

Soulpepper Theatre Company and Bad Hats Theatre Presents:

ALICE IN WONDERLAND

Adaptation of Lewis Carroll's book by Fiona Sauder with music by Landon Doak and Victor Pokinko



Study Guide compiled by Deborah Drakeford
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Soulpepper

SOULPEPPER.CA
416.203.6264
BOX OFFICE: 416.866.8666

YOUNG CENTRE
FOR THE
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50 TANK HOUSE LANE
DISTILLERY DISTRICT
TORONTO ON M5A 3C4



ALICE IN WONDERLAND STUDY GUIDE

THEMATIC OVERVIEW

Alice in Wonderland is a brand-new adaptation of Lewis Carroll's book by Fiona Sauder with music by Landon Doak and Victor Pokinko.

The play centers on Alice, a girl with a lot of questions, who is having trouble finishing a school assignment. Told to sit in a corner as a punishment, Alice's focus wanders and eventually leads her out the class window to pursue a rabbit. The Rabbit leads Alice down a Rabbit Hole to a world full of curious creatures and wondrous situations. Alice is made to realize that she must reach the Eighth Square in Wonderland to become a Queen. She sets off, making many discoveries along the way, finding the courage she realizes she may have been missing.

This play embodies and celebrates the following of the Seven Ancestral Teachings: Respect, Bravery, Honesty, Wisdom and Love.

The Pre-Show Unit focuses on imagination, bravery and celebrating differences.

The Post-Show Unit prompts students to reflect on the challenges experienced by Alice and to celebrate the wonder in the real world and Wonderland.

SYNOPSIS

Alice finds herself unable to finish a school assignment because she still has so many questions that need to be answered. Sent to the corner of the class to help her focus, Alice is drawn to look out the window where she sees a Rabbit who seems to be in a terrible hurry. Alice pursues the Rabbit and finds herself falling, falling, falling down a Rabbit Hole, and landing in Wonderland. There Alice meets many wondrous creatures and learns she must reach the Eighth Square to become a Queen. Wanting this very much, Alice begins her journey in Square One and travels to each Square in sequence to eventually reach the Eighth. Along the way, Alice discovers truths about herself, which help her when she returns to the Real World.



CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

The Arts: Drama, Music

Health and Physical Education: Social/Emotional Learning Skills, Healthy Living including Identification and Management of Emotions, Self-Awareness and Sense of Identity

Full-Day Kindergarten: Self-Regulation and Well Being, Play-Based Learning

English/Language Arts

SEVEN ANCESTRAL TEACHINGS

Respect

Bravery

Honesty

Wisdom

Love

THEMES

Power of the imagination

Taking risks

Finding support in others

Courage in difficult circumstances

Developing one's sense of integrity

CHARACTER EDUCATION CONNECTIONS

Respect

Responsibility

Honesty

Integrity

Perseverance

*Character education, or the teaching of community and social values, is designed to ensure students learn appropriate, positive behaviour and develop good character. It is the development of knowledge, skills, and abilities that encourage learners to make informed and responsible choices.



PRE-SHOW UNIT

PRE-SHOW DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When you say the word “imagination,” what does that mean to you? What does it make you think of?
2. What does bravery mean? What can bravery look like?
3. How does it feel to be powerless in a situation? What can you do to gain power?
4. Who supports you when you are feeling upset or afraid?

PRE-SHOW WARM UP ACTIVITIES

Imagination Object

Using an everyday object (a ball, a scarf, or a wooden spoon), pass (or mime passing) the object around the circle. Everyone takes a turn changing the object into something else. (For example, a wooden spoon becomes a microphone or a hair brush).

For virtual classrooms: The teacher holds up an everyday object. The students take turns pretending to hold that object and turn it into something else. Or each student grabs a random object from their room, shows the class, and then turns into something else.

Alien Translator

One student is an Alien, the other is a Translator. The audience asks the Alien a question (for example: Where are you from? What do you like to do?). The Alien answers in a made-up language. The Translator translates what the Alien has said.

The object is to listen to the tone of the Alien and respond accordingly.

The Translator is always right in the translation!

Random Freeze

All students move randomly around the space, using different levels. When the leader says “Freeze”, all stop in whatever shape they are. Students then describe who/what they are and what they are doing.



PRE-SHOW ACTIVITY 1

Imagination Room

Each student has 2 pieces of paper and coloured pencils/crayons/markers.

