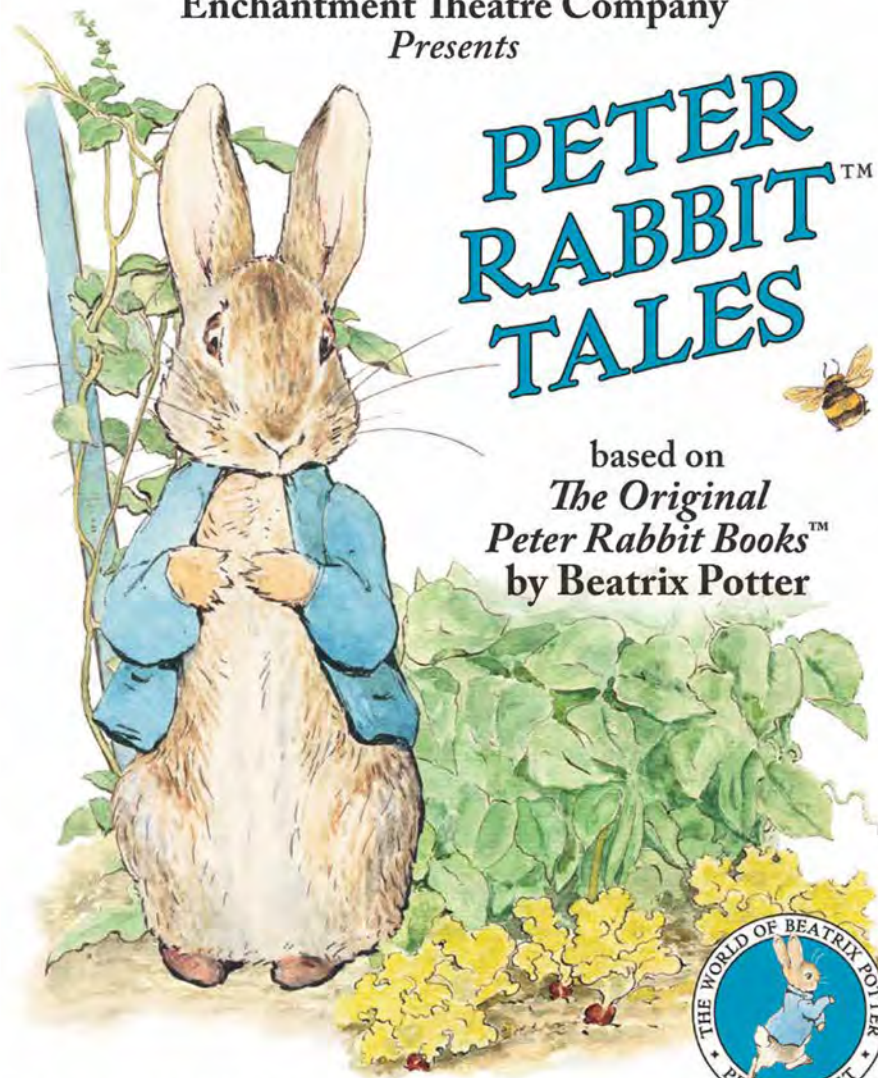




Enchantment Theatre Company
Presents

PETER RABBIT™ TALES

based on
The Original
Peter Rabbit Books™
by Beatrix Potter



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2019-2020

FIELD TRIP EDUCATOR GUIDE

Pre-Show Activity 1

Classroom Activities

UNDERSTAND THE STORY

- Read *Peter Rabbit™ Tales* show synopsis.
- Discuss students' reactions to the story and characters.

QUESTIONS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION:

1. Who is the main character of this story? Who are some of the other characters?
2. What are some words to describe Peter at the beginning of the story? Explain.
3. What are some words to describe Tommy Brock and Mr. Tod at the beginning of the story? Explain.
4. Why is Peter afraid?
5. Why do you think Peter went into Mr. McGregor's garden even after he was warned by his mother?
6. Why is Benjamin mad at his father?
7. What animal scares Peter and Benjamin while they're in Mr. McGregor's garden?
8. Can you define what a "flashback" is? Can you give examples of this device from other stories you've read or films you've seen?
9. Which animals help Peter and Benjamin find Tommy Brock's trail?
10. What does Tommy Brock do at Mr. Tod's house?
11. Why does Flopsy decide to join the search?
12. What do Peter and Benjamin do to get into Mr. Tod's house?
13. Why does Peter run away?
14. How does Peter rescue the baby bunnies?
15. How do you think Peter feels at the end of the story? Did?



