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A Note to Educators

This Educator's Guide has been prepared by Meg Heimstead, Artistic Supervisor of Creative Arts Theatre Company. The intent of this guide is to foster exploration and research as the audience prepares for and reflects on the performance of *The Little Mermaid*. The questions, activities, and materials have all been prepared with the student audience in mind. Please feel free to use/copy any of the pages in this guide, as you reflect with your students on the play.

This production of *The Little Mermaid* is made possible by the City of Tampa Parks & Recreation Department and Friends of Tampa Recreation.

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About Creative Arts Theatre Company

Creative Arts Theatre is the City of Tampa's resident, professional theatre company for young audiences. A staff of 5 professional artists create and perform innovative theatre experiences, inspired by classic and contemporary children’s literature. Their mission is to encourage literacy throughout Hillsborough County through the magic of live performance.

Each year, Creative Arts Theatre presents over 200 performances at community centers, libraries, and schools, reaching an audience of approximately 15,000 people annually. Over the past 50 years, they have performed for more than one million children and their families. Creative Arts Theatre Company is a proud member of Theatre for Young Audiences/USA.

In addition, Creative Arts Theatre Company offers classes, camps, and workshops for children throughout the year at the City's community centers. Topics include acting, improvisation, storytelling, and musical theatre.

For more information, visit us on the web at [www.tampagov.net/theatre](http://www.tampagov.net/theatre)
The Role of the Audience

*Educators, please read the following to your students before you travel to see the show.*

As an audience member, YOU have a very important role to play! Without you, there would be no performance. You are an active collaborator in the live theatre experience; your applause and laughter feeds the actors vital energy and subtly makes each performance unique!

Live theatre is very different than watching something on TV or at the movie theater. When you watch TV at home, you may leave the room or discuss what you are seeing with family and friends. As a member of the audience while attending a play, you must watch and listen carefully because:

- You need to concentrate on what the performers are saying or you might miss something important. You can’t rewind live theatre!
- The actors on stage can hear you and are affected by your behavior. Talking and moving around is very distracting for the actors and for those seated around you.

Tips for the Best Theatre Experience

Here are a few tips for the BEST possible experience at the theatre:

- Remain sitting once the performance has begun.
- Keep your hands and feet to yourself.
- Don’t talk to your neighbor during the show. You might miss something important!
- Applaud when you like a scene and at the end of the show.
- Laugh if something is funny.
- HAVE FUN!
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACTOR</td>
<td>Any theatrical performer whose job it is to portray a character.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAST</td>
<td>The group of actors in a play.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CENTER STAGE</td>
<td>The middle of the stage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHARACTER</td>
<td>Any person portrayed by an actor onstage. Characters may also be animals, and sometimes objects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COSTUME DESIGNER</td>
<td>The person who creates what actors wear in the performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIRECTOR</td>
<td>The person in charge of the entire production.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOWNSTAGE</td>
<td>The area at the front of the stage, closest to the audience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOUSE</td>
<td>The area of the theatre where the audience sits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIGHTING DESIGNER</td>
<td>The person who creates the lighting for a play to simulate time of day, location, and mood.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLOT</td>
<td>The story of the play.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROP</td>
<td>An object used by an actor in a scene.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SET</td>
<td>The background scenery for the show.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SET DESIGNER</td>
<td>The person who decides what the scenery, furniture, and props will look like for the play.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOUND DESIGNER</td>
<td>The person who chooses music and/or sound effects like birds chirping, a phone ringing, or thunder.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STAGE CREW</td>
<td>The people who change the scenery during a performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UPSTAGE</td>
<td>The area at the back of the stage, furthest from the audience.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
BEFORE THE PERFORMANCE

The Little Mermaid Synopsis

Join us as two human characters narrate the story of the little mermaid from the bottom of the ocean! Hold your breath and dive into this tale of dazzling undersea beauty! The little mermaid, youngest daughter of the sea king, is a quiet child. Unlike her older sisters who are content to frolic in the ocean depths, she dreams of something more than a life beneath the waves—a shipwreck and a handsome human prince just may change her world forever. This tale of longing, sacrifice, and love is based on the story by Hans Christian Andersen and is adapted for the stage by Mike Kenny.

