

Fort Wayne
youtheatre
EDUCATION GUIDE



USING THIS GUIDE

This study guide is intended to be used before and after watching the show to help students explore and deepen their understanding of the play. Here's how you can use it in your classroom:

Meet the Characters - Teachers can show their students this page before the show to become familiar with the actors and their roles in the play. They can also refer to this page after the play to remind them who the characters were.

Class Discussion Questions - A list of questions created to encourage class discussions and/or reflections about themes and topics in the play. These questions are divided into pre-and post-show.

Pre/Post Show Activities - Activities teachers can do with their classes before and after seeing the show. Each activity has a description, rationale, list of objectives, and supplies list.

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ABOUT: US



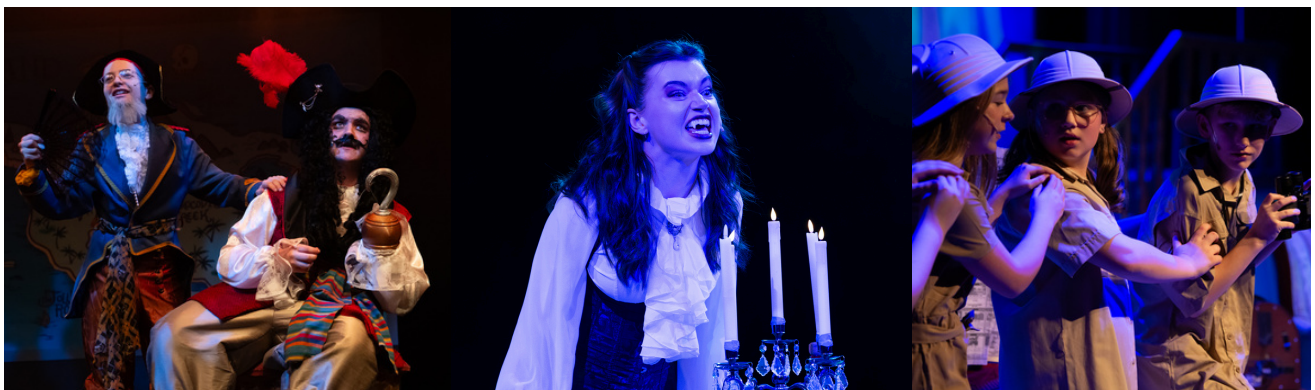
Did you know Fort Wayne Youth Theatre is the fifth oldest children's theatre in the country? Since 1934, we've been on a mission to educate, engage, and entertain through the power of live theatre.

It all started when the Old Fort Players (now Civic Theatre) imagined a place where children participated in theatre to develop poise, self-confidence, and an ability to express themselves creatively. Thus, the "Children's Theatre" was born! The very first class had 40 students – paying just \$1 for 8 weeks of lessons! Their first show, *The Steadfast Tin Soldier*, featured 75 young actors performing for audiences at the Majestic Theatre. Tickets were only 10¢ for kids and 25¢ for adults!

In 1978, Broadway actor Harvey Cocks took the lead as Executive Director, inspiring young performers for more than 40 years. In 1984, the Youth Theatre began its independent journey. Over the decades, Youth Theatre moved to different homes across the city before finding its place at Park Lake Professional Center in 2025. Today, Youth Theatre is guided by Executive Director Heather Closson, Artistic Director Christopher J. Murphy, and supported by Education Coordinator Yaro Carpenter, Creative Programming Intern Em Humbarger, and a team of amazing local artists.

Youth Theatre isn't just about what happens on stage—we take theatre into the community, too! Our touring troupe, Youth Theatre-On-The-Go, brings stories to schools, libraries, hospitals, and community centers. In 2018, our Young Heroes of Conscience series, which has celebrated inspiring figures like Anne Frank, Ruby Bridges, and Harriet Tubman, won the Mayor's Arts Award.

For over 90 years, countless youth have discovered their voices, made lifelong friends, and experienced the joy of storytelling. And the story is still being written – by the young artists of today.



ELEMENTS OF A PRODUCTION

Read below to learn about the key elements that make up a theatre 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?

MAKEUP

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 performer's 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?

BEHIND THE SCENES

Learn more about the guest Director of *Grimm in 60*.

Jim Matusik

Originally from Michigan, Jim Matusik has been involved in community theatre for most of his adult life, both onstage and behind the scenes. He received the Fort Wayne Civic Theatre's Anthony Award for acting, has earned multiple acting awards from Arena Dinner Theatre, and was nominated for the Irene Ryan Acting Scholarship through the American College Theatre Festival. *Grimm in 60* marks his third consecutive fall production as a director for Fort Wayne Youtheatre, a streak he hopes they haven't started regretting yet.



Elkhorn Episode 203



Robert in *The Play That Goes Wrong*



John Smith in *Caught In The Net*

BEHIND THE SCENES

How old were you when you got started in directing, and what inspired you to start?