Peter escapes Mr. McGregor

Pre-Show Activity 2

Prepare for the Play

Enchantment Theatre Company's production of Peter Rabbit™ Tales is an adaptation. That means that Enchantment Theatre Company read the three "rabbit tales" and then had to come up a way to combine the tales and make the story come to life on stage!

QUESTIONS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION:

1. Define "adaptation" with your class. (Synonyms: adjust, modify, convert, transform).
2. There are a number of cartoon adaptations of Beatrix Potter's tales. Have any of the students watched the current "Peter Rabbit" Nickelodeon cartoon series or the British animated series, "The World of Peter Rabbit and Friends"? The creators of these cartoon series had to adapt the stories when they created their cartoons.
3. If the students are familiar with either cartoon series, what's different about the adaptations than the story you read in class?
4. Ask your class to identify some fairy tales that they know (*Cinderella*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *Pinocchio*, etc.). Find a story with which most of the class is familiar and discuss all the different adaptations of that story.
 - a. How many of you have seen a movie, play, ballet, or cartoon of the Cinderella story?
 - b. How many have you have read the story in a book?
 - c. What was different about these adaptations? What was similar?
 - d. Do you know which adaptation came first?
5. Have you ever read a book and then seen the movie adaptation of that book? How were they alike? How were they different? Which did you prefer and why?
6. The performers will be acting out the story of Peter, Benjamin and their family.
 - a. What do you imagine the play will be like? What will it look like/sound like?
 - b. How do you think watching the play will be different from reading the story?
7. Define the following (reference About the Play page): masks, mime, music, puppets, scenery. You will see all of these during the play.



Tommy Brock snoring in Mr. Tod's bed

Images © Frederick Warne & Co

Pre-Show Activity 2

Explore Imagination

When you hear a story read to you, you imagine what the characters look like and what they're doing. You use your imagination to create the story in your mind. When Enchantment created its adaptation of the Peter Rabbit stories, the artists and designers who worked on the show used their imaginations in the same way. They asked themselves: How can we bring the drawings to life on stage? What will Peter Rabbit look like? How will we show that Mrs. Tiggy-Winkle is a hedgehog? What kind of masks will the characters wear? What about their costumes and props? Which characters will be puppets, which will be actors? How will we create Mr. McGregor's garden? How will we show Peter and Benjamin making a tunnel under Mr. Tod's house? What will the music sound like?

Having an active imagination can help you in many ways.

1. Have you ever used your imagination to solve a problem or find your way out of a difficult situation?
2. Have you ever used your imagination to make something ordinary become more exciting (for example, pretending that the jungle gym is a rocket ship)?
3. Have you ever had a dream or a daydream that seemed so real you almost believed it really happened? Have students share stories in pairs or with the class.
4. Can you think of a time that your imagination "played a trick on you" and you imagined something scary was happening that turned out to be something different (for example, you thought you heard a burglar in the house but it turned out to be a mouse)? Have students share stories in pairs or with the class.
5. Have you ever used your imagination to make up an original story or play?



Mrs. Tittlemouse



The Garden at Little Ees Wyke, painted by Beatrix Potter in 1902. By kind permission of the Linder Collection

The Garden at Little Ees Wyke, painted by Beatrix Potter in 1902. By kind permission of the Linder Collection

Pre-Show Activity 2 (part 2)

Use Your Imagination

- 1. Simple Shape:** Draw a simple shape on the black board (for example, triangle) and ask students to look closely. If we use our imaginations, what can this simple shape become? Does it resemble anything (for example, a mountain, a triangle instrument, a rooftop, a clown hat, a slice of pie, etc)? Have students come up to the board and add details to the shape to create some of these images. Repeat the exercise with other shapes.
- 2. Simple Shape Group:** To follow up with a group shape activity, put students together in small groups and give each group one large sheet of white paper and several basic shapes cut out of colored paper. Ask the students to lay the shapes on the paper in different combinations to create pictures (for example, a half circle under a triangle to create a sail boat, a triangle over a square to create a house). When the group is happy with its picture, have them glue the shapes into place.
- 3. Scribble:** Ask students to scribble on a sheet of paper with their eyes closed. After a few seconds have everyone open their eyes and look closely at the scribbled page. Ask students, “What does your scribble look like? Can you find an image in the design?” Instruct students to take a crayon or marker and trace the outline of the image they see. Then, ask them to add details to turn their scribble designs to create complete pictures.
- 4. Group Draw:** To follow up with a group drawing activity, put students together in small groups and give each student a sheet of paper and a different color crayon or marker. Ask the students to start drawing a tree. After a short time (5-10 seconds), ask everyone to put their markers down and pass their paper to the left. Each student should end up with a new tree. Ask the students to pick up their markers and add on to this new tree. After another 5 seconds, ask the students to put down their markers. Repeat these steps until everyone gets back the tree they started.
- 5. Take a Walk:** Take your class for a walk through the school or outside. Ask them to imagine they are ... and let that change the way they walk:
 - a. Old Mr. Bouncer walking slowly with his cane.
 - b. Peter Rabbit hopping nervously in the woods.
 - c. Mr. Tod, the fox, following Flopsy Bunny.
 - d. Tommy Brock, the badger, sneaking into Mr. Tod's house.
- 6. Games and Activities for Younger Children:** Visit the Peter Rabbit website at www.peterrabbit.com for additional activities geared to pre-K through first grade.