What is a Fairy Tale?

From Scholastic.com

A fairy tale, or wonder tale, is a kind of folktale or fable. In these stories we meet witches and queens, giants and elves, princes, dragons, talking animals, ogres, princesses, and sometimes even fairies. Marvelous and magical things happen to characters in fairy tales. A boy may become a bird. A princess may sleep for a hundred years. Objects too can be enchanted — mirrors talk, pumpkins become carriages, and a lamp may be home to a genie.

The oldest fairy tales were told and retold for generations before they were written down. French fairy tales were the first to be collected and written down, but now we can read fairy tales from almost any culture. When these stories were studied together, something amazing was discovered. From countries as distant and different as Egypt and Iceland similar fairy tales are told. Both Egypt and Iceland have "Cinderella" stories, as do China, England, Korea, Siberia, France, and Vietnam; and the list doesn't stop there. One thing is for sure; people everywhere like stories in which truth prevails over deception, generosity is ultimately rewarded, hard work overcomes obstacles, good triumphs over evil, and love, mercy and kindness are the greatest powers of all.

Today, some authors still like to retell and invent new fairy tales. The Cinderella story was recently re-imagined by Diane Goode in her book Cinderella: The Dog and Her Little Glass Slipper. Jon Scieszka's fractured fairy tales in The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales are another example of a retelling but with humor.
Let’s Talk About It!

Questions for Discussion

- Which fairy tales have you heard before?
- What is your favorite fairy tale?
- Why is that fairy tale your favorite?

Why Did People Tell Fairy Tales?

One of the great traits of fairy tales is that they always have a lesson to share! Back in the days when people didn’t have newspapers or television, what better way to teach children to behave than through stories? And the wonderful thing is, those lessons still have meaning today. For instance, Cinderella and Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs teach us that if you are a good person, good things will happen to you. Goldilocks and the Three Bears? Never go in to strangers’ homes. The Three Little Pigs? Cutting corners can end in disaster. And these are just to name a few!
About the Original Story

Adapted from AAC Children’s Theatre on Tour Activity Guide

*The Little Mermaid* is a well-known fairy tale by Danish author Hans Christian Andersen about a young mermaid willing to give up her life in the sea, and her identity as a mermaid, to gain a human soul and the love of a human prince. The tale was first published in 1837 and has been adapted numerous times in various media. Perhaps the most famous adaptation is the 1989 Walt Disney film. As is common among numerous fairy tales, the Disney version was significantly rewritten to provide a more pleasing ending. In the original tale, however, the mermaid does not have a “happily ever after,” but instead realizes the ultimate sacrifice by choosing to return to sea foam rather than harming the prince. In the end, she is rewarded for making this sacrifice and begins earning the soul she so longed for, by doing good deeds as the wind. Though very different from the Disney version, the overriding messages of love and sacrifice are seen as potential character-building opportunities for young audiences.

Let’s Read It!

**Introduce *The Little Mermaid* to your class either by reading it aloud or asking students to read aloud.**

We recommend finding a version of the original tale by Hans Christian Andersen. Please make sure that the version you select is suitable for young children. Because children are often more familiar with the Disney film, you might want to introduce both versions to the class, asking them to compare and contrast the two.
Let's Talk About It!

Questions for Discussion

- What makes this story a fairy tale? Are there any good or bad characters? What events wouldn’t happen in the real world? Does good win in the end? What are we supposed to learn from the story?

- How were the characters described in the story?

- What language was used?

- How was the original story different from the film version? How was it the same?

- What would make the story even better? What if it took place in the future or on a different planet? What if the Little Mermaid never made a deal with the Sea Witch? What would her life have been like under the sea?

Let's Draw It!

Art & Language Arts

- Using art materials like crayons, pencils, markers, etc., ask students to create a picture of something that happens in the story. For example—the little mermaid swimming through her underwater castle, the little mermaid saving the prince, the little mermaid making a deal with the sea witch, etc.

- Ask students to tell a story about what is happening in the picture. Questions to ask students include:
  
  -Who is in the picture?

  -What problems are the characters facing?

  -How do the characters in the picture feel?

