Pre-Show Materials for Teachers

For use with Aesop’s Fables
By James Brock
Produced with permission from Pioneer Drama Services
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Treehouse Troupe’s Pre-Show Materials for Schools

Meet Our Cast and Crew!

Aesop…………...Allison Kump
Rosa……...Rosa Cooper-Davies
Hilary...........Hilary Mankin
Jeff..............Jeffrey Sneed
Cierra...........Cierra Kelly
Kevin...........Kevin Lewis
Kati.............Kati Serbu

Director.........Aimee S. Reid
Touring Manager...Marie Duffee

To Use This Packet

Treehouse Troupe has put together a collection of information about us, our play, and education-based activities you can do with your students to prepare them for the production.

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Who Was Aesop?

Historians do not know a lot about Aesop’s life, appearance, or even his real name. What historians do know is that Aesop was born in the 5th century BCE. It is unclear where he was born, but most scholars suggest Lydia or Greece.

Aesop was born a slave, but his second master gave him freedom because of Aesop’s wisdom and wit. Aesop, after being freed, worked hard and soon rose to a man of great renown in politics.

Legend says Aesop was sent to Delphi on a royal mission to deliver some gold. However, upon his arrival the citizens became greedy and tried to take the gold from him. Aesop was disgusted by their greed and sent the gold back to the king of Corinth.

The Delphians were outraged when they learned of this and so they sentenced Aesop to death for this crime.
Theatre Etiquette

A live theatre performance can be very exciting. Since this may be some of our audience member’s first show, please go over the following prior to the performance:

- Arrive to the theatre on time.
- Please stay seated during the performance. After the play is over, remain seated—the actors will be conducting a brief talk-back.
- Visit the restroom before the performance begins.
- The use of cell phones (phone calls or texting) and recording devices are not allowed during the performances a any time.
- Please do not talk to your neighbor during the performance. If you like something you see, go ahead and applaud for the actors—it lets them know you like what they’re doing!

Some questions to ask before the show

What is the difference between a live theatre show and television?

Aesop’s fables center around animals. What is your favorite animal and where do they live?

When you lose in a game, how do you feel? If you feel sad or upset, what do you do to stop feeling sad or upset?

When things do not go your way or you do not get what you wanted, what do you do? And how do you feel when things don’t get your way?

What animal best represents how you act? How is that animal different from you?

Some questions to ask after the show

Why did Kati have a hard time wanting to play with Aesop and the other children? Have you ever wanted to play something different than what your friends want to play?

The Hare likes to hop, the Tortoise likes to walk slowly—how do you like to get around?

Aesop tells some pretty fantastic fables—what kinds of stories are your favorites to tell?

Jeff as the Crow and Hilary as the Fox
Photo by Kathy Heisinger
Some Definitions:
Fable- A short story with animals in that teaches a lesson of some kind
Conceited- Being too proud of yourself
Costumes- A set of clothes worn by an actor or performer whilst on stage
Actor- A theatre performer
Character- A person from a story
Props- Objects used on the stage during a performance
Scenery- pieces of furniture used to make a setting.
Lesson Plan: Discovering Aesop's Fables

Target Grades: 1-4

Lesson Overview: Students will dramatize “The Mouse and the Lion,” practicing telling a story in sequence and identifying characteristics of animals.

Length of Lesson: 30-45 minutes

Instructional Objectives:

Ohio Content Standards:
Drama/Theatre. Creative Expression and Communication. Benchmark A. Grade 2. 3: Listen to a story and sequence the events including the problem and the solution.

Drama/Theatre. Creative Expression and Communication. Benchmark A. Grade 3. 2: Use voice, movement, space, and/or physical objects to express or communicate thoughts, feelings and ideas both in improvised and scripted settings.

Science. Life Science. Grade Cluster K-2. C. Describe similarities and differences that exist among individuals of the same kind of plants and animals.

Supplies: see Appendix

Instructional Plan

Warm-up/Framing Activity
Create an empty space in the classroom and designate it the “Playing Space.” Ask students to brainstorm what belongs in a forest—what animals, what plants? After brainstorming, play “Add-on Tableaux.”