Tommy Brock

© Frederick Warne & Co

Peter Rabbit™ Tales Show

Synopsis

At the beginning of the play, we meet the characters in our story: Peter Rabbit is grown-up and has his own garden. Peter is easily frightened and avoids anything that smacks of danger or adventure.

We also meet Peter's sister Flopsy, her husband, Benjamin Bunny, and their three baby bunnies. Living with Benjamin and Flopsy is Benjamin's father, old Mr. Bouncer, who often baby-sits for the children when Flopsy and Benjamin go out. We're also introduced to two unpleasant neighbors, Mr. Tod, the fox and Tommy Brock, the badger. Tommy Brock is a disagreeable fellow who eats worms and frogs, and Mr. Tod is disliked by everyone for his habit of nibbling on small animals. Tommy Brock and Mr. Tod are not at all fond of one another. Neighbors to the Rabbit family are Squirrel Nutkin, a cheeky squirrel who's lost his tail, and the hedgehog, Mrs. Tiggy-Winkle, a kindly laundress.



Photos by Mark Garvin

As our play unfolds, Tommy Brock steals the baby bunnies while they're under Mr. Bouncer's care. Benjamin decides to set off to track the badger and find his children, and he asks Peter to join him on his quest. But Peter refuses, reminding Benjamin that he's never recovered from his frightening experience in Mr. McGregor's garden. Suddenly the lights dim, the scenery changes and the cousins are sent back to the past. The lights come up on Peter's mother, Mrs. Rabbit, his three sisters and a younger Peter in a flashback sequence that recounts Peter's escapade in Mr. McGregor's garden. Mrs. Rabbit warns Peter not to go into the garden, but Peter disobeys her and loses his coat and shoes and, almost, his life. Just as Peter is about to be caught by Mr. McGregor, he returns back to the present. Benjamin gently suggests that because of Peter's past experience, he should certainly understand how frightened the baby bunnies must feel. Reluctantly, Peter agrees to join Benjamin on his search.

When Peter and Benjamin lose Tommy Brock's trail, Benjamin gets upset at his father for letting Tommy Brock near his children. Peter reminds Benjamin how brave Mr. Bouncer was when they were young and, again, the scenery and lights change, as the cousins' travel back into the past in a second flashback sequence. Returning to Mr. McGregor's garden, the young Peter and Benjamin try to recover Peter's coat and shoes but get trapped by a cat. Mr. Bouncer suddenly arrives and fights off the cat, rescuing the young cousins. Peter and Benjamin return to the present, and Benjamin hopes that he can be as brave as his father was.

As they continue their pursuit, the rambunctious Squirrel Nutkin and the motherly Mrs. Tiggy-Winkle help Peter and Benjamin find the badger's trail. Back at home, a worried Flopsy decides to follow the cousins and join the search. Tommy Brock arrives at Mr. Tod's house and discovers that the fox is out. He makes himself at home, taking a nap in Mr. Tod's bed. Peter and Benjamin follow the badger to the fox's house, but they can't find a way in, so they dig a tunnel under the house. Suddenly, Flopsy arrives, and Peter sends her into the tunnel to join Benjamin. Just as they are about to break through into the kitchen, Mr. Tod appears, and Peter, in a panic, runs away. But when Mr. Tod enters his house and realizes that Tommy Brock is in his bed, Peter returns to save the day.

