



Arts Education for Young People

THE VELVETEEN RABBIT

Teacher Guide

Kupferberg Center Performances, Queens College/CUNY

The Teacher Guide provides background information, Learning Standards, and pre- and post-concert activities that coordinate with the performance and the Student Guide to encourage learning across the curriculum. For your convenience, this guide is also available as a .pdf on our website. Visit KupferbergCenter.org/revelations and click on "Teacher Guides."

The Velveteen Rabbit

"When a child loves you for a long, long time...then you become Real." So says the Horse to the Velveteen Rabbit in Margery Williams' famous and much-loved literary classic. A stuffed toy rabbit, given as a gift to a young boy, yearns for the day the Boy will choose him as his special playmate, so that he can become real. Through love, devotion and a little bit of magic, he not only becomes a truly beloved toy, but also is miraculously transformed into a real, live woodland rabbit. This innovative production combines the theatrical magic and signature style of Enchantment Theatre Company with the musical magic of Tony, Emmy and Grammy Award-winning composer/arranger Don Sebesky. With an original musical score, extraordinary puppets, masks and magic, Enchantment Theatre Company brings to life this charming tale of love and devotion, creating an unforgettable theatrical experience for the whole family.



About The Performers

For more than 25 years, Enchantment Theatre Company has been producing innovative, quality theater for children and their families. Recognized across America for its uniqueness, the Philadelphia-based company presents inspiring classic tales using a special blend of magic, mask, pantomime, puppetry and original music.

CURRICULUM FOCUS: LANGUAGE ARTS

Mini-Lesson: Write a Memoir of a Favorite Toy

NYC Language Arts Performance Standards: 2b, 2c, 3b, 3c, 4a, 4b, 5a, 5b

Teaching Point: Use descriptive language and details to stretch out your story

Coordinate with Student Guide: "Becoming Real"

Whole Group: Read *The Velveteen Rabbit* to the class. Select an excerpt from the book that is very descriptive. Retell it in a short, bland way. Then read it with the descriptive, vibrant language the author used. Note how the author took the moment and stretched it out by adding the details. Ask students to tell what the details are. Ask students to think about a favorite toy they have now, or had when they were younger.

Turn and Talk: Ask students to turn and tell a friend about their toy. What did it look like? Where did you get it? Do you still have it?

Suggestion for K-1: Begin the lesson with a Show and Tell of the children's favorite stuffed animals.

Individual Work: Write about a moment with your favorite toy: when you got it, when you lost it, going to sleep with it at night, having to share it, etc. Use descriptive language and details to stretch out the moment.

Small Group: Share your story with each other in small groups.

Extension: Mini-lesson on Point of View. *The Velveteen Rabbit* is written from the point of view of the stuffed rabbit.

Rewrite your memoir from the point of view of your toy.

CURRICULUM FOCUS: SCIENCE

Activity: Categorize items as alive or not alive.

Extension: Design and build a TerraAqua Column

NYC Science Performance Standard: 2

Life Sciences Concepts: 2a, b, c, d

Teaching Point: What makes something "alive?"

Coordinate with Student Guide: "What is Alive?"

Whole Class: Place some of the following items on the students' tables in jars or buckets: Ferns, beetles, sand, snails, bread, fish in a bowl, grass seeds, seedlings in pots, dried peas, gravel, small stuffed animals. Create a chart entitled "Living Things." Ask the following questions:

- What characteristics that can be used to define "living"? Elicit the following from the students:

(Grade 3-up): Living things are: built from cells, have life spans, need matter and energy, respond to their environment, and carry the hereditary material DNA.

(K-2): Living things have life cycles, need to eat, have offspring that look the same.

- **Discuss:** Which can be observed in a living object as it sits in front of you? Which can be observed in a living object over time? Which items do you currently classify as living?
- **Small group or individual activity:** have students sort items into two categories: Alive and not alive.

Extension: The extended lesson can be found at the following website with accompanying directions for building the TerraAqua Column and with handouts: <http://www.learner.org/channel/courses/essential/life/bottlebio/terraqua/>
Following the instructions provided on the website, build a TerraAqua column from plastic soda bottles and fill it with your items. Observe these organisms to see which observations were accurate – which are alive?

Answers to the activity in the Student Guide:

1. If it moves, it's alive. FALSE. Many things that move aren't alive, such as cars, clouds, and flowing water.
2. If it makes light or a noise, it's alive. FALSE. A burning candle and a flashlight make light but are not alive. A ringing bell and a piano make noise, but are not alive.
3. To be alive, something has to breathe. FALSE. Not all living things "breathe" in the same way that animals do — inhaling and exhaling. Plants, for example, do not breathe. However, the cells of all living things do take in and release gases.
4. To be alive, something has to grow. TRUE. One characteristic of life is a life span, which includes a period of growth.
5. Seeds, spores, eggs, and pupae are not alive. FALSE. Just as all cells come from an existing cell, all life comes from something that is alive — there is no "discontinuity" of life during a life span. Seeds, spores, eggs, and pupae represent the living beginnings of a life span and have the potential for growth, development, reproduction, and death. They also demonstrate the other characteristics of life. This makes them alive.
6. Plants are not alive. FALSE. Because plants don't move, some children think they aren't alive. But plants have the characteristics of life. They are built from cells, have life spans, require matter and energy, respond to their environment, and carry the hereditary material DNA.

