

Fort Wayne  
**youth**theatre  
*Education  
Guide*



**2022-23 SEASON**

# Fort Wayne youthatre

About Us...

As the fifth oldest active children's theatre in the nation, Youthatre is dedicated to its mission to "educate, engage and entertain" through quality theatrical experiences. In 1934, Dr. Clive McAllister, president of the Old Fort Players (now the Civic Theatre), appointed a committee to create a junior or children's theater branch of the organization. The committee established the philosophy that the new "Children's Theatre" would develop poise, better diction, and self-esteem for children through dramatic instruction. They would give at least one play a year, and awaken enthusiasm in children for beauty in art and integrity in dramatic literature.

The first class began with an enrollment of a whopping 40 students, each of which paid just \$1.00 for 8 classes! The first production, "The Steadfast Tin Soldier," was performed at the Majestic Theatre in Fort Wayne and had a cast of 75 young people. Tickets were only 10 cents for children and 25 cents for adults.

In 1954, the Majestic Theatre was deemed unsafe for children by the fire department and so the Children's Theatre spent the next 10 years at various locations in the city. By the time it rejoined the Civic Theatre at the Old Palace Theatre, it had a new name, the "Fort Wayne Youthatre." In 1973, both organizations moved to their current home in the Arts United Center on E. Main Street in downtown Fort Wayne. The Youthatre became autonomous in 1984.

In 1978, Broadway star Harvey Cocks became the Executive Director of Youthatre. Even after retiring from that position, Harvey has remained as our Artist in Residence; and after 40+ years, he is still inspiring young actors and actresses! In 2010, he was joined by Leslie Hormann, who served as Executive/Artistic Director until 2018.

Youthatre is currently managed by Executive/Artistic Director Todd Espeland, who came to us in 2018 after serving as Artistic Director of the Kalamazoo Civic Theatre. He is joined by Assistant Director/Director of Outreach Christopher J. Murphy and Administrative Assistant/Marketing Director Megan Ebbeskotte and a staff of outstanding local artists who serve as teachers, guest directors, choreographers, music directors and designers.

For over three quarters of a century, Youthatre has produced classes, camps and theatrical productions for the artists and audiences of northeast Indiana. Our touring "Youthatre-On-The-Go" troupe takes literature-based shows into the community, performing in hospitals, libraries, community centers and more. In 2018, our Linda L. Ruffolo "Young Heroes of Conscience" Series, which has spotlighted the likes of Anne Frank, Ryan White, Harriet Tubman and Ruby Bridges, won the "Mayor's Arts Award."



# ELEMENTS OF A PRODUCTION

## SETS

The scenery pieces that form the area in which the performers act out the play. Sometimes scenery is very realistic, making the audience think they are inside a real house, for example. Other times the scenery is quite fanciful or limited. What different sets can you name in the show? What time and place does it look like?

## LIGHTS

The lighting instruments that help to create the right atmosphere on the stage. Lights direct the attention of the audience to specific areas of the stage or to a specific performer. The lights may be different colors to add special effects such as nighttime or a storm. How do the lights in this production show changes in the time and place?

## PROPS

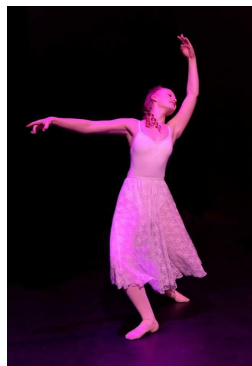
The objects performers carry to help them act out the story. Look for important props that help define character or place. Can you name a few?

## MAKE-UP

The cosmetic bases, blushes, lipsticks, mascara and eye liners which helps the performer physically become the character he/she is playing. Make-up is also used so that the performers facial features can be seen clearly under the bright stage lights from a distance. Do you notice any special make-up in the show?

## COSTUMES

The clothing the performers wear. Depending on the story being acted out, this clothing may be what a character of the time would have actually worn. It may also be very exaggerated or fantastic in the case of a dream or a fairy-tale. Costumes help the audience know what a character is like or where and when he/she lived. Are the costumes drab or colorful? Do they look realistic? What do they tell you about the time and place?