With delightful derring-do, Peter hilariously pits the badger and fox against one another and rescues the baby bunnies. The fox and the badger chase each another off into the woods and Benjamin and Flopsy are joyously reunited with their children. Peter is praised for his bravery and the rabbits travel home to Mr. Bouncer, who is forgiven for his blunder. Squirrel Nutkin and Mrs. Tiggy-Winkle join the family for a country dance, celebrating the return of the babies and Peter's return to the family fold.



**"Once upon a time
there were four little
Rabbits, and their names
were – Flopsy, Mopsy,
Cotton-tail and Peter..."**

These famous opening lines of
"The Tale of Peter Rabbit" have
enchanted young audiences
for over 100 years!

Photos by Mark Garvin

About the Tales

Our production is based on three of Beatrix Potter's "rabbit tales": *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*, *The Tale of Benjamin Bunny* and *The Tale of Mr. Tod*. Beatrix Potter wrote and illustrated over 24 tales and some of her most popular stories featured rabbits. When Enchantment Theatre decided to make a play based on some of Beatrix Potter's stories, we wanted to use the tales about Peter Rabbit and his family; not only are they delightful adventures, filled with humor, bravery and loyalty, but these stories are remarkably true to both animal and human nature. We recognize ourselves in Peter, Benjamin and Flopsy and are also keenly aware of the dangers they face as rabbits, both from Mr. McGregor, the farmer and Mr. Tod, the fox. Ms. Potter's stories are told with humor and wit, combined with a deep appreciation for her character's strengths and foibles. Her gorgeous illustrations perfectly evoke her animal characters and the English countryside, as they beautifully support the storytelling.

The Tale of Peter Rabbit, published in 1902, was Beatrix Potter's first book and it became an instant classic. It's the story of Peter; a naughty rabbit-child who disobeys his mother's warning and goes into Mr. McGregor's garden. Peter stuffs himself on vegetables and is almost caught by Mr. McGregor. During the chase he loses his coat and shoes but manages to escape under the garden gate. When Peter returns home, ill and exhausted, his mother puts him to bed with chamomile tea.

The Tale of Benjamin Bunny was published in 1904 and picks up where Peter's story ended. Peter's cousin, Benjamin Bunny, convinces Peter to return to Mr. McGregor's garden to retrieve his coat and shoes – Benjamin saw the McGregor's drive away in their wagon. Peter reluctantly agrees to accompany Benjamin back to the garden. The cousins find Peter's coat on a scarecrow and linger to pick vegetables to take home. But just as they're about to leave they run into the garden cat and hide under a basket. Old Mr. Bouncer comes to save the day and fights with the cat, locking it in the greenhouse. He scolds the bunnies and sends them home.



Peter sneaking into the garden



Benjamin Bunny

The Tale of Mr. Tod was published in 1912. The story features two “disagreeable people”, Mr. Tod, the fox, and Tommy Brock, the badger. In this tale, Peter, Benjamin and Flopsy are grown up and Benjamin and Flopsy have children of their own. When Tommy Brock steals Flopsy and Benjamin’s babies, Benjamin and Peter go off to rescue them. Tommy Brock doesn’t have a house of his own, so he decides to settle in Mr. Tod’s house to cook a baby bunny pie. Peter and Benjamin follow his tracks to the fox’s house, but they aren’t able to get inside. They decide to dig a tunnel under the house, when suddenly Mr. Tod appears. Mr. Tod tries to get the badger out of his house and they begin to fight and chase each other into the woods. Peter and Benjamin are able to rescue the baby bunnies and bring them back home.

There are a number of other beloved Beatrix Potter characters that we’ve introduced into our play: Squirrel Nutkin (from *The Tale of Squirrel Nutkin*, published 1903) and Mrs. Tiggy-Winkle (from *The Tale of Mrs. Tiggy-Winkle*, published 1905). Both of these animals help Peter and Benjamin as they search for the baby bunnies.

And look out for Jeremy Fisher, Jemima Puddle-Duck, Sally Henny-Penny, Pigging Bland and Timmy Tiptoes as they all make a brief appearance when they collect their laundry from Mrs. Tiggy-Winkle!