Adapted from <http://www.learner.org/channel/courses/essential/life>

Bookshelf

What's Alive? Let's Read and Find Out Science 1 by Kathleen Weidner Zoehfeld. HarperTrophy, 1995.

200 Science Investigations for Young Students: Practical Activities for Science by Mark Wenham. Paul Chapman Educational Publishing, 2001. (Ages 5 – 11)

Animal Life Cycles (Science Picture Cards) by JoEllen Moore. Evan-Moor Educational Publishers, 1988.

Articles for Teachers

Students' Conceptions of the Life Concept by M. Brumby. Science Education, 66 (1982): 613-622. "Biology in Elementary Schools: Children's Conceptions of Life." By J. Stepan. American Biology Teacher, 47 (1985): 222-225.

**CURRICULUM FOCUS:
MATH**

Activity: Identify which part of the pattern comes next
NYC Mathematics Learning Standard: M2f
Teaching Point: Identify and continue patterns
Grades: K-1
Coordinate with Student Guide: "Toy Patterns"

**CURRICULUM FOCUS:
VISUAL ARTS**

NYC Activity: Make a puppet from simple materials
Learning Standards for the Arts: 1
Blueprint for the Arts Benchmark: "Art Making"
Teaching Point: Design and make a puppet
Coordinate with Student Guide: "Take It Home: Parent & Kid Corner"

Resources

Puppet Mania: The World's Most Incredible Puppet Making Book Ever by John E. Kennedy. North Light Books, 2004.

Making Puppets Come Alive: How to Learn and Teach Hand Puppetry by Larry Engler and Carol Fijan. Dover, 1997

The Usborne Book of Puppets (How to Make Series), by Ken Haines and Gill Harvey. EDC, 1998.

www.teacherhelp.org/puppets.htm#hand

<http://familycrafts.about.com/od/puppets/>

http://www.makingfriends.com/puppet_making.htm

NB: The finished puppets can be used for the theater exercise in place of stuffed animals or favorite toys.

Activity: Draw or paint a picture of your favorite toy

Teaching Point: Use detail in shape and color to show how your toy was special

Coordinate with Student Guide: "Becoming Real"

Extension: Create a "Gallery of Toys That Became Real" by hanging the finished work with the "Memoir of a Favorite Toy" beneath it (see Curriculum Focus: Language Arts).

Idea: The students can use their drawing in the Student Guide as a preliminary sketch for a larger drawing or painting. Try different materials such as pastels, or tempera paint shapes with details outlined in oil pastels.

**CURRICULUM
FOCUS:
THEATRE ARTS**

Activity: Use puppets to dramatize an event; create dialogue, voices and movement

NYC Learning Standards for the Arts: 1

Blueprint for the Arts Benchmark: Theatre Making: Playwriting/Play Making

Teaching Point: Create a Character through movement, voice, and personality choices.

Whole Group: Demonstrate how to give your puppet a character through the type of voice you use, what you think the toy's personality is, and the words you choose. Model the "Interview Game." Ask several students to come up and answer questions as if they are the toys. Interview them as if you are a film director looking for toys to star in your next movie (Toy Story 3!)

Here are some ideas of questions to ask, or make up your own: What is your name? How old are you? What is your favorite thing to do? Do you get along well with other toys? Who is your best friend? Which other toys do you like to play with? What is the nicest thing your child has done for you? The worst thing? What is the nicest thing you've done for your child? Invite students to ask questions of a new group until everyone gets a turn.

Discuss: What would happen if these toys found themselves together in the classroom without their children? What would they say? How would they act? What would they do?

Small Groups: Improvise dialogue between your characters based on the questions posed, using the ideas gained from the interview game as to what choices your character would make.

Mid-lesson Teaching Point: Once the students have an idea of their characters and how they interact, give them choices of a problem they must solve (i.e., their child forgets them in the classroom that night; they fall into the tempera paint; another child hides them in the wrong bag, etc. Older children will be able to come up with their own problem to solve that will make sense for them). Ask students to shape their story into a puppet show with a beginning: the toys meet; a middle: there is a problem; and the end: they solve the problem together.

Share Session: Each group performs their show for the whole group. Keep each performance under 10 minutes.

**CURRICULUM FOCUS:
DANCE**

Mini-lesson: Create and perform simple dances based on movement ideas that suggest specific animals.

NYC Learning Standards for the Arts: 1

Blueprint for the Arts Benchmark: Dance Making

Teaching Point: Explore shape, space, force and dynamics.