Add-on Tableaux: Explain that a tableau is a word that means “frozen picture.” Instruct the students to step into the Playing Space, one-by-one, and create a tableau of an animal or plant that goes into the forest. When everyone has joined, finish the activity by pantomiming, or perhaps actually, taking a picture.

Note: If you find that your students tend to copy each other, refer back to the brainstorming session and ask students to select from that list.

Target Activity
Ask the students to sit at their desks or in a story area. Brainstorm what are the sounds they might hear in the forest: wind, leaves, animals, crickets, rain, etc. As they brainstorm, ask the students to try out the sounds from their seats. Then, instruct the students to close their eyes; they are going to create the sound setting for a story. Prompt them to create the sounds, one after another, or perhaps split up the class to create a symphony of sounds.

Instruct the class to open their eyes and to remember the forest as you read “The Lion and the Mouse.” Read the story, provided in Appendix A.

If time: Hand out the mask templates (Appendix B) and provide coloring materials for the students to color in the masks. Instruct/help them cut out their masks, punch a hole, and tie string to the masks so they can be worn, or glue a craft stick to the side so the mask can be held like opera glasses.

Ask the students to find their own space in the room and create an individual tableau of the lion character (reminding them it is a frozen, silent picture). Once they have created the body of the lion, ask them to unfreeze and use their voices to create the sound of the lion. Repeat activity for the mouse character.

Place students in groups of four and assign or let them decide among themselves who will play the lion, the mouse, a narrator (explaining a narrator speaks the story) and a person to create all the sounds.

Assign each group a scene in the story—for example, the mouse discovering the lion caught in the net, or the mouse nibbling the net. Give them a few minutes to practice, and emphasize that everyone must contribute.

Once they have practiced, allow each group to share their section of the story, in order. If time: Ask the observing students what the performers did with their bodies and voices to show their characters and the story.

Assessment
-Ask students to recall the order of “The Mouse and the Lion.”
-Ask students what they changed about their bodies and voices to show a mouse, a lion, or their sound effects.
-Ask: What was it like being a lion? A mouse?
Appendix A: The Story of the Lion and the Mouse

Once, as a lion lay sleeping in his den, a naughty little mouse ran up his tail, and onto his back and up his mane and danced and jumped on his head so that the lion woke up.

The lion grabbed the mouse and, holding him in his large claws, roared in anger. 'How dare you wake me up! Don't you know that I am King of the Beasts? Anyone who disturbs my rest deserves to die! I shall kill you and eat you!'

The terrified mouse, shaking and trembling, begged the lion to let him go. 'Please don't eat me Your Majesty! I did not mean to wake you, it was a mistake. I was only playing. Please let me go - and I promise I will be your friend forever. Who knows but one day I could save your life?'

The lion looked at the tiny mouse and laughed. 'You save my life? What an absurd idea!' he said scornfully. 'But you have made me laugh, and put me into a good mood again, so I shall let you go.' And the lion opened his claws and let the mouse go free.

'Oh thank you, your majesty,' squeaked the mouse, and scurried away as fast as he could.

A few days later the lion was caught in a hunter's snare. Struggle as he might, he couldn't break free and became even more entangled in the net of ropes. He let out a roar of anger that shook the forest. Every animal heard it, including the tiny mouse.

'My friend the lion is in trouble,' cried the mouse. He ran as fast as he could in the direction of the lion's roar, and soon found the lion trapped in the hunter's snare. 'Hold still, Your Majesty,' squeaked the mouse. 'I'll have you out of there in a jiffy!' And without further delay, the mouse began nibbling through the ropes with his sharp little teeth. Very soon the lion was free.

'I did not believe that you could be of use to me, little mouse, but today you saved my life,' said the lion humbly.

'It was my turn to help you, Sire,' answered the mouse. Even the weak and small may be of help to those much mightier than themselves.