Ask each student to draw a shape. Then in this order, ask the students to give their shape eyes, limbs, hair/hat/head covering, a colour, and a name.

Divide the students into pairs.

Share the creature shape with their partner.

Have the partner create the perfect room for their partner's creature on the second piece of paper.

Share the rooms with partner.

Extension:

Act out your creature (what does it sound like? how does it move?) and invite your partner over to the room created for it.

Questions:

- What made you decide to draw your creature like that?
- What did you like about the room your partner created for your creature?
- What might you have done differently? Why?

PRE-SHOW ACTIVITY 2

Sculptor and Clay

Divide the class into groups of 4 or 5.

One person per group is the Sculptor, the others are the Clay.

The Sculptor creates "sculptures" by asking the "Clay" to move in different positions to create a picture (ideas of pictures are: a day at the beach, a game of croquet, discovering a new world, etc.)

In the next picture, the Sculptor can be asked to create sculptures of a feeling: bravery, fear, love, feeling lost, etc.

Extension: [Repeat the activity allowing for other students to become the Sculptor]

The sculpture can add words by asking each piece of Clay to say what they might say if Clay could talk.

Create a scene that leads up to the final moment of the picture of the Sculpture.

Questions:

- How was it to create a feeling vs creating a picture of something more concrete?
- Was it easy or hard to come up with the words for the Sculpture?



POST-SHOW UNIT

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. At the end of the play, what does Alice write for the answer on the homework?
2. Why does Alice go to Wonderland?
3. Knowing that Alice's Wonderland looks a lot like the world she already knows, and that it challenges her in similar ways - what would your wonderland look like?
4. What does Alice understand at the end of the play that she didn't at the beginning?
5. Why do you think the writers decided to add music to the story? What does it add? What does it represent?
6. What do each of the squares on the chess board represent?
7. What question is missing from Alice's homework assignment? Why doesn't Alice want to finish her homework?
8. What are the similarities between Wonderland and the Classroom? In what ways are they different?
9. What do you think the Cheshire Cat represents to Alice?
10. Is there a villain in this story?
11. In what ways is Alice different from her classmates? In what ways is she similar?
12. Why does Alice want to get to the Eighth Square?
13. What happens when Alice gets to the Eighth Square?
14. Do the characters in Wonderland remind Alice of anyone she already knows? In what way?
15. Have you ever been somewhere that reminds you of Wonderland?
16. What was the hardest part of Alice's journey to the Eighth Square?

POST-SHOW DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Discuss the students' reactions to the play.
2. What was important for Alice?
3. How did the company create Wonderland?
4. What did you think of the musical element? What did that add to the storytelling?
5. What do you think Alice discovered?



POST-SHOW WARM-UP & ACTIVITIES

Sound Machine

Get into a circle.

As a group, go around the circle creating a soundscape one person at a time - the first person starts a simple, repeatable sound using body and/or voice (for example, a rhythmic tap on a leg). Each subsequent person adds a complimentary sound until the whole group has created a soundscape.

Choose a person to be the Conductor: get the group to go slower, faster, louder, softer, etc.

Does the change in tempo/volume create an emotional response?

Break off into groups of 4 or 5 and create own soundscape. Groups can choose an emotion that Alice experienced (fear, frustration, excitement, etc.) and create a soundscape for that emotion. Present to the rest of the class and have the class guess the emotion.

Boring Story

Choose a simple everyday experience, for example, ‘what you do when you get up in the morning’?

Choose 3 activities that embody that experience: wake up, brush teeth, get dressed.

The presenter tells the story to the group and says “I woke up this morning” and the the group cheers wildly!! “I brushed my teeth” (more cheers! whooping and hollering!) “I got dressed” (cheers! amazing! wonderful!)

How does it feel to be cheered on? What kind of emotions did you experience?

POST-SHOW ACTIVITY 1

What Do You Think?

The objective for this activity is for the students to consider their opinion when it comes to making choices. How much choice do you feel you have?

Create an imaginary line in the classroom: one end is Strongly Agree, the other end is Strongly Disagree. Explain that there is a range of opinion in the middle.

For virtual classrooms: designate one side of the students’ screens to Strongly Agree and the other to Strongly Disagree.

As you say the following statements, have the students place themselves along the line.