Whole Group: Use a large, empty space such as the gym, cafeteria or large classroom with desks moved aside. Ask students to think about the way that a rabbit moves. Ask: What shapes does it make when it walks, hops, runs, sleeps, eats, stretches? When it holds still to listen? When it moves, does it hop lightly or heavily? When would the rabbit move quickly? Slowly? How does it react when it sees other rabbits? How would a toy rabbit move differently from a real rabbit? Ask children to try various levels – high and low – in their movements and in stationary poses.

Small Group: Choose three movements from the group to perform in a pattern. Practice together.

Share: Perform your dance study for the whole group.

Variation: Choose three movements a toy rabbit would make, and three movements a real rabbit would make. Make the transition through the movements to show a transformation from toy to real.

Extension: Each student creates a dance based on the movements their favorite toy (as per their memoirs) would make were it to come to life.

Accompaniment: Why not use some selections by composer Don Sebesky to accompany the dances!

Resources

The Drama Game File (CD-Rom) A Comprehensive Collection of Drama Games for Classroom Teachers and Theatre Artists, by Jonas Basom. Drama Education Network, 2005

www.DramaEd.net

**CURRICULUM FOCUS:
SOCIAL STUDIES/
TECHNOLOGY**

Activity: Research author Margery Williams and toys from late 1800's to early 1900's.

NYC Social Studies Learning Standard: 1

Teaching Point: Compare and contrast toys of Williams' era to ours.

Coordinate with Student Guide: "Becoming Real," & "Now and Then."

Research: Use internet to find out about author Margery Williams. Research what kinds of toys were popular in the late 1800's and early 1900's, when she was a child. Print out a picture of a toy from that period. Cut out a picture of a toy from a current magazine or catalogue. Paste them side-by-side. Tell how they are the same and how they are different. (This could be given as a homework assignment). NB: Grades: K-1 would need teacher or parent assistance; grades 2-3 could do this on the classroom computer with a partner.



Web Resources

- <http://www.historyslice.com/kids/toys001a.htm>
- <http://www.archives.gov.on.ca/english/exhibits/toys/1800s.htm>
- <http://www.history.com/exhibits/toys/yoyo.html>
- <http://www.gasolinealleyantiques.com>

Field Trip: Take a Trip to The Museum of the City of New York to see their historical toy collection or their workshop, "Growing Up in New York City: New York City Childhood." Through paintings, old photographs, and the Museum's toy collection, students will learn about the roles and lifestyles of children in New York City over the past 150 years. Students will create murals depicting their own New York City childhood. Call 212-534-1672, extension 3334, or email schoolprograms@mcny.org, or visit their website, www.mcny.org.

Answers to Student Guide activity: old toys: cowboy on horse, sailor, skin horse, velveteen rabbit, duck with frog.

**CURRICULUM FOCUS:
MUSIC**

Activity 1: Songwriting--create a song for your favorite toy based on a familiar tune.
NYC Learning Standards for the Arts: 1
Blueprint for the Arts Music Literacy: Music Making
Teaching Point: Make your lyrics fit to the rhythm of the music.
Coordinate with Student Guide: "Making Music"

Whole Group: Write a song together to the familiar tune "Wheels on the Bus."

Turn and Talk: Tell your partner what song your toy would sing if it could.

Individual Work: (Younger students may choose to work with a partner). Write new words for your toy's favorite song, or even a new tune!

Share session: Share your song with a small group or the class. Learn each other's songs!

Resources

<http://www.cmnonline.org/> (Children's Music Network: terrific resource for children's music, activities and games).

<http://www.rosettarequiem.org/songs/RosettaRequiem-Songs-ChildrensSongs-SongMaking.html>

<http://music.aol.com/artist/don-sebesky/> (Site for Don Sebesky. Listen to clips from "A Joyful Noise: A Tribute to Duke Ellington" by scrolling down the page and clicking on the image of that album. Three clips that show variety are Joyful Noise Suite: Gladly, Sadly, Madly. Creole Love Song is fun for listening and moving to.

www.dos.state.ny.us/kidsroom/firesafe/song3.html (Hear songwriter and Velveteen Rabbit lyricist Gloria Nissenssen's fire safety song: "Crawl Low Under Smoke.")

Activity 2: Word Search Puzzle

NYC Learning Standards for the Arts: 2

Blueprint for the Arts: Awareness of Careers in Theater

Coordinate with Student Guide: "Making a Show"

C	O	M	P	O	S	E	R	D
X	D	K	J	T	L	A	B	E
Y	U	I	M	N	Y	F	R	S
P	T	Q	R	A	R	W	Q	I
J	G	A	S	E	I	R	P	G
K	M	U	S	I	C	I	A	N
L	E	B	T	R	I	T	V	E
O	W	F	O	F	S	E	O	R
A	C	T	O	R	T	R	C	R