Appendix B: Lion and Mouse Masks

Materials:
- Paper
- String (or Craft Stick)
- Tape
- Scissors
- Hole Puncher

Steps:
1. Color or paint the animal using your favorite coloring material.
2. Cut out the mask. Ask an adult to help you cut out the eye holes.
3. Notice the pair of little circles on each side of the mask? These are the spots where you need to punch holes for attaching the string. Paper masks normally tear around these holes after a few uses. To reinforce these spots, put scotch tape over the marked holes and fold the tape towards the back of the mask.
4. Punch holes on the pair of marked circles and tie the ends of an elastic string on each hole.
5. Try on your animal mask. It should fit snugly but not too tight. Adjust the length of the string if necessary.
6. For Craft Stick: Glue or tape the craft stick at the back of the animal mask. Wear the mask by holding it in front of the face!
For the lion’s mask template, visit: www.firstpalette.com/tool_box/printables/lionmask.pdf
Aesop’s Story Problems
For grade 2

If the Fox wanted to pay the Owl to fly to the top of the wall and get the grapes. The Fox has 2 pennies, 3 dimes and one nickel. How much will the Fox be able to pay the Owl?

The fox has tried to steal the apple from the crow five times. She has stolen the apple two times. What is the probability that she will steal the apple the next time? More, less or equally likely to occur?

If the fox finally snatched three out of the twelve grapes from the high wall, draw how many grapes would be left hanging from the wall?

Want to Read More?
Here are some books like Aesop’s Fables...

ANANSI AND THE MOSS-COVERED ROCK
Eric A., Kimmel
“Anansi the Spider uses a strange moss-covered rock in the forest to trick all the other animals, until Little Bush Deer decides he needs to learn a lesson.”

CLICK, CLACK, MOO: COWS THAT TYPE
Cronin, Doreen
“When Farmer Brown’s cows find a typewriter in the barn they start making demands, and go on strike when the farmer refuses to give them what they want.”

PAPA, PLEASE GET THE MOON FOR ME
Carle, Eric
“Monica’s father fulfills her request for the moon by taking it down after it is small enough to carry, but it continues to change in size. Some pages fold out to display particularly large pictures.”

THE WOLF’S CHICKEN STEW
Kasza, Keiko
“A hungry wolf’s attempts to fatten a chicken for his stewpot have unexpected results.”

ZOMO THE RABBIT: A TRICKSTER TALE FROM WEST AFRICA
McDermott, Gerald, retold and illustrated by
“Zomo the Rabbit, an African trickster, sets out to gain wisdom.”

<<All of the above taken from: http://kids.nypl.org/reading/recommended2.cfm?ListID=61

STUCK
Oliver Jeffers
“An absurdly funny ‘tale of trying to solve a problem by throwing things at it.’”

Classroom and Homework Activities for Aesop’s Fables

5 Minute Activities
1. In 3 minutes, come up with a list of as many animals you can think of. Which team has the most animals? How many words are on both teams’ lists?
2. There are many of Aesop’s fables, make a list of 5 fables that you would like to read about. Ask a parent or teacher to help you find books about Aesop’s fables and as you read, write down the information you learn.
3. People use symbols (pictures) to record stories and history. Make a list of symbols that you see in everyday life that people have a common understanding of. If you have more time: create a personal symbol for yourself.

15 Minute Activities
1. In the play, Kati did not get what she wanted, write a story (real or made up) about a time you didn’t get what you wanted and how did you handle it?
2. Draw a picture of your favorite animal from the play. On the back write the traits of this animal.
3. In the play, there is a high wall with grapes at the top. What could the fox have done to get the grapes besides asking the owl for help? Write a short story describing how you would solve this problem.

30 Minute Activities
1. Aesop was a slave back in ancient Greece. Look up Aesop’s life story and create a short play of your own!
2. The Tortoise and the Hare have a race—what if they did an obstacle course instead? Head outside or go to your gymnasium and create an obstacle course. Try it fast like the Hare and slow like the Tortoise!
3. The Donkey wished she were a lion, so she put on a lion’s skin to convince her friends—do you ever wish you were someone else? Write about who you wish you could be and why.

We’re looking forward to coming to your school!

Treehouse Troupe 2012

Back row: Kevin, Kati, Allison, Cierra, Rosa
Front row: Jeff, Hilary
Photo by Kathy Heisinger