  -What happens before this picture? What happens after the picture?
Let’s Write About It!

Language Arts

- **Ask students**—Has there ever been a time when you have wanted something very, very much, but you were told that you couldn’t have it? Write a letter about the thing that you want. Why do you want it? What would you give up in order to have it? What happens if you don’t get it?

- In groups, have students create their own fairy tale. Include good and bad characters, magical elements, and a clear beginning, middle and end. If time permits, have students act out their stories for the class!

Let’s Research It!

Social Studies

From [https://kids.kiddle.co/Mermaid](https://kids.kiddle.co/Mermaid)

The first stories about mermaids appeared in 5000 B.C., and variations have appeared in cultures across the globe. The word mermaid is a compound of mere, the Old English word for "sea", and maid, a woman. The male equivalent is a merman. Much like sirens, mermaids sometimes sing to people and gods and enchant them, distracting them from their work and causing them to walk off the deck or run their ships aground. They are also said to carry humans down to their underwater kingdoms. In Hans Christian Andersen's *The Little Mermaid*, it is said that they forget that humans cannot breathe underwater, while others say they drown men out of spite. The sirens of Greek mythology are sometimes portrayed in later folklore as mermaid-like; in fact, some languages use the same word for both bird and fish creatures, such as the Maltese word 'sirena'. Other related types of mythical or legendary creatures are water fairies (e.g., various water nymphs) and selkies, animals that can transform themselves from seals to humans.

- Research sea myths from different cultures. Compare stories—which is similar and which is different? Are there any common themes? Why do you think so many cultures developed stories about sea creatures?
**Pre-Show Discussion Questions**

Ask students to make predictions about the play they are going to see.

- What is a play?
- How is a play different from TV shows or movies?
- Based on the synopsis and what you know about *The Little Mermaid*, what do you think the set will look like? What challenges might there be in representing an underwater world?
- What are some objects (props) that might be used to help tell the story?
- Do you think the show will be funny or serious?
- Will there be music? If so, how do you think it will sound?
- What do you think the characters will be wearing?
- What are you most looking forward to seeing?

**Activity:** Now that we’ve imagined the play, let’s take out some paper and crayons and draw what we think the play might look like!
AFTER THE PERFORMANCE

Post-Show Discussion Questions

*Hold a class discussion when you return from the show. Ask students the following questions and allow them the opportunity to write or draw pictures of their experience.*

- What was the first thing you noticed when you walked into the performance space? Was it what you expected? If not, how was it different?
- Draw or write about what you remember about the set. Did the set look the way that you thought it would?
- What did you think of the costumes? Do you think that they fit the story? What things do you think the costume designer had to consider before creating the costumes?
- Was there music in the play? If so, how did it add to the performance? What did you think of it?
- What did you think of the actors? Do you think that they were able to bring the characters to life? Did you feel caught up in the story? Did anything surprise you?
- Which character did you relate to the most? Why? What words describe that character?
- What did the characters learn about themselves or the world in the play? Was there a moral or lesson?
- What was the story about? Describe the beginning, middle, and end. What was the climax of the story? Why? If you had to summarize the play in one sentence, what would it be?

Additional Questions for Discussion

- In what ways was the play different from the original story?
- Why didn’t the prince recognize the mermaid?
- Why was the mermaid willing to endure so much pain just to become human?
- Why didn’t the little mermaid kill the prince in order to avoid her own death?
- What lessons can we learn from the little mermaid’s actions?
Additional Post-Show Activities

- Draw a picture of the audience from the stage. How might things look from where the actors are standing?
- Write a letter to the cast, telling them what you thought of the performance. Our mailing address is on page 24.
- Which job would you like to try? Actor, director, sound designer, costume designer, set designer, or another role? What skills might you need to complete your job?

CURRICULUM CONNECTION

Language Arts Activities

The activities below are all creative writing exercises.

Write About It!

- **Magical Transformation!** If you could magically transform (into an adult, mermaid, unicorn, animal, etc.) would you do it? Write an opinion piece about why you would transform or not.
- **Let's Write a Story!** Write a short story about a character that transforms into something else. Then act out your story, determining how the character’s voice and movements would change.
The events described in *The Little Mermaid* take place on land and in the sea. The little mermaid lives in the sea during the first part of the play and then goes to live on land once she develops legs.