Statements:



- I like to make choices
- I make many choices in my life
- I have no choice in what happens in my life
- I find it easy to choose between right and wrong
- I choose who I am
- My choices affect others
- Others influence my choice

Post-Activity Questions:

- Did you find it easy to answer these questions?
- Were you surprised by your responses?
- Did you change your mind after you made a choice?
- What did this exercise show you about making choices?

Extension:

How does this activity relate to Alice and what she experienced in Wonderland?

Do you agree/disagree with the choices Alice made?

How might things have been different if Alice made other choices?

Create a scene of what might have happened if Alice had done things differently - finished her homework, stayed really HUGE, challenged the Red Queen to an arm wrestle...

POST-SHOW ACTIVITY 2

Hot Seat

The objective for this activity is to consider the point of view of the characters in the play and to use physical and vocal characteristics to create characters.

Divide the class into groups of 4 or 5.

Within each group, each student takes on a character from the play with one student becoming the Talk Show Host.

Each character takes a turn being in the Hot Seat: the Host asks questions (and can take questions from the audience) of the character, who answers in character. (What is your favourite meal? Favourite colour? Do you have any siblings? What is your job? What do you like to do in your free time?)

Encourage the students to use physical, vocal, and facial expressions to fully create their character.

Extension:

Turn the Talk Show into a Musical Show, an Opera Show, or a Dance Show.



Questions:

- What did you learn about your character?
- How easy or hard was it to think as your character might think?
- Did using a physical or vocal quality make it easier or harder to become your character?

RESOURCES

ABOUT BAD HATS THEATRE COMPANY

Bad Hats Theatre Company is a Toronto-based company founded in 2015. Bad Hats creates new multidisciplinary works and was named Soulpepper Theatre's Associate Company in 2019.

With an emphasis on pieces that speak to multiple generations, Bad Hats' company of artists' work collaboratively to develop work for audiences of all ages. Their practice centers on the understanding and questioning of the strange and magical act of growing into a person. The core team consists of Fiona Sauder (Artistic Director), Matt Pilipiak (Managing and Artistic Producer), Victor Pokinko (Executive Producer), Nicola Atkinson (Founding Member), Landon Doak (Associate Artist) and Lauren Vandervoort (General Manager).

CURRICULUM EXPECTATIONS

THE ARTS (DRAMA/MUSIC)

- engage in dramatic play and role play, with a focus on exploring themes, ideas, characters, and issues from imagination or in stories from different communities, times, and places
- express thoughts, feelings, and ideas about a variety of drama experiences and performances
- demonstrate an understanding of the element of role by communicating thoughts, feelings, perspectives appropriate to the role being played



- identify, using drama terminology, the elements and conventions of drama used in shared drama experience and theatre, and describe how they help communicate ideas and feelings and create interest
- express personal responses and preferences and make connections to themes and issues presented in their own and others' drama works
- demonstrate an understanding of some drama and theatre themes and traditions from a variety of times, communities and places (e.g., Ancestral Teachings)
- identify and describe key contributions drama and theatre make to community
- develop an understanding and appreciation of music
- develop an ability to create and perform music
- develop practical artistic skills to sharpen the ability to reason, to think critically, and to explore their emotional responses to the music
- develop musical literacy through singing, playing, moving, performing, creating, and listening actively

HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- apply skills that help them identify and manage emotions in order to improve their ability to express their feelings and understand and respond to feelings of others
- apply skills that help them recognize sources of stress and to cope with challenges including help seeking behaviours in order to support the development of personal resilience
- apply skills that help them build relationships, develop empathy and communicate with others in order to support healthy relationships, a sense of belonging and respect for diversity
- apply skills that help them develop self-awareness and self confidence in order to support development of a sense of identity and a sense of belonging
- explain how understanding and being able to name their feelings can help in knowing when they might need to get help
- demonstrate an understanding of the interconnections between a person's thoughts, emotions and actions, and of the potential impact of the positive and negative thinking on mental health

FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN: SELF-REGULATION AND WELL-BEING

- demonstrate self-reliance and a sense of responsibility



- demonstrate a willingness to try new experiences
- demonstrate self-motivation, initiative and confidence in their approach to learning by selecting and completing tasks
- demonstrate self-control (be aware of and label their own emotions; accept help to calm down; calm themselves down after being upset)
- develop empathy for others, and acknowledge and respond to each other's feelings (demonstrate an awareness of their own health and well-being; communicate their thoughts and feelings, and their theories and ideas, through various art forms)