Mrs. Tiggy-Winkle



Squirrel Nutkin



Flopsy, Benjamin and bunnies

About the Play

In our production of *Peter Rabbit™ Tales*, we use a number of different theatrical devices to bring the story to life. Here are some of the things you and your students can expect to see:

- **Masks:** In the show, all of the actors wear animal masks to help them portray the different characters. Masks have been used in theater since its earliest beginnings, and they help to transform the actor and to transport the audience to another world.
- **Mime:** Mime is acting without speaking or making any noise. In *Peter Rabbit™ Tales*, the performers act out the story with their bodies and gestures, but they do not speak.
- **Words and Music:** There is recorded narration spoken by Susan Sweeney throughout the show to help the audience follow the story. Original music, composed by Charles Gilbert especially for this production, adds to the atmosphere.
- **Puppets:** Some of the characters in the story are played by actors wearing masks and costumes. Other characters—Mr. McGregor and his cat—are played by puppets. **ROD PUPPETS** (manipulated by sticks) will be the primary puppet device you'll see.
- **Scenery:** There will be painted curtains to evoke the world of the stories as well as set pieces representing Mr. McGregor's garden and Mr. Tod's house.
- **Lighting:** Special theatrical lights will help create the mood and the world of the story.



Photo by Mark Garvin

Note: *Very young children may be confused or even frightened by the characters wearing masks. Show them the production photos on this page and pages 15, 26 and 27 so they know what to expect. Another way to prepare is to have students experiment with masks in class. Have them silently act out different characters, actions, and emotions while wearing simple masks, and see if their classmates can guess who or what they are portraying. Talk about different ways we can communicate without using words or facial expressions. A few scenes in the show are performed in low light. Prepare children who are afraid of the dark by encouraging them to talk about their fears. Ask them to guess what parts of the story might take place when the stage is darker.*

About Beatrix Potter

Beatrix Potter is known throughout the world for her beloved animal characters and inventive tales. The particular pleasure of her stories is their truthfully humorous observation of animals and celebration of the natural world. She combined exquisite drawings with imaginative, witty and highly original story-telling. Born in 1866, Beatrix Potter came from an upper middleclass family and grew up in London. As a child, she was educated at home and had limited opportunities to spend time with other children. Her nursery became the home to a menagerie of pets that she and her brother Bertram collected. She observed her pets closely, studied their characteristics and drew them with great skill.

Through extended family vacations, first in Scotland and later in the Lake District, Beatrix fell in love with the English countryside. Her curiosity, artistic ability and keen observational skills led her to an interest in studying and drawing nature. As a young woman in the 1890s, she yearned to use her talents to find her purpose in life and gain financial and personal independence from the confines of her Victorian family. She began to sell some of her drawings for greeting cards and hoped to get one of her stories published. Her first story, *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*, was originally written in 1893 as a letter to cheer a sick child. In 1901 she privately published a small edition of the story when she was unable to find a publisher. The book was taken up by Frederick Warne & Company in 1902 and became an instant classic. Twenty-two tales followed, with most published over the next ten years. In 1905, Beatrix's editor, Norman Warne, asked her to marry him. Although her parent's disapproved, Beatrix accepted. Tragically Norman Warne died only a few weeks later.

Within the same year Beatrix bought Hill Top Farm in the village of Sawrey in the Lake District. She spent as much time as she could there and her illustrations of the farm and village began to appear in her tales. Working with a local solicitor, William Heelis, she began to purchase properties in the area, with the intention of preserving the farms and conserving the land. In 1913 Beatrix married William Heelis and made Sawrey her permanent home. For the next thirty years they shared a passion for farming and land preservation. When Beatrix Heelis died in 1943, at the age of 77, she left over 4,000 acres of land and fifteen farms to the National Trust of England. Brilliant artist, imaginative writer, passionate naturalist and pioneer in land conservation; Beatrix Potter shared her love of nature with millions of children through her distinctively original tales and by preserving the land that inspired them.



Beatrix Potter picture
courtesy of The National Trust



Young Beatrix Potter
courtesy of the Beatrix Potter Society

© Frederick Warne & Co



Rooftop view from Hill Top Farm from *The Tale of Samuel Whiskers*

INTRODUCING Enchantment Theatre Company

Enchantment Theatre Company exists to create original theater for young audiences and families. We accomplish this through the imaginative telling of stories that inspire, challenge and enrich our audiences, on stage and in the classroom. In doing so, we engage the imagination and spirit of our audience until a transformation occurs and the true grace of our mutual humanity is revealed.

Enchantment Theatre Company is a professional non-profit arts organization based in Philadelphia whose mission is to create original theater for children and families. For over 35 years, the Company has performed throughout the United States, Canada, and the Far East, presenting imaginative and innovative theatrical productions for school groups and families. Originally a privately owned touring company, in 2000 Enchantment put down new roots in Philadelphia, where it was reestablished as a resident non-profit theater. While dedicated to serving its home community, the Company also maintains an extensive national touring schedule that includes performances on its own and in collaboration with the nation's finest symphony orchestras.