My first directing gig came when I was a junior at Michigan Tech University, when I was given the chance to direct a local community theatre production of Neil Simon's *Fools*. I got the opportunity through my college improv class and, despite having very little idea what I was doing at first, I quickly discovered how much I loved shaping the whole story instead of just one character.

What is your favorite show you have ever directed?

I've loved all my babies, but I'd have to say my favorite was Peter Shaffer's *Black Comedy*. The play begins in complete darkness. Then the characters experience a power outage, and the stage suddenly lights up for the audience, even though the characters are supposed to be unable to see. It's clever, physical, ridiculous, and requires a lot of very precise chaos, which is pretty much my wheelhouse.

Did you have a favorite mentor or teacher that taught you?

My first real mentor was Sue Stephens, my acting and improv professor at Michigan Tech. She taught me to listen, trust my instincts, stay flexible, and not panic when things go in an unexpected direction. Those are useful skills in improv, directing, and honestly, life in general.

What does your process look like?

My process is very improv-heavy. I like to give actors room to explore, try things, and discover moments together instead of dictating every move from the beginning. Then we take the best of what we find and shape it into something that feels natural, clear, and repeatable. After all, we do have to perform the same show every night.

If someone wanted to be a director, how should they start?

Start by getting involved any way you can. Act, work backstage, assist another director, or just pick up your phone and start filming stuff. Create whatever you can. Just create. Don't wait until you feel completely ready. Say yes, learn by doing, and remember: even falling flat on your face is still forward progress.

ABOUT: THE PLAY

Take a look below to learn more about the play.

OVERVIEW

Welcome to the wildest “study hall” ever—where Vice Principal Pedant’s test-prep pageant mutates into a student-led, laugh-til-you-snort blitz through the Brothers Grimm. Our motley crew (theater kid, class clown, goth, hype-man athlete, shy human-prop department, and more) hijacks the script and speed-runs Cinderella, Sleeping Beauty, Rumpelstiltskin, Hansel & Gretel, The Frog Prince, and Rapunzel—complete with audience cues, cartoonish mayhem, and birds who moonlight as stylists. The show gleefully pokes fun at the absurdity baked into these classics: eye-pecking “helpers,” princes who fall in love with shoe sizes, step-sisters trimming toes, a hedge that eats entire towns, sleep apnea chic, and a Doordash delivery that solves a centuries-old riddle. It’s a backstage rebellion dressed as a fairy-tale revue.

Grimm in 60 is a meta, big-energy comedy that treats the original plots like the hilarious cautionary PSAs they are, spotlighting every red flag the stories ask us to ignore (“Trust strangers! Eat the house!”). It celebrates the joy of performance while lovingly roasting the logic of the tales we think we know—because sometimes the happiest ending is admitting the stories were ridiculous all along.

AUTHOR MATT LYLE



Originally from East Texas, Matt Lyle is a writer, actor, and director living in Dallas, Texas. Matt’s plays have been produced across the U.S. His plays, *The Boxer*, *Hello Human Female*, *Barbecue Apocalypse* and *Big Scary Animals* all garnered DFW Theater Critics Forum Awards for “Outstanding New Play” and *Barbecue Apocalypse* was nominated for an American Theatre Critics Association Steinberg New Play Award. Matt has been commissioned by Theatre Three, Dallas Theater Center and Audacity Theatre Lab. He is a member of the Dramatist Guild and the Playwright’s Center and was honored as the 2018 Distinguished Alum of the Stephen F. Austin State University School of Theatre. His work is published by Broadway Play Publishing.

HISTORY

The Grimm Brothers

The German brothers Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm collected some of the Western world's most popular stories. They put together a famous book of folktales that has been published in at least 70 languages. The tales include such classics as "Snow White," "Rumpelstiltskin," "Rapunzel," "Cinderella," and "Little Red Riding Hood." Jacob Ludwig Carl Grimm was born on January 4, 1785, in the German village of Hanau. Wilhelm Carl was born in Hanau on February 24, 1786. While in their 20s they began collecting folktales for a friend. The friend wanted to publish a collection of tales. The brothers wrote down tales that they heard storytellers tell out loud. The friend never used the tales, so the Grimms decided to publish them. The Grimms sometimes changed the tales they heard. Sometimes they put their own religious, political, or moral views into the tales. Other times they combined several versions of a story into one.

The first volume of the tales was published in 1812. It was called Children's and Household Tales. Today the collection is commonly known as Grimm's Fairy Tales. The Grimms added to the collection for many years. Eventually it contained more than 200 tales.

Aside from collecting folktales, the Grimm brothers wrote books about the German language. They also worked for the government and as university professors and librarians. Wilhelm Grimm died on December 16, 1859, in Berlin, Germany. Jacob died there on September 20, 1863.



CHARACTERS

