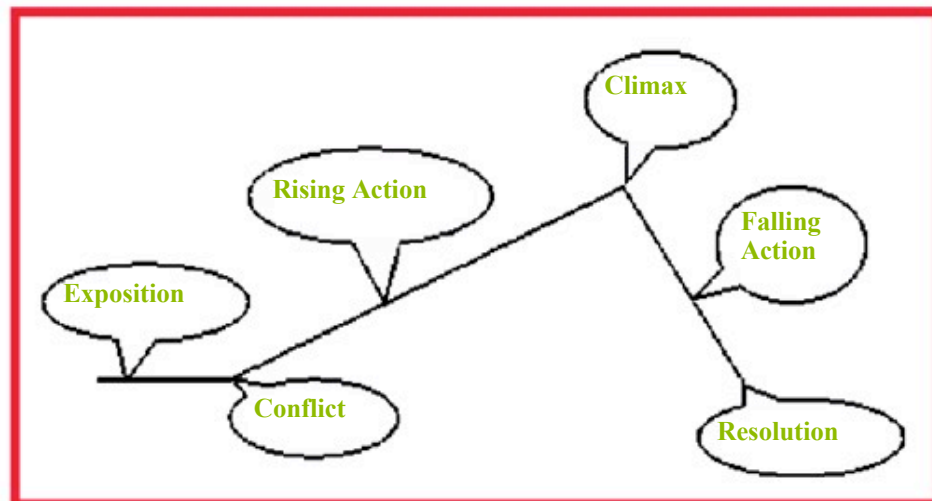
**Rising action** - the complications that may change the course of the story

**Climax** - a turning point within the play

**Falling action** - the tying up of loose ends

**Resolution** - the ending when problems are solved

After reading the book, define each of these parts of the story and draw a diagram of the action.



# ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

- **Define the Characters.** Make a list of all the characters that appear in the book. What do you know about each of the characters and how do you know it? Examples include a character's words, thoughts, actions, and the impact each has on other characters. List some words that describe each character.
- **Writing Assignment.** Have you ever hated something the way the Grinch hates Christmas? Do you still hate it or did you come around the way he did? Write about your experience including why you felt so strongly and what you learned about yourself or the situation.
- **Who-Feast.** We learn that the Whos serve Who-hash and Who Roast Beast at their Christmas Dinner. What fun foods would you serve at your Who-feast? Create a menu of imaginary foods (from all the food groups) to serve your guests. Choose one and write a recipe card listing the ingredients and the steps involved in preparing your invented dish. You could also draw pictures of each dish or of a dinner table spread with all your fantastic foods.
- **Ted Geisel (aka Dr. Seuss) once received a letter** from two brothers with the last name "Grinch." They were being teased by friends and asked him to change the Grinch's name. Ted replied that the Grinch was actually the Hero of Christmas. "He starts out as the villain, but it's not how you start out that counts." What do you think he means and do you agree?
- **Discuss an illustration from the book** or any photo from a theatre performance: What's going on in it? What feelings are conveyed and how? Who are the characters and how do you know? What do the surroundings tell you? Give a copy of the picture to small groups and ask them to create a new story about the picture. Discuss how the groups' stories are the same and different from each other and from the book.
- **Create Group Stories.** Divide the class into small groups and give each a picture from the book with the text covered. (You could also use a photo from any theatre production.) Ask each group to write the opening lines of a story told based on what is happening in the picture. Each group then passes their paragraph (but not the picture) to the next group, who then adds another paragraph. Each story is passed from group to group, with each group adding and finally completing the story. When the first group gets its story back, they read it to the class and share the original photo.

# A BIOGRAPHY OF DR. SEUSS A.K.A. THEODOR GEISEL

*(Excerpted from the biography on [www.seussville.com](http://www.seussville.com). More information on Theodor Geisel can be found at the Dr. Seuss National Memorial website - [www.catinthehat.org](http://www.catinthehat.org))*

## CHILDHOOD

Theodor ("Ted") Seuss Geisel was born on March 2, 1904, in Springfield, Massachusetts. His father, Theodor Robert, and grandfather were brewmasters and enjoyed great financial success for many years. Coupling the continual threats of Prohibition and World War I, the German-immigrant Geisels were targets for many slurs, particularly with regard to their heritage and livelihoods. In response, they were active participants in the pro-America campaign of World War I. Thus, Ted and his sister Marnie overcame such ridicule and became popular teenagers involved in many different activities.

## DARTMOUTH COLLEGE

Ted attended Dartmouth College and by all accounts was a typical, mischievous college student. He worked hard to become the editor in chief of Jack-O-Lantern, Dartmouth's humor magazine. His reign as editor came to an abrupt end when Ted and his friends were caught throwing a party that did not coincide with school policy. Geisel continued to contribute to Jack-O-Lantern, merely signing his work as "Seuss." This is the first record of his use of the pseudonym Seuss, which was both his middle name and his mother's maiden name. It was a perfectly ingenious pseudonym; it squeaked Ted's work past unsuspecting college officials, yet clearly identified him as the creator.

## OXFORD

In 1925, with graduation approaching, Ted's father asked the question all college students dread: what was Ted going to do after college? Ted claimed to have been awarded a fellowship to Oxford University and the elder Geisel reported the news to the Springfield paper, where it was published the following day. Ted confessed the truth-Oxford had denied his fellowship application-and Mr. Geisel, who had a great deal of family pride, managed to scrape together funds to send him anyway. Ted left for Oxford intending to become a professor. (He couldn't think of anything else to do with an Oxford education.)

## EARLY CAREER

After leaving Oxford, Dr. Seuss returned to New York in 1927. He decided that he could make a living as a cartoonist and was thrilled when one of his submissions was published in The Saturday Evening Post. His work caught the eye of the editor for Judge, a New York weekly, and Ted was offered a staff position. Standard Oil also recognized Ted's talent and offered him a job in their advertising department. In all, Ted spent over 15 years in advertising, primarily with Standard.

His advertising work insured him enough income that in 1927 he married Helen Palmer, a classmate at Oxford University. It was Helen who first suggested that Ted draw for a living.

In 1931 an editor at Viking Press offered him a contract to illustrate a collection of children's sayings called Boners. While the book received bland reviews, Ted's illustrations were championed; he considered the opportunity his first official "big break" in children's literature.

While traveling on a luxury liner, Ted became bothered by the rhythm of its engines. At his wife's urging, he applied the incessant rhythm to his first children's book, *And to Think That I Saw It on Mulberry Street*. Publishers in 1937 were not receptive; in fact, Ted presented his manuscript to 27 publishing houses and received 27 rejections. Discouraged, Ted literally bumped into an old Dartmouth friend who happened to work at Vanguard Press, a division of Houghton Mifflin. His friend offered to show the manuscript and illustrations to key decision-makers. Vanguard wound up publishing *Mulberry Street*, which was well received by librarians and reviewers.

## WWII

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While Ted was not an advocate of war, he knew that war against Japan and Germany was imminent. Ted contributed anywhere from 3-5 urgent political cartoons each week to *PM* magazine, considered by many to be a liberal publication. Despite the steady work from *PM*, however, Ted wanted to contribute more to the war effort.

In 1942, at age 38, Ted was too old for the draft, so he sought a commission with naval intelligence. Instead, he wound up serving in film maker Frank Capra's Signal Corps (U.S. Army) making movies relevant to the war effort. He was introduced to the art of animation and developed a series of animated training films, which featured a trainee called Private Snafu. At first, many balked at the idea of a "cartoon" training series, but the younger recruits really responded to them.

## PUBLISHING SUCCESS

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He continued writing during this time since children's books were one of the few side activities allowed under his advertising contract. Three of his books received Caldecott Honor Awards: *McElligot's Pool* (1947), *Bartholomew and the Oobleck* (1949), and *If I Ran the Zoo* (1950). He also received an Oscar for *Gerald McBoing-Boing* (Best Cartoon, 1951).

In 1955 Ted received an honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters from his alma mater, Dartmouth. He received an additional six other honorary doctorates during his lifetime.

An influential book titled "Why Johnny Can't Read" was published in 1955. It said children were being held back by boring books. An article under the same name in *Life* magazine called for more imaginative illustration, and named Dr Seuss as a good example of what could be done. So Ted was asked to write a children's primer using 220 new-reader vocabulary words; the end result was *The Cat in the Hat*, published in 1957. While schools were hesitant to adopt it as an official primer, children and parents swarmed for copies. *The Cat in the Hat* catapulted Ted from pioneer in children's literature to definitive children's book author-illustrator.



In 1960 friend and publisher Bennett Cerf, wagered that Ted couldn't write a book using 50 words or less, prompting Ted to write Green Eggs and Ham.

How the Grinch Stole Christmas! aired during the 1966 holiday season and it still ranks high in viewer ratings so many years later.

Helen Palmer Geisel - an author in her own right and a tremendous support editorially, artistically, and administratively during much of his career - suffered from frail health, including cancer. She died on October 23, 1967. He later married long time friend Audrey Stone. A former nurse, she brought order and stability to his life at a time when Ted's popularity was pulling him in various directions.

Ted was concerned about the environment and wanted manufacturers, businesses, and individuals to take responsibility for their actions. The Lorax, published in 1971, weaves a familiar tale of a good thing gone wrong.

In 1980, the American Library Association (the same organization responsible for the prestigious Newbery and Caldecott Awards) honored Ted with a Laura Ingalls Wilder Award. This special award is given to an author or illustrator whose books - having been published in the United States - have made a substantial contribution and lasting impact to children's literature.

The Butter Battle Book, published in 1984 and perhaps the most controversial of all his books, was written in response to the arms buildup and nuclear war threat during the Reagan administration. For the first time in decades, editors and art directors questioned Dr. Seuss-the cover, the ending, the verb tenses, even the title itself went through several changes. Ultimately, few changes were made. For six months, Butter Battle remained on The New York Times' Bestseller List - for adults.

In 1984, Ted received a Pulitzer Prize and in 1986 he was awarded a New York Library Literary Lion. That same year, the San Diego Museum of Art, under the watchful eye of Ted himself, featured a retrospective dedicated to his life and work. Several of his paintings and early sketches were included in the mix. The show was well-received by the public and traveled to many locations throughout the United States.

## LEGACY

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Theodor Seuss Geisel passed away on September 24, 1991, at the age of 87.

In 1993, Ted's widow Audrey founded Dr. Seuss Enterprises (DSE) to protect and monitor the use of Dr. Seuss's characters for licensing purposes. To date, many DSE-endorsed projects include a theme park, a board game, interactive CD-ROMs, and affiliations with Hallmark and Espirit. Mrs. Geisel oversees the selection process of each project, always considering Ted's wishes and dreams.

### Additional Resources:

A video interview (and transcript) with Audrey Geisel is available at:  
<http://www.readingrockets.org/calendar/readacross/seuss>

The Mandeville Special Collections Library at UC San Diego has an online library of Dr. Seuss' political cartoons and advertising artwork. It can be reached at:  
<http://orpheus-1.ucsd.edu/speccoll/seusscoll.html>

### Activities and Discussion:

- **What other Dr. Seuss books have you read?**  
How are they similar and different to "Grinch?"
- **Write your own story or poem** in a rhyming-style similar to Dr. Seuss'. Here's one example to help inspire you

Seal up the Chimney  
Nail Down the Tree  
Stash the Stockings  
Scrap the Jubilee  
  
Camouflage the Presents  
Keep the Wreath in your Sights  
Arm the Toy Soldiers  
And Unplug the Lights  
  
Beware of Green Santas  
Don't give 'em an Inch  
Stay up past your bedtime  
And Catch the Grinch!

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## THE MAKING OF AN ANIMATED CLASSIC

In 1966, nine years after the book was published, Ted received a call from his old friend Chuck Jones, a successful animator who had created Bugs Bunny, Wile E. Coyote, the Roadrunner and many others. The two had worked together during World War II while

creating military training films and had remained friends for life. Jones convinced Ted to adapt *How The Grinch Stole Christmas!* For television.

It was a painstaking task, as Jones used the full animation technique that had been popular at Disney. The idea behind full animation is that one could follow the story, with or without the benefit of narration. With full animation, a half-hour television program would require approximately 25,000 drawings-over 12 times as many drawings as most animations of equal length.

The length of the story, the color of the Grinch, and the development of a script that did not end on a trite or overly religious note also had to be addressed.

Ted was always very particular about colors, and it took some convincing by Jones for Ted to concede to paint the Grinch green with evil red eyes. The songs were a collaborative effort between Ted and composer Albert Hague. To resolve Ted's concern that the story end in a way that was not trite or overly religious, the script called for a star to rise to the heavens (rather than drop from the sky) to emphasize the power of the heart.

The voices of the characters in the film were very important. The voice of the Grinch (and the narrator of the film) was provided by Boris Karloff, who was best known for his roles in monster movies such as *Frankenstein's* monster in the 1931 film. The song "You're a Mean One, Mister Grinch" was sung by Thurl Ravenscroft, whose rich baritone was also used for Tony the Tiger's "grrrrreat" for Kellogg's Frosted Flakes.

At last, "How the Grinch Stole Christmas!" aired in time for the 1966 holiday season and it still ranks high in viewer ratings. In 1971, it won a Peabody award in combination with an animated version of another Dr. Seuss classic, *Horton Hears a Who!*

### Activities and Discussion:

- **What other books** do you know that have been made into movies? How did you feel about the transition? What differences did you notice?
- **Chuck Jones** is considered to have helped usher in the "Golden Age of American Animation." Research his contributions and characters
- **Make a flip book.** Draw the outline of a face and make many copies on a copy machine. On the first page draw eyes and on subsequent pages, draw them getting larger or looking in the other direction. You could also show changes to the nose, mouth or hair (getting larger, opening into a grin, or standing on end.) Making sure each picture is only slightly different from the previous one. Put the previous drawing under the next to help you keep the features in the right place each time. When all your drawings are done, reverse the order so the last is on top. Then staple the top and flip through them from bottom to top. Your drawings could also be a moving animal or vehicle.

•**Create a storyboard.** A storyboard looks similar to a comic strip in that it is a series of pictures with explanations of the action and dialogue. They help a director plan a film and its camera shots and angles. Make a storyboard of your favorite Dr Seuss book. The quality of your drawings is less important than the way you express your view of the story.

•**The animated TV show added some songs** to help express the feelings of the characters. In musical theatre, songs are added to help express a character's inner feelings. In small groups, make a list of other moments in the story where songs could be logically added. Compile a list of songs that you like which could be used to help advance the story or share the feelings of a character.

•**Create a Venn diagram** comparing what student like about the book version and what they like about the animated special. Older students might prefer comparing how a story is told in print as compared to how it is told on film. Things to include might be the amount of imagination used for each, the visual and aural components, and point of view. After you have seen the live stage performance, add a third circle showing the similarities and differences among the three forms of storytelling.

•**Research** what was involved in animation when the special was made in 1966. How has the art form evolved and what were some of the key examples of the changes? What is involved in making animated specials today? Create your own animated version of another Dr. Seuss book.

•**Before you see the stage production,** discuss how you think certain scenes will be done on stage. What part of the story do you think will be the most difficult to recreate in front of an audience? What are you looking forward to the most?

**Additional resources:**

National Public Radio has an article on the creation of the animated special with video and song clips and a link to an interview with Chuck Jones at:

<http://www.npr.org/programs/morning/features/patc/grinch/>

## BRINGING THE STORY TO LIFE

Dr. Seuss' *How the Grinch Stole Christmas!* The Musical was originally commissioned by and produced at The Children's Theater Company in Minneapolis, Minnesota, a theater recognized as North America's flagship theatre for young people and families. The Grinch made his

debut on the CTC stage in November of 1994, after special arrangements had been made with the Dr. Seuss estate to exclusively adapt and perform the book. The original production was an enormous success and was remounted again in 1995 and 1998 playing to sold-out houses every time.

The director and choreographer of CTC's production, Matthew Howe, said "We're trying to emulate what Dr. Seuss gave us in his book, to capture the true spirit of his story." Howe worked with the actors to develop a rich understanding of the characters. "The script allows for a very full exploration of the Whos, the Grinch, Max and their relationships.

San Diego's Old Globe Theatre, one of the most renowned regional theaters in the country, launched its own production of *The Grinch* in November 1998. It has played to critical acclaim and sold-out houses there for the past eight years.

In bringing this show to Broadway, the New York producers had to overcome several problems. One was the size of the Hilton Theatre – much larger than the Old Globe. Everything needed to be adjusted to fit in a much larger space. Another problem was keeping the show as close to the story as possible. "Everyone on the creative and production team is very intent on keeping the tale true to the heart and spirit of the original work just as the Seuss Estate wishes. Dr. Seuss wrote a story about the Grinch's realization of the true meaning of the holidays and that is what we want to tell in the theatre," said Kathryn Schwarz of Running Subway Productions, the producers of the New York show. When Ted Geisel died, his widow became the head of Dr. Seuss Enterprises and it is very important to her that the integrity of her husband's work be preserved.

The stage production is different from the book and animated movie in that it is narrated by Max the Dog, but it does include the songs "You're a Mean One Mr. Grinch" and "Welcome Christmas," which were created specifically for the animated TV show.

### Activities and Discussion:

- **When developing the animated special**, Chuck Jones said that, "Max represents all of us. He is very honest, very decent, and a very put-upon dog." Dr. Seuss described him as "Everydog--all love and limpness and loyalty." Do you agree with these views? How do you think he will be as a narrator? Why?

- **Research the history** of one of the production elements (sets, sound, costumes, lighting). How did it develop? How is technology used today? What are today's trends in the industry?

- **How can a costume designer** let the audience know about the character wearing it? What can the set tell you about the story? How can lighting and sound convey mood?

• **Who is involved in creating theatre?** As a member of the audience, you only see the actors on stage and maybe an usher who shows you to your seat. What you don't see are all the other people who contributed to the production. As an art and as a business, a theatre production is a huge effort with a number of areas to cover. Some of these include:

- The Playwright who writes the script
- The Producer who provides the money for the production
- The Director who coordinates all the actors and design elements
- The Designers of Sound, Scenery, Costumes & Lighting
- The Builders and Technicians to make the designers ideas come to life
- The Composer and Lyricist who write the music and the lyrics for the songs
- The Musical Director and Orchestra who play the music
- The Choreographer who creates the dance number
- The Understudies who go on when an actor is unable to perform
- The Stage Manager who coordinates the backstage activity
- The House Manager and Ushers who get people to their seats
- The Marketing and Public Relations Managers who get the word out to the public about the show
- The Box Office Manager and Staff who sell the tickets

Sometimes one person may take on several of these roles; sometimes not all of these roles need to be filled. Research one of "behind the scenes" positions and determine the education or training level required for entry-level employment, the number of job openings in that area, three post-secondary programs offering advanced training, and entrepreneurial possibilities.

**Additional resources:**

The Center for Arts Education's Career Development Program publishes a series of handbooks with lessons and activities to help prepare students for careers in the arts. To download these, visit:

<http://www.cae-nyc.org/pages/career-resources>

## NOW THAT YOU'VE SEEN THE SHOW

- **What if you could interview** someone involved with the show? Start with your playbill to research someone involved with the production and then create a list of questions you would ask.
- **Design or create a television commercial** to bring in others to see the show. What parts of the show would you highlight? What would you want to leave as a surprise?
- **Write a review of the show..** Consider the show's environmental aspects and their effectiveness. Consider the choices the actors made. What made the experience real for you? Discuss how different audience members interpreted different choices.
- **What happens next?** Write additional scenes that could happen after the story ends or write letters from one character to another.
- **Create your own Who costume.** What sorts of qualities did the costumes have? Did the shapes seem very square and sharp or round and curvy? Were they made of things that were soft and fluffy or hard and stiff? Draw a Who costume on paper or find pictures of things that remind you of the costumes. Perhaps you can make a costume out of clothing you have at home.
- **Write a newspaper article** (or film a news story) about the Grinch and his actions. Or create a whole Who-ville newspaper/newscast with articles and viewpoints for all the characters in the show. You could include stories, reviews, comics, horoscopes and ads from local Who-businesses.

Actors: Price Waldeman, Nicole Bocchi, Caitlin Hopkins & Company



# HOW TO WATCH A SHOW

The usher shows you to your seat and hands you a playbill. The lights go down on you and up on stage. Now what?

Watching a play with live actors in front of you can be a wonderful experience. The actors have rehearsed for months and are committed

to making you believe every moment on stage. In return there are things as an audience member that you should do to show the same respect for their work.

- Arrive on Time. If the show has started before you arrive, you may be asked to wait in the lobby and then you will miss the opening number.

- Stay in your seat during the performance. Use the restroom before the performance starts or during the intermission. If you must get up, be polite to the people around you.

- Don't talk on your cell phone or send text messages. Turn off any electronic devices that make noise or shed light.

- If you did not hear something, keep listening. You will probably understand what is happening even if you missed on a line. Don't talk to your friends around you; there will be time afterwards to talk about what you loved.

- While you are allowed to eat during the performance, please do so quietly and unwrap candy and snacks prior to the start of the show.

- Who your appreciation of the work the actors are doing. It is customary to applaud at the end, but if something make you laugh during the show - then laugh!

Just because you are sitting in the dark does not mean you are alone. Remember that the actors can hear you. What you do can motivate them to give you more or it can distract them from giving a good performance. Ask any actor and he or she can probably tell you a story about an audience member who fell asleep or laughed like a donkey.

Also keep in mind the other audience members in the theatre. They paid for their tickets too, and deserve a good time just like you. They want to concentrate on the conversations on stage and not be distracted by what is going on behind them.

Activities and Discussion :

- Who has been to a live theatre performance before? What did each notice about the experience? How did people behave?

- What makes a good audience or a bad audience? What does an audience member need to contribute to make the experience a good one?

- How is attending a play different from watching a movie in a theatre or in you home? How is it different from attending a live sports event? How are they the same?



## Resources:

- **Additional information** about Dr. Seuss political cartoons can be found in the “Issues/Opinions/Inspirations” section of his biography on:

<http://orpheus-1.ucsd.edu/speccoll/seusscoll.html>

Additional political cartoons on daily topical issues can be found at:

<http://cartoonbox.slate.com/index/>

- **A catalog of his political cartoons** can be found at the Mandeville Special Collections Library at the University of California, San Diego:

<http://orpheus-1.ucsd.edu/speccoll/dspolitic/index.htm>

- **The PBS show, *Independent Lens*** broadcast an award winning documentary entitled “The Political Dr. Seuss” about his political cartoons and perceived social subtext of his books. More information about this film - plus lesson plans, sample cartoons, additional resources and a history of political cartooning - can be found at:

<http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/politicaldrseuss./index.html>



# LESSON PLAN - POINT OF VIEW

**Objective:** Students will write a creative story from a different character's point of view

Stories are not reflections of reality but are selective versions of it, told from a particular perspective. "Point of View" is how one person perceives a story or series of events. The facts are given from his or her perception. In Dr. Seuss' story, we see the events of the day from the view of an outsider standing with the Grinch. Who else appears in the story? - the dog, Max; Cindy-Lou Who coming upon the Grinch mid-theft; the rest of the Whos who wake up to find their gifts and decorations gone. Each of them sees the day the Grinch stole Christmas in a different way.

- A. **Consider everyday objects from their point of view.** What does a piece of chalk think about as it writes on a chalkboard? Is it sad to think about how it will be erased soon, or is it happy to give itself up to helping children learn? How does a football feel as it flies across a field after a kick? Does a shoe enjoy the view from the ground or does it hate the smell of feet? Ask students to write a riddle or essay from the point of view of an inanimate object (perhaps a tree ornament or candy cane) and share them with the class.
- B. **As a class create a chart** comparing how the Grinch views Christmas to how the Whos of Whoville do. While the narrator says the Grinch has no known reason to hate Christmas (perhaps his head, or his shoes, or the size of his heart), the Grinch refers to the noise of the toys, the sharing of a feast, and the sounds of the singing. The Whos demonstrate that their feelings about Christmas are not based on the gifts or the food, but rather the feeling expressed by joining hands with others and singing.
- C. **Ask each student to write a letter to a friend** (or a journal entry or a news interview) as if he or she were a character in the story. How does Max feel about being dressed as a reindeer and being forced to pull the overstuffed sleigh? Does Cindy-Lou who fall asleep when she gets back to bed, or does she lie awake wondering why Santa looked green? Is there another Who living in the town who wakes to find a favorite food gone and does not immediately respond in a Christmas spirit? How does he or she come around?
- D. **Have the students share their letters** with the class. Did any similar characteristics show up in the letters?

## LESSON PLAN - CREATING YOUR OWN POETRY

**Objective:** Students will understand basic elements of a rhyming poem and create their own.

- A. **Give students a copy of *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* to read or read it aloud to them.**
- B. **List the following words on the board:** throat, coat, trick, nick, around, found, said, instead, thread, head. Students will likely they are from the story when the Grinch decides to dress as Santa Claus. Discuss the concept of initial and final sounds to a work (“thr” and “c” vs. “oat” for “throat” and “coat”), pointing out that the difference in rhyming words is in the initial sounds. Choose one of the words on the board and give the students one minute to list as many words as they can think of that rhyme with it. Try several rounds. Since Dr. Seuss was known for making up his own words, ask students to make-up words that rhyme with a word on the initial list. After asking each to share his or her most nonsensical word, ask the students to create a definition for one of their made-up words.
- C. **Put the letter “A” next to the word “throat” and ask students to identify other words on the board that rhyme with it.** Continue labeling each pair of rhymes with a different letter. Since you have now identified the rhyme scheme of AABBCDDDEE you can explain how this format can vary in other poems. Next, have students count the number of syllables in each rhyming line of the story. Is there a pattern?
- D. **Show students the word “onomatopoeia” and ask them what they think to means.** Give them the definition (a word whose sound imitates the actual sound of the thing the word refers to) and some examples such as “The buzzing of innumerable bees” where the “zz” and “mm” sounds in these words imitate the actual sounds of bees. Looking at just the pictures in the book (or in this teacher’s guide), have students come up with a sound or sounds to represent what is happening in each picture. For example if there is a picture of the Grinch stuffing a tree up the chimney, what sounds could students make that could signify that: grunting, the swishing of pine needles, or jangling ornaments, for instance.
- E. **Alliteration is the repetition of the same letter or sound within nearby words.** Most often, repeated initial consonants. Tongue twisters are excellent examples of alliteration. Have students create their own tongue twisters by selecting a letter of the alphabet. Then select two nouns and a verb that begin with that letter, such as “The Grinch gave gifts” for the letter “G”. Then ask students to fill out the sentence with additional related words: The gregarious green Grinch gave gorgeous gifts of grapes.
- F. **Have students create their own story-poem in a style similar to Dr. Seuss’, including made up words.** If time allows, allow them to illustrate their stories and share the final product with the class.

# LESSON PLAN - POLITICAL CARTOONS

**Objective:** After examining some of Dr. Seuss' early political works, students will create their own.

In 1941 Ted Geisel, then working as an advertising cartoonist, drew a cartoon about Mussolini, the dictator of Italy from 1922 to 1943. The liberal New York newspaper PM like it and ended up printing his cartoons for two years. His cartoons satirized the isolationists who did not believe the US should get involved in a world war that was seen as "foreign." Other cartoons of his were about the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Hitler, and wartime prejudice.

- A. **Choose a few of Dr. Seuss' political cartoons** to discuss with the class. *(See the following list of resources for web pages with his work.)* Some good examples are "What this country needs is a good mental insecticide," (about racism), "All Aboard...if you insist! But if you want to help the Army, stay home." (about rationing during WWII) or "Put your finger here, pal" (about anti-Semitism). Discuss qualities of the drawings that are similar to the illustrations in his children's books. What do students see as the objective of each cartoon and why? Are these cartoons effective in their opinions?
- B. **A political cartoon is based around the use of a symbol** used as a visual cue to get an idea across quickly. Examples commonly used in political cartoons are a donkey for the Democratic Party, an elephant for the Republican Party, and the Statue of Liberty or an eagle used to represent the United States. Choose a current political cartoon from a newspaper or from the Professional Cartoonist Index (<http://cagle.msnbc.com/> - which also has teachers' guide of daily lesson plans.) What are the messages conveyed in these examples? What symbols are used and why are they effective? Why would someone draw a cartoon rather than write an opinion piece for a newspaper?
- C. **Ask each student (or in teams) to choose a topic** that is important to her or him. It could be a current event, a social issue or simply a topic getting lots of media attention. Next, students should consider and list icons which could be used to help symbolize the topic - people, locations or images, that would make people immediately think of the topic. How can these symbols be used to convey your opinion about your topic? Finally, each student should draw the cartoon (or combine photographs to create the image) and write is or her topic/ onion on the back.
- D. **Display these for the class** and allow time for everyone to view them all. Then gather back together to discuss or write about the effectiveness of different pieces and why.