In its home city, Enchantment has reached audiences of about 20,000 per year through its innovative and imaginative presentations of literary classics for children. Its newest program, Enchantment Everywhere, was started in the spring of 2014, and takes completely portable productions directly into school auditoriums, community centers and local venues – anywhere children and families gather - providing free tickets to thousands of children. On tour across the United States each year, the Company reaches more than 150,000 people in 35-40 states. Based on extensive experience, about 80% of the Company's touring audience is comprised of children from 5-12 who delight in the company's fantastic life-size puppets, skilled masked actors, original music, and startling feats of magic and illusion. It is to their infectious laughs, astonished gasps, and enthusiastic applause that Enchantment is dedicated.



Set model of Mr. Tod's house. Copyright © C. David Russell, Production Designer

INTRODUCTION TO Masks and Puppets

In this production of *Peter Rabbit™ Tales*, actors wearing animal masks portray all of the characters. Though masks are rare in American contemporary theater, they have been used since the very beginnings of theater. The early Romans used enormous masks that exaggerated human characteristics and enhanced the actor's presence in the huge amphitheaters of their day. Greek theater used masks that were human scale to designate tragic and comic characters. Masks have been used in the early Christian church since the 9th century and were revived during the Renaissance in Italy with the Commedia Dell' Arte. Theater throughout Asia has used masks to create archetypal characters, human and divine. In Balinese theatrical tradition, for example, masks keep ancient and mythological figures recognizable to a contemporary audience, preserving a rare and beautiful culture. Though used differently in every culture, the mask universally facilitates a transformation of the actor and the audience.

In Enchantment's productions we sometimes include very large or very small characters in our stories, so we use puppets to portray them. Similar to masks, puppets also have a long and esteemed history. They have been used to represent gods, noblemen and everyday

people as well as animals and mythical creatures. In the history of every culture puppets can be found, from the tombs of the Pharaohs to the Italian marionette and the English Punch and Judy. The Bunraku Puppet Theater of Japan has been in existence continuously since the 17th century.

In the early days of Bunraku, the greatest playwrights preferred writing for puppets rather than for live actors!

Puppets are similar to the mask in their fascination and power. We accept that this carved being is real and alive, and we invest it with an intensified life of our own imagining. Thus, puppets can take an audience further and deeper into what is true. Audiences bring more of themselves to mask and puppet theater because they are required to imagine more. Masks and puppets live in a world of heightened reality. Used with art and skill, they can free the actor and the audience from what is ordinary and mundane, and help theater do what it does at its best: expand boundaries, free the imagination, inspire dreams, transform possibilities, and teach us about ourselves.



Punch and Judy



Japanese Bunraku Puppet



Mr. Tod mask - Photo by Mark Garvin



Mr. McGregor's Cat puppet - Photo by Mark Garvin

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

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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:

- What was the show about?
- What parts of the show were most exciting?
- Which character did you enjoy the most? Why?
- 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:

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



Resources

Enchantment Theatre Company at enchantmenttheatre.org

Peter Rabbit at www.peterrabbit.com

REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

BBC – **Gardening with Children**
www.bbc.co.uk/gardening

Dewey, John, **Art as Experience**
Perigee Books

Dunn, Louise M. and Mills, Winifred H,
Marionettes, Masks and Shadows
Doubleday, Doran & Company, Inc.

Lear, Linda, **Beatrix Potter - The Extraordinary Life of a Victorian Genius**
Penguin Books published by Penguin Group

Minnesota Conservation Volunteer –
Young Naturalists Series
www.dnr.state.MN.us/volunteer

Potter, Beatrix, **The Complete Tales of Beatrix Potter**
Frederick Warne & Co and Penguin Group

Priestly, J.B., **The Wonderful World of the Theatre**
Rathbone Books Limited

Sendak, Maurice, **Caldecott & Co. Notes on Books and Pictures**
Noonday Press

Spitz, Ellen Handler, **Inside Picture Books**
Yale University Press

The Beatrix Potter Society
beatrixpottersociety.org.uk

Free Library of Philadelphia
www.library.phila.gov

National Trust
www.nationaltrust.org.uk

The Official Website of Peter Rabbit™
www.peterrabbit.com

Victoria and Albert Museum
vam.ac.uk



Peter's jacket on the scarecrow

Curriculum Connections

Dramatic Arts/Theatre
English Language Arts

Additional Curriculum Connections information:
<https://artsbridgega.org/field-trip/peter-rabbit-tales/>