# MEET *the* TEAM

## **TODD ESPELAND, CO-DIRECTOR**

Todd is the Executive/Artistic Director of the Fort Wayne Youtheatre. He is the former Artistic Director of Commedia Zuppa Mask Company, The Kalamazoo Civic Theatre and a graduate of the world renowned Dell'Arte International. While at Dell'Arte, Todd did extensive post-graduate work in Mask, Clown, Circus Techniques, Commedia Dell'Arte and Physical Theatre. He holds MFA in Directing from the University of Nevada Las Vegas.

With Commedia Zuppa Todd served as a mask and movement specialist and artist in residence Off-Broadway for the Rosebud Theatre Company, and at many regional theatres, colleges, universities and toured original works of theatre nationally and internationally including his award winning Theatre for Young Audiences mask show BOXHEAD. During this time he was also a lead coach and director with Starfish Circus, a nonprofit that focuses on helping kids develop skills for healthy, active and enthusiastic lives through circus & performing arts.



## **CHRISTOPHER J. MURPHY, CO-DIRECTOR**



CHRISTOPHER J. MURPHY is proud to share Youtheatre's mission with the young artists of our community. Murphy began his long association with Youtheatre as an actor, then as a teacher and guest director before joining the organization full-time in 2016.

As the Assistant Director and Director of Outreach, he directs, teaches and oversees Youtheatre's diverse community outreach programs such as Youtheatre-On-The-Go.

Before coming to Youtheatre, Murphy spent twenty-two years as the Theatre Director at his alma mater, Blackhawk Middle School, from 1993- 2015. In addition, Murphy has been a Master Teacher with F.A.M.E. (Foundation for Art and Music in Education) for fifteen years, taught at arts camps throughout the United States, and worked extensively as a producer/director/writer in the orchestral world. He lives in downtown Fort Wayne with the finest canine known to man, Herbie Murphy.

## ***Q: What does a Director do?***

**A:** A Director collaborates with and supervises all the other members of the production team (sets, lights, costumes, etc.) to make sure everyone is working together to tell the same story. He or she also directs the movement of the performers and helps them develop characters and relationships. In short, the Director is THE BOSS.

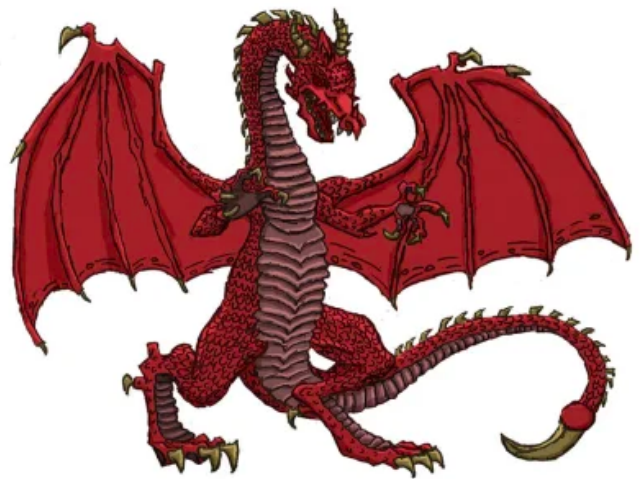


A black silhouette of a dragon's head and long, flowing tail, positioned to the left of the word "Dragons".

# Dragons

**The dragon is a legendary animal, similar to a huge lizard or snake, that appears in stories and art from all over the world. Dragons typically are portrayed as having scaly skin, a powerful jaw with sharp teeth, four legs with long claws, and a long tail. Horns, spikes, and batlike wings also may sprout from their body.**

In most **Western** myths, such as those of Europe, dragons are symbols of evil. They are usually fire-breathing beasts that terrorize people. In many tales, a hero makes it his mission to slay a dragon. Dragons are also known for greedily guarding stolen treasure.



In most **Eastern** legends, such as those of China and Japan, dragons are good creatures. They lack wings but can fly, and they live in water. They are thought to control rivers and the rain and wind. In Chinese culture, dragons are symbols of power and luck. In the past, the dragon was the symbol of the emperor of China.

# HISTORY:

# European Dragons

**In European mythology, a dragon is a serpent-like legendary creature. Though a winged creature, the dragon is generally to be found in its underground lair, a cave that identifies it as an ancient creature of earth.**



## English Mythology

English dragons come in two kinds. The first flies through the air on powerful wings and breathes fire. It loves gold and other kinds of treasure; where it finds a hidden hoard it moves in and sleeps on top of it. The fiery, flying dragon has been connected with the appearance of comets. The second kind, the more common type, of dragon in English folklore is the creepy and poisonous kind. It tends not to have wings, and it lurks in caves, marshes or fens. It's been suggested that these dragon-stories may be connected with finds of dinosaur bones or fossils.

## Greek Mythology

For the Greeks of the Classical times, dragons were terrifying serpent-like earth-born, dark creatures that had to be slain. Dragons were guardians of underground sources of power, and often guarded the more literal sources, springs, where the watery underworld burst to the surface. The water-dragon most widely depicted was called the *Hydra*.

## Slavic Mythology

Dragons of Slavic mythology hold mixed feelings towards humans. For example, dragons in Bulgarian mythology are either male or female: the female dragon represents harsh weather and is the destroyer of crops. The male dragon protects the humans' crops from destruction and is generally loving to humanity. In Bulgarian legend, dragons are three headed, winged beings with snake's bodies.

In Russian, Belarusian, and Ukrainian lore, dragons are generally evil, four-legged monsters with few if any good qualities. Their number of heads ranges from one to seven or sometimes even more, with three- and seven-headed dragons being most common.

## Celtic Mythology

Most dragons in Celtic mythology have a similar appearance, being wormlike in shape, without legs, although they sometimes had wings, and having poisonous bites or stings as opposed to breathing fire. They were usually serpentine and were considered symbols of wisdom due to their long lifespans. Merlin, holding his staff, is often depicted with facing dragons at the head of the staff, and it has been suggested that this represents a balance between opposing forces.

# HISTORY: *Chinese Dragons*

**Chinese dragons traditionally symbolize potent and auspicious powers, particularly control over water, rainfall, typhoons, and floods. The dragon is also a symbol of power, strength, and good luck for people who are worthy of it.**



## Appearance and Origin

The traditional description of these mythical beasts is "the head of a camel, the horns of a stag, the eyes of a demon, the ears of a cow, the neck of a snake, the belly of a clam, the scales of a carp, the claws of an eagle, the paws of a tiger." The ancient Chinese self-identified as "the descendants of the dragon" because the Chinese dragon is an imagined reptile that represents evolution from the ancestors and *qi* energy. The presence of dragons within Chinese culture dates back several thousands of years. The Chinese dragon is extraordinarily powerful, and when it flies, it is usually accompanied by lightning and thunder. Some historians suggest a link with rainbows and a 'serpent of the sky': which is seen after rain showers or at waterfalls.

## Symbolism

Dragons symbolize importance, power and strength, and were the symbol of the Emperor of China. Dragons are essential in agricultural life, since they are seen to control the seasons and the weather. Although they have no wings, the fiery pearl sometimes displayed in their mouths gives them the power to fly to heaven. The male air and weather dragons would bring rains and winds to help the harvest, while the female earth dragons would preserve the waters in rivers and underground wells. Farmers would make offerings to the dragons to ensure a good harvest. When areas were suffering from a drought, the dragons were thought to be sleeping underground, or in ponds. When the spring rain would come, people thought the dragons were waking up to create the rain, and that dragons could divert floodwater away from towns.

## Dragon Dancing

On some celebratory occasions, like Chinese New Year, festivities often include dancing with dragon puppets (not too unlike the dragon puppet you saw in *Jeremy Thatcher!*) These are "life sized" cloth-and-wood puppets manipulated by a team of people, supporting the dragon with poles. They perform choreographed moves to the accompaniment of drums, drama, and music.



# Your Fav Dragon!

## SOME OF THE MOST FAMOUS DRAGONS IN POPULAR CULTURE WORLDWIDE.

In just about every culture in the world, there is some version of the mythical creature we know and love. Below are some of the most famous dragons in fiction: do you spot any you know?



Maleficent's Dragon: *Sleeping Beauty*



Elliot: *Pete's Dragon*



Toothless: *How to Train Your Dragon*



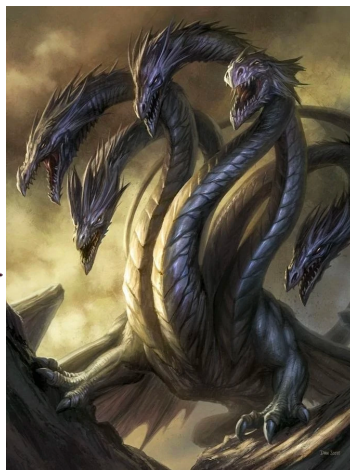
The Dragon: *Beowulf*



Smaug: *The Hobbit*



Mushu: *Mulan*



Hydra: Greek  
Mythology



Charizard: *Pokemon*



# Summer Camps 2023



## RISING STARS Musical Theatre Camp

Session 1: June 12- 16 (M - F: 10am- 2pm)  
Session 2: June 19- 23 (M- F: 10am- 2pm)

Spend one or two weeks strengthening your vocal technique, honing your acting chops and expanding your dance skills. While learning both classic and modern musical theatre, students will rotate through musical theatre performance, choreography and vocal performance with the directors and music directors of Youththeatre and the choreographers of Fort Wayne Dance Collective.

For incoming 4th - 12th graders



## LET'S PUT ON A SHOW! Disney's 101 Dalmatians Kids

June 12- 23 (M - F: 10am- 2pm)

Everyone's in the cast as Youththeatre directors lead you through auditioning, rehearsing and performing Disney's 101 Dalmatians KIDS. Based on the film, it's a 30-minute fur-raising adventure featuring Cruella De Vil and 101 of the most adorable heroes to set their paws onstage.

For incoming 2nd - 5th graders



## RISING STARS Acting Camp

Session 1: July 10- 14 (M - F: 10am- 2pm)  
Session 2: July 17- 21 (M - F: 10am- 2pm)

This two-week camp provides an extraordinary theatre experience and actor training with some of the leading teaching artists in our area. Students are grouped by age and rotate daily through a series of labs on acting, movement, improv, script reading, creating characters and more.

For incoming 3rd - 12th graders



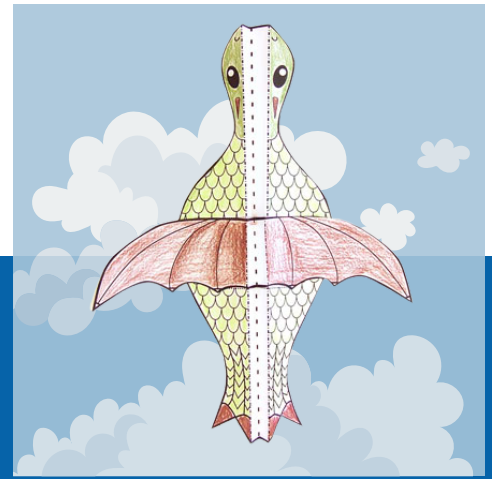
## Register Today!

Scan the QR code for info, financial aid, and enrollment



# ACTIVITY #1: FLYING DRAGON

**This activity, best suited for Pre-K to 5th graders, encourages students to get thinking about how to visually design their own magical dragon, and then to bring them to life to soar through the air by following specific, STEM instructions.**



Materials needed:

- Safety scissors
- Crayons, markers, or colored pencils
- Glue/tape
- Dragon airplane print out (next page)

Start by asking the students what their pet dragon would look like. What color would its scales be? Can it fly? Does it breathe fire? Where does it live? What do they feed it? Is it a nice dragon, a mean dragon, or a little bit mischievous like Tiamat?

Next, have them color in the dragon airplane on the next page. Now its time to create the dragon paper airplane!

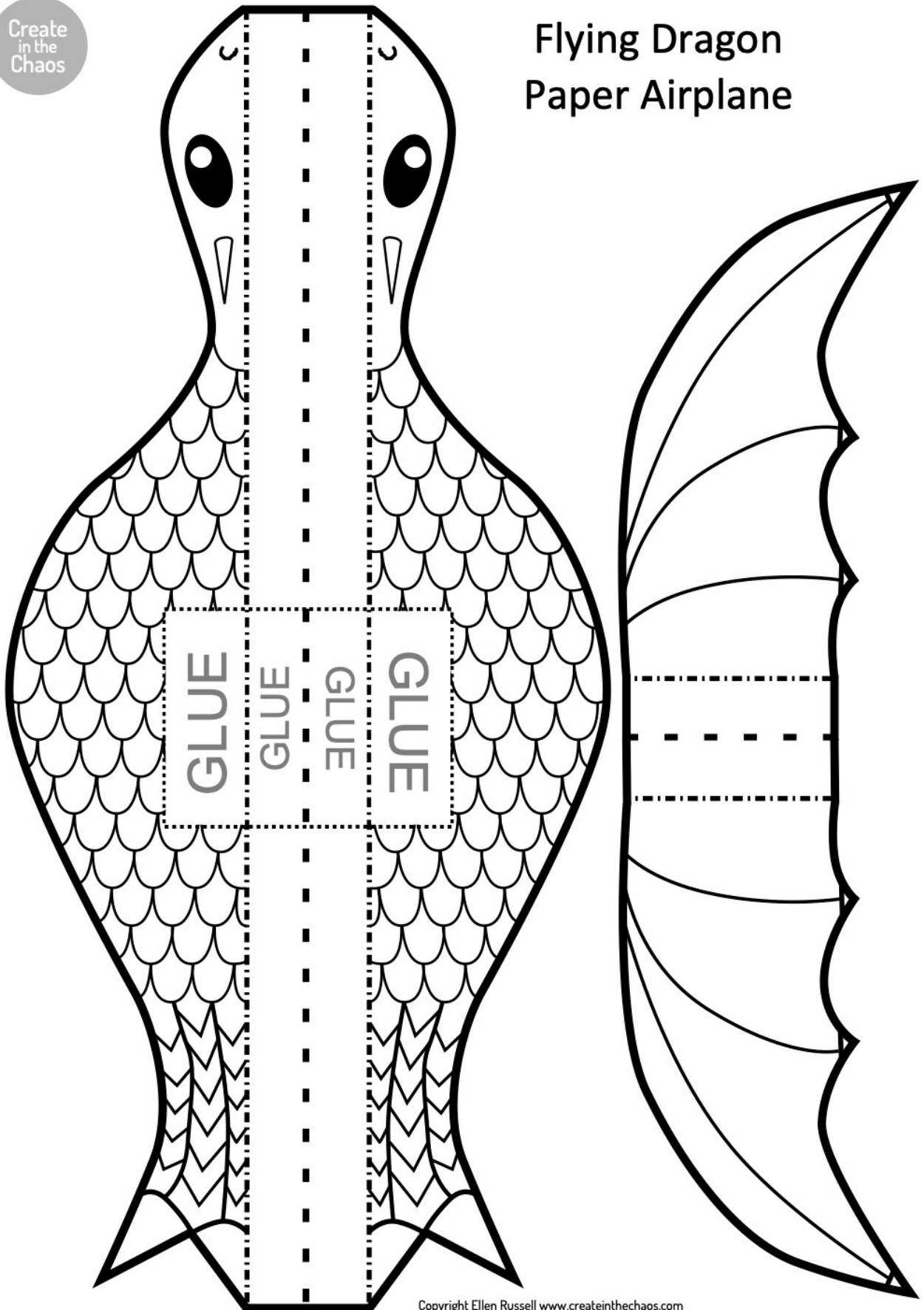
1. Cut out the dragon and its wings once they're colored in
2. Fold the dragon and wings in half using the dotted line in the very center
3. Then, fold the two sides of the dragon and the wings down using the two outer dotted lines
4. Then add glue or tape on the surfaces of the dragon that say "GLUE" and attach the wings
5. Tape the front and rear tip of the dragon to keep the center crease shut
6. Let it fly!

## DISCUSSION TOPIC:

**At the very end of Youtheatre's *Jeremy Thatcher, Dragon Hatcher*, in order to ensure her survival, Jeremy had to let Tiamat go. Have you ever had to let something you loved go? Maybe its a pet you couldn't take care of, a toy you don't play with anymore, or a friend who had to move away? Are you glad you let that those things go?**



# Flying Dragon Paper Airplane



# ACTIVITY #2:

## SHADOWBOX THEATRE

**Good theatre can be done just about anywhere! In this activity, best suited for 6th to 12th graders, students will build their own shadowbox and create theatre using light obstruction and shadow displacement.**



Materials needed:

Puppets:

- Dragon puppet print out (next page)
- Scissors
- Tape
- Pencil

Shadowbox Theatre:

- Cereal box
- Thin white paper or wax paper
- Desk lamp or flashlight

Making shadow puppets with your hands has been a pastime since the earliest of times as humans sat around an open fire. Let's dress it up a bit by designing a small theater and paper shadow puppets!

To make the paper shadow puppets: cut out one or both of the dragon silhouettes on the next page, then tape the back to a pencil. This way you can prop up the puppets without your hand being in view.

To create a shadowbox theatre to accompany you puppets, follow the following instructions:

1. Tape the ends of the cereal box up well so that it's sturdy and closed.
2. Then trace about 1 - 1 1/2 inches away from the edges of the large faces of the box to create a large rectangle. Do this on both sides. These are your marking lines.
3. Next, using scissors or a utility knife, cut out the large rectangles you just drew
4. Tape your wax paper over the hole on one side only. That side with the paper faces your audience.
5. Shine the your light through the opposite side of the box: and you have a theatre!

### DISCUSSION TOPIC:

**In every classic story involving dragons, the dragon is a ferocious beast which must be slain to get the girl and save the kingdom. But in Youtheatre's *Jeremy Thatcher*, the dragon is friendly and helpless. What other stories (books, movies, plays, etc.) can you name that flip the narrative between who is the hero and who is the villain?**





# POP QUIZ:

## Test Your Memory



See how much you remember from the performance of **JEREMY THATCHER, DRAGON HATCHER** with this brief quiz on the play, the plot and characters.

1. What is the prize for Jeremy's school drawing contest?
  - a. No homework for a week
  - b. Brand new colored pencils
  - c. \$100 cash
  - d. To paint a school mural
2. What is Freddie, the school bully's, nickname?
  - a. Freddie the Frog Killer
  - b. Sticky Fingers Fred
  - c. Freddie the Freak
  - d. The Dodgeball King
3. Why did Elives give Jeremy the dragon egg?
  - a. He wanted to get rid of it
  - b. It *chose* Jeremy
  - c. It matched Jeremy's eyes
  - d. He wanted Jeremy to be his successor
4. Where does Jeremy need to take the egg to hatch it?
  - a. A very warm place, like an oven
  - b. Under the light of a full moon
  - c. The bed of a creek
  - d. The top of the closest mountain
5. Dr. Thatcher is a pediatrician: true or false?
  - a. True
  - b. False
6. How do Jeremy and Tiamat communicate?
  - a. Jeremy learns "dragonese"
  - b. Tiamat draws what she wants
  - c. They send each other their thoughts
  - d. They cannot communicate
7. What book does Miss Priest give Jeremy?
  - a. *How to Train Your Dragon* by Cressida Cowell
  - b. *Dragonology* by Dr. Ernest Drake
  - c. *Dracopedia Field Guide* by William O'Connor
  - d. *On the Nature (and Disappearance) of Dragons* by S.H. Elives
8. Who comes over to the Thatcher's for dinner?
  - a. The Huttons
  - b. The mayor's family
  - c. Dr. Thatcher's colleagues
  - d. Spec's family
9. When does the ritual to send Tiamat home take place?
  - a. A full moon
  - b. Midsummer's Night
  - c. The Summer Solstice
  - d. A year after her hatching
10. What does Tiamat leave behind for Jeremy?
  - a. A diamond tear
  - b. One of her fangs
  - c. A piece of her shell
  - d. Another dragon egg

## Answer Key

Q1: d: To paint a school mural Q2: a: Freddie the Frog Killer Q3: b: It chose Jeremy Q4: b: Under the light of a full moon. Q5: b: False Q6: c: They send each other their thoughts Q7: d: On the Nature (and Disappearance) of Dragons by S.H. Elives Q8: a: The Huttons Q9: b: Midsummer's Night Q10: a: A diamond tear

# COMING SOON...

## 2023 SUMMER THEATRE CAMPS!

Fort Wayne  
**youtheatre**  
To enroll,  
visit [FortWayneYoutheatre.org](http://FortWayneYoutheatre.org)



**2023:  
A SUMMER  
OF DRAMA!**  
(THE FUN KIND!)



# Suggested Reading...

**Elementary:** *How to Train Your Dragon* by Cressida Cowell, *Dragons Love Tacos* by Adam Rubin, and *Dragon Masters: Rise of the Earth Dragon* by Tracey West.

**Middle School:** *The Hobbit* by J.R.R. Tolkien, *Dragons in a Bag* by Zetta Elliot, and *The Dragon Warrior* by Katie Zhao.

**High School:** *Dracopedia The Great Dragons: An Artist's Field Guide and Drawing Journal* by William O'Connor, *Eragon* by Christopher Paolini, and *Dragons, Gods & Spirits from Chinese Mythology* by Tao Tao Liu Sanders.



# LANGUAGE ARTS

## STANDARDS

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Most Youtheatre productions are literature-based and on the recommended reading list of the Library of Congress.

Language Arts Standard: Perceive, identify, describe and analyze the distinguishing characteristics of form, structure and style of story.

- Retell story identifying plot, theme, characters, and setting.
- Recall story plot utilizing chronological order.

Language Arts Standard: Evaluate Theatre/Literary work based on critical perception and analysis.

- Share perception of theatre experience in the area of voice, movement, mood and motivation.
- Make suggestions for alternative endings.
- Analyze and critique story and performance through creative writing.
- Create a similar story through creative writing.

Language Arts Standard: Use Theatre /Literary work to develop affective areas of self-concept, problem solving and interpersonal skills.

- React to feelings of self and others within a production.
- Identify conflict within story as it relates to self and others.
- Compare and contrast problems and resolutions found in different stories and real life situations.
- Express personal attitudes, values, and belief systems as it relates to theatre piece.
- Interact freely in conversations, class discussions and dramatic activities.
- Contribute to the solving of problems through dramatization/improvisation.

Language Arts Standard: Examine Theatre /Literary work in a historical and multicultural context.

- Identify similarities and differences between characters from diverse cultures depicted.
- Identify historical differences/figures in different time frames depicted in story.
- Identify significance of historical aspects in story.

Exploring Aesthetics: A Philosophical Basis for Life!

- Attending live theatre helps children value its importance to the community and helps develop a lifelong commitment and love of Theatre and Literature. Students experience aesthetic growth through appreciation of Theatre.
- Students discover through experience that making art is an essential human activity. It requires collaboration, and enhances creative thinking.