A **habitat** (hab-ih-tat) is the place or type of place where a plant or animal naturally or normally lives or grows. Just like you have a home or place to live, so do other animals and plants. Different animals need different habitats. A fish, for example, needs clean water in which to live. An elephant needs a big space where it can roam freely on land.

**Questions for Discussion**

- Can you name some animals that live only in the sea?
- Can you name some animals that live only on land?
- Can you name some animals that live in the sea and on land?

**Did you Know?**

- Around 70% of the Earth’s surface is covered by oceans.
- The largest ocean on Earth is the Pacific Ocean. It covers around 30% of the Earth’s surface.
- The longest mountain range in the world is found under water. Stretching over 34,700 miles, the **Mid-Oceanic Ridge** is a mountain chain that runs along the center of the ocean basins.
- About 70% of the oxygen we breathe is produced by the oceans.
- The sea is home to the world’s largest living structure – the **Great Barrier Reef**. Measuring around 1,600 miles, it can even be seen from the **Moon**!
- 25% of marine animals live in the coral reefs... and 90% of sea life relies on the reefs for one reason or another.
- There are over 1 million species of known marine animals that live in oceans, and maybe as many as 9 million that have not yet been discovered.
- We have only explored about 5% of the world’s oceans. There’s a lot more to be discovered!
Science Activities - OCEANS (Continued)

Below are some online resources about preserving our oceans!
All activities are from nationalgeographic.org

- Healthy Beaches— https://www.nationalgeographic.org/activity/healthy-beaches/
- How People Affect Ocean Animals and Plants—
  https://www.nationalgeographic.org/activity/how-people-affect-ocean-animals-and-plants/
- Coral Reef Fish Survey Simulation—

What Can YOU Do to Protect Our Oceans?

⇒ **Make a Difference**: volunteer your time or donate to an organization that works to protect ocean and coastal habitats.

⇒ **Appreciate Your Ocean and Coasts**: enjoy the ocean, waterways and shorelines. But remember that these recreation areas are a fragile home to many plants and animals.

⇒ **Respect Your Ocean and Coasts**: recycle, reduce and reuse. Keep trash and plastics off waterfronts and in trash cans.

⇒ **Educate Yourself**: investigate how the ocean impacts your school or community, from drainage issues and recycling to cafeteria fish sticks! Read about special ocean areas like national marine sanctuaries and share what you know.
Visual Arts Activities

Lets Make Art!

- Using one of the coloring sheets on page 17, 18, 19 & 20, color your own scene inspired by *The Little Mermaid*!
- Design Your Own Set! Imagine and design a set that creates an underwater world. What objects would you see? What kind of lighting could create a watery feeling? What kind of materials would you use?

![Paint Palette]

Theatre Arts Activities

Act Out the Story!

- **Story Circle** - Sitting in a circle, have students take turns retelling the story of *The Little Mermaid*, one sentence at a time. Each student should repeat what the students before them said in their own words, then add a sentence, until the story is complete.

- **Underwater!** - Get the class to walk around to the underwater music. When the music stops they freeze and turn into a sea creature (e.g. a fish, octopus, etc.) Get half the class to become seaweed and plants that are growing in the sea bed. Get the other half to move between the plants to the music. Freeze frame as the music stops. Swap over. Several children become mermaids and mermen. They move amongst the plants and fish. When the music stops they describe what they can see, hear, and feel under the sea.
Resources

Creative Arts Theatre Company
www.tampagov.net/theatre

Books

Mermaids Most Amazing by Narelle Oliver (G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 2001)
Song of the Sea: Myths, Tales and Folklore by Ann Spencer (Tundra Books, 2001)
The Annotated Hans Christian Andersen by Hans Christian Andersen, edited by Maria Tatar (WW Norton, 2007)
The Book of Mermaids by Patricia Saxton (Shenanigan Books, 2005)
A Book of Mermaids by Ruth Manning-Sanders (MAB Media, 2016)
A Treasury of Mermaids by Shirley Climo (Harper-Collins, 1997)
The Little Mermaid by Hannah Elliott (Little Simon, 2018)
The Mermaid and the Shoe by K.G. Campbell (Kids Can Press, 2014)
Sukey and the Mermaid by Robert D. San Souci (Four Winds Press, 1992)
CPALM Standards Connected to this Guide

Standards Connected to Performance:

TH.K.C.2.1—Respond to a performance and share personal preferences about parts of the performance.

TH.1.C.2.2—Identify elements of an effective performance.

TH.2.O.2.1—Re-tell what happened in the beginning, middle, and end of a story after viewing a play.

TH.3.S.1.1—Demonstrate effective audience etiquette and constructive criticism for a live performance.

TH.4.S.1.3—Use theatre terms to evaluate a live performance and discuss the qualities that directly impacted the audience's response to the production.

TH.5.O.1.3—Evaluate how an actor’s or designer’s choices about a character affect the audience’s understanding of a play.

Standards Connected to Theatre Etiquette:

TH.K.S.1.1—Demonstrate appropriate audience behavior at a live performance.

TH.1.S.1.1—Exhibit appropriate audience etiquette and response.

TH.2.S.1.1—Exhibit the behavior necessary to establish audience etiquette, response, and constructive criticism.

TH.3.S.1.1—Demonstrate effective audience etiquette and constructive criticism for a live performance.

TH.4.S.1.1—Exhibit proper audience etiquette, give constructive criticism, and defend personal responses.

TH.5.S.1.1—Describe the difference in responsibilities between being an audience member at live or recorded performances.

Standards Connected to Theatre Arts:

TH.K.F.3.1—Exhibit age-appropriate dramatic play behaviors.

TH.1.O.1.1—Demonstrate how the parts of the story go together by acting out a story with a beginning, middle, and end.

TH.2.F.1.1—Create and sustain a character inspired by a class reading or activity.

TH.3.H.2.2—Create and tell a story, fable, or tale.

TH.4.F.2.1—Identify the types of jobs related to putting on a theatre production and compare them with other arts-related and non-arts performances or events.

TH.5.C.2.4—Identify correct vocabulary used in a formal theatre critique.
Standards Connected to English Language Arts:

LAFS.K12.R.1.2—Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

LAFS.K12.W.3.9—Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

LAFS.K.RL.1.3—With prompting and support, identify characters, settings, and major events in a story.

LAFS.1.SL.1.2—Ask and answer questions about key details in a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.

LAFS.2.W.1.3—Write narratives in which they recount a well-elaborated event or short sequence of events, include details to describe actions, thoughts, and feelings, use temporal words to signal event order, and provide a sense of closure.

LAFS.3.RL.1.3—Describe characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.

LAFS.3.RL.1.2—Recount stories, including fables, folktales, and myths from diverse cultures; determine the central message, lesson, or moral and explain how it is conveyed through key details in the text.

LAFS.4.RL.1.3—Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., a character’s thoughts, words, or actions).

LAFS.5.W.2.4—Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

Standards Connected to Science:

SC.K.L.14.2—Recognize that some books and other media portray animals and plants with characteristics and behaviors they do not have in real life.

SC.1-5.L.17 - Plants and animals, including humans, interact with and depend upon each other and their environment to satisfy their basic needs.

SC.1.E.6.1—Recognize that water, rocks, soil, and living organisms are found on Earth's surface.

SC.1-3.N.1.1—Raise questions about the natural world, investigate them in teams through free exploration, and generate appropriate explanations based on those explorations.
Standards Connected to Social Studies:

SS.1.C.2.4—Show respect and kindness to people and animals.

SS.4.FL.1.1—People have many different types of jobs from which to choose. Identify different jobs requiring people to have different skills.

Standards Connected to Visual Art:

VA.K.O.2.1—Generate ideas and images for artworks based on memory, imagination, and experiences.

VA.1.O.2.1—Create imagery and symbols to express thoughts and feelings.

VA.2.C.1.1—Use the art-making process to communicate personal interests and self-expression.

VA.3.C.2.1—Assess personal artworks for completeness and success in meeting intended objectives.

We’d Love to Hear from You!
Creative Arts Theatre Company
3402 W. Columbus Drive
Tampa, FL 33607