

Post-Show Activity 1

Respond to the Play

- Review the performance and ask students to describe with as much detail as possible what they remember. What animals did they see? What were the costumes like? How did the actors transform themselves to play different characters? What was the scenery like? What kind of music was used?
- Ask the students to help make a list of different things that happened in the performance. Write these down on the board.

QUESTIONS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION:

1. Who is the main character in the story? How do you know that?
2. How did you feel about not being able to see the actor's faces completely?
3. Did you have to use your imagination when you watched this play? Explain.
4. What happened in the story that was surprising? Exciting? Funny? Scary?
5. How was the play different than the story you read in class (if you read the story prior to seeing the play). How was it the same?
6. Did the music help tell the story? How?
7. How did the actors show how they were feeling or what they were doing without words? (see Activity 2 for more)
8. Were Tommy Brock and Mr. Tod friends?
9. Did Squirrel Nutkin and Mrs. Tiggy-Winkle help Benjamin and Peter? How?
10. List characters that were portrayed by actors. Then list some that were portrayed by puppets.
11. Do you have a pet that reminds you of a human? What does it do that is "human-like?"
12. Benjamin and Flopsy are mad at Old Mr. Bouncer but forgive him by the end of the play.
13. Name a time you forgave someone. Did you feel better afterwards?
14. What do you think Peter learned by helping Benjamin?
15. If the story kept on going, what do you think would happen?



Photo by Mark Garvin

Post-Show Activity 2

Discover Theatre in the Classroom

In *Peter Rabbit™ Tales*, the actors were able to communicate ideas and feelings without using words. Discuss with the students how the actors let the audience know what was happening, even when they weren't using their voices.

Use the following activities to explore the possibilities of communicating without speaking:

- 1. Invisible Object:** Imagine you are holding a very heavy bowling ball. Pass it around the circle without speaking and without dropping it! Think about how you have to stand to hold a heavy object, what your muscles feel like, how slowly you have to move. Give prompts like, "Be ready for it! It's heavy. Make sure your neighbor has it before you let it go!" When it's gone all the way around, try passing around a very light feather, a hot potato, a live frog. "Don't let it get away!" Don't say what it is you are passing, have the students guess based on how you handle the imaginary object.
- 2. Without Words:** Ask students to think of actions or gestures they use to communicate. For example, can they think of ways to act surprised using only their face? Can they say something without using any words? Without speaking, try saying:

Hello!

Yes! / No!

I'm sleepy

I'm scared

I'm going to sneeze

It's over there

I love you

I don't know

I'm hungry

Go away! / Come here!

That's funny!

Where are you?

My stomach hurts

- 3. Tableau:** Now try to communicate a larger idea as a group. Still without talking, your students will have to create a tableau, or a frozen picture, of a place or activity of your choosing. They should try to do different things from each other. For example, if the activity is recess, not everyone should be playing kickball. You should see people frozen in mid-run, sitting and laughing together, throwing a ball, etc. Try the following:

- At recess
- In the desert
- Having a picnic
- Getting ready for school
- Everyone is a dinosaur looking for food



Post-Show Activity 2 *(continued)*

- 4. How Do You Move?** Make a space in the classroom for the students to move freely. Tell the students they are standing on a towel on a very hot beach and in order to get to the ocean they must walk through the scalding hot sand. Ouch! How do they move across the space? Other suggestions for environments to move through:
- A sidewalk covered with chewed bubble gum
 - A frozen pond
 - A very steep hill
 - A pond scattered with stepping stones
 - The surface of the moon
 - A giant bowl of Jell-O
- 5. More Mime:** Extend the space exploration to include other imaginary activities:
- Carefully paint a door.** After finishing, open the door and step through it without getting any paint on your clothes.
 - Build a snowman.** The teacher should be able to tell how big the snowman is by how the student uses the space.
 - Eat an ice cream cone.** At some point, the ice cream should fall on the floor. How do you react to this?
 - Rake leaves into a large pile.** Admire the size of the pile, make sure no one is looking, and then jump into it.
- 6.** To conclude, ask the students to list the ways they saw one another communicate without using words (through facial expressions, movement, gesture).



Photos by Mark Garvin

Post-Show Activity 3

The Role of Music

Charlie Gilbert is the composer for the music for *Peter Rabbit™ Tales*. He has worked on a number of Enchantment Theatre productions, creating musical arrangements and additional music for Enchantment's production of *The Velveteen Rabbit* in 2007 and the entire score of Enchantment's *Harold and the Purple Crayon* in 2009. Charlie recently composed the score for Enchantment's adaptation of *The Brave Little Tailor* and he adapted Rimsky-Korsakov's symphonic suite, *Scheherazade*, for Enchantment's original production of *Aladdin and Other Enchanting Tales*. Charlie's music for *Peter Rabbit™ Tales* underscores the action of the story, and helps the performers tell the tale without words.

MUSIC AND CHARACTER

One of the ways the composer helps to tell the story is to create musical "themes" or melodies that occur again and again throughout the play. See if you can find Peter Rabbit's theme music. Is there a theme you hear for Old Mr. Bouncer? What about Tommy Brock? Did you notice that the "rock-a-bye baby" melody occurs throughout the show whenever anyone rocks the baby bunnies? How many instruments can you list that each played that melody? (It was each played by the trumpet, French horn, flute, oboe and string bass!)

MUSIC AND SETTING

The music in a performance can often indicate a new setting. Listen for the changes in the music when Peter and Benjamin go back into the past, when Benjamin and Peter arrive at Mr. Tod's house and when Peter, Benjamin and Flopsy return home. Were there other musical setting changes that the students noticed?

MUSIC AND MOOD

The composer has an important job in setting the mood or atmosphere of a play by the music he creates. For example, when Peter Rabbit is frightened in Mr. McGregor's garden, the music is much different than when he's happily picking vegetables in his own garden.

1. **Have you ever seen a scary movie or been to a haunted house?** Describe the music you heard. How did the music help make the movie/experience scary?
2. **Have you ever been to a circus and heard happy, carnival music?** What if you heard that music when you were at school? What would you think was happening?

If you were a composer, what kind of music would you write for the scene in which Peter pits Tommy Brock and Mr. Tod against one another?

3. **What was the mood of the music at the end of the play?**

To illustrate the role of music in storytelling, try the following activities:

1. **Ask your students to recall a personal experience** (for example, a family vacation or the first day of school). Ask one student to tell his/her story to the class. After he/she is finished, have the same student retell the same story. This time, play a dynamic track of music (preferably instrumental) to underscore the story. Ask the class how this music affected the story. When you attend the performance, encourage your students to pay attention to the music, and remember how the music created different moods within the piece.
2. **Get the entire class up and away from their desks.** Play a piece of music and ask everyone to move or dance how the music makes them feel. Does it make you want to sneak? Look for something? Skip? Does it make you feel sleepy? Angry? Scared? After a minute or so, play a different piece of music with a vastly different mood. Switch at least one more time.

Post-Show Activity 4

Storytelling and Writing

Try these writing exercises to get your students writing and illustrating their own stories. Talk about the following important parts of a story: setting, introduction to characters, conflict, rising action, climax, and resolution.

Group Storytelling (Listening, Speaking): Tell a story as a group with each student telling just one line at a time. You can begin the story to set-up the adventure, but you never know where it will go. For example: "One day, Hawthorne School's fourth grade class (substitute your school and class) decided to go on a walk to Blue Creek Park (substitute a location near you)." Go around the room with each student contributing one line. Remind students to listen to what has been said and build on what has already happened in the story. Help them move the story along and find an ending.

Writing a Story in Pairs (Writing, Reading): Divide students into pairs. Ask each student to write the first line of a story. Ask everyone to put pencils down after the first sentence. Have students trade papers with their partner, read the first line of their partner's story, and add a second line. Ask everyone to put pencils down and trade papers again. Repeat this process until partners reach a conclusion to both stories. Once they are done, you could have students copy these stories onto blank paper, one or two lines per page, and have them illustrate them.

Draw Your Own Tale (Drawing, Visual): Imagine that you're an animal who lives in the woods. What kind of animal are you? Do you live in a tree trunk... under the ground? Who are your friends? Are there other animals that frighten you? Draw an adventure you might have in the woods. What are you looking for? Who do you meet? What do you find? How do you get home? Can you write captions for each drawing you create?



Old Brown, the owl

Post-Show Activity 5

Jobs in the Theater

1. What kind of jobs do you imagine people have at the theater? Can you name five different kinds of theater jobs?
2. When your class comes to the theater, look around to see what kinds of jobs people are doing. You will see someone in the box office, ushers, and actors. There are also people doing many jobs you don't see: the stage manager who calls the cues for the show; the lighting technician who runs the lights; the director who directed the actors in rehearsal; the costume designer; the designers who created the masks, puppets, and scenery; the people who publicize the show, answer the phones, and sell the tickets.



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Pigling Bland and Pig-wig



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Post-Show Activity 6

Nature and Conservation

Through Beatrix Potter's exquisite drawings and imaginative stories, children around the world have been introduced to the English countryside. At a time when nature being taken for granted, Ms. Potter recognized the value of land conservation for future generations. Discuss with your students different activities their community could undertake to preserve or enhance the natural environment around them. Create a community garden, park or preserve? Create a conservation center for animals? Conserve woodland areas against future development? Why do they think these different activities would be of value?

Try these exercises to introduce your students to the natural world around them.

- **Where do animals live?** We see animals around us all the time, but we don't always see where their homes are. Take your students outside and ask them to sit under a tree. Who else is there? A tree can be an apartment building for many kinds of animals. Can they count the number of creatures they observe? Squirrels, birds, chipmunks, mice, ants? Can they imagine what their homes are like? Discuss with your students the habitat of their animal neighbors.

- **Rabbits!** Peter Rabbit and Benjamin Bunny are from England and are called **European Rabbits**. These wild rabbits have grey/brown fur, long ears, large hind legs and fluffy white tails. Rabbits are social animals and like to live in colonies or warrens with up to ten family members. In North America, there are many breeds of wild rabbits: **cotton-tail rabbits** – brown/grey with white tails and medium ears; **jackrabbits** – enormous ears, longer hind legs and fur that changes with the seasons; snowshoe hares – with furry feet and color changing fur. Ask your students why they think rabbits have long ears and long hind legs. Why do they think some wild rabbits have fur that changes color with the seasons? What other kinds of rabbits have your students seen? **Domestic pet rabbits** are bred to be white, black, brown or multi-colored, large or dwarf, lop-eared or long eared. Does anyone in the class have a pet rabbit? What breed is it?

- **Outdoor Treasure Hunt.** Divide your class into two groups and send them on a treasure hunt. Each group will have a pad of paper and a pen and will make a list of what they find. They'll be looking for: **Numbers** – find leaves with 1/2/3/4/5/6 points; **Colors** – find examples in nature of red, yellow, blue, brown, green...and anything else; **Shapes** – find an example of a circle, square, rectangle, oval, star, spiral; **Textures** – find examples of hard, soft, wet, dry, prickly, smooth. *Note:* students should observe and record what they see but not pull leaves, pick plants, or eat berries!



Jeremy Fisher



Squirrel Nutkin and friends

Post-Show Activity 7

Write a Review

Goal: To write a review of the performance.

Explanation: In this activity, students will reflect on the performance by writing their own review.

Activity:

1. Ask students to imagine that they are a critic for the school newspaper. They are going to write a review of *Peter Rabbit™ Tales* to inform others about what they experienced.
2. In the review, they should describe with details:
 - a. What they saw
 - b. What they heard
 - c. How the performance made them feel
 - d. What the performance reminded them of
 - e. What their favorite part was and why
3. Remind students that they must paint a picture of the experience with their words so that others who did not see the performance can imagine it as vividly as possible.

Follow-Up Discussion Questions:

1. What did you include in your review? Why did you want to share that particular idea?
2. What things did writing the review make you think about that you hadn't thought of by just watching the show?



Photo by Mark Garvin

Post-Show Activity 8

Write a Letter

Goal: To reflect on the performance experience and to practice writing skills.

When: After the performance.

Explanation: After the show, students will write letters to *Peter Rabbit™ Tales* or to ArtsBridge donors whose support keeps field trip tickets accessibly priced for school groups.

Activity:

1. After attending the performance, discuss the experience with your students. Use the following discussing questions to guide the conversation:
 - a. What was the show about?
 - b. What parts of the show were most exciting?
 - c. Which character did you enjoy the most? Why?
 - d. What did the characters learn?
2. Next, invite students to write a letter to the performers or to ArtsBridge donors about their theater experience.

a. Letter Example #1

Dear Performers of *Peter Rabbit™ Tales*,
My favorite part of the show was....
While watching your show I felt... because...
I have drawn a picture of the scene when....
If I could be in your show, I would play the part of ... because...

b. Letter Example #2

Dear ArtsBridge donors,
Thank you for helping my class go to the Cobb Energy Centre to see *Peter Rabbit™ Tales*! My favorite part of the show was.... While I was watching the show I felt... because... I have drawn a picture of the scene when... This experience was special because...

3. After writing the letter, students can illustrate a scene from the performance.
4. Last, mail the letters to us and we'll make sure they get to the right people.

ArtsBridge Foundation
Attn: Education Department
2800 Cobb Galleria Parkway
Atlanta, GA 30339

Follow-Up Discussion Questions:

1. What did you choose to share in your letter? Why?
2. How does receiving a letter make you feel?
3. How do you think the recipient of your letter will feel when he or she receives your letter? Why?
4. Why do you think the performers choose to make being a performer their career?
5. Why do you think people give money to help students like you attend ArtsBridge performances at the Cobb Energy Performing Arts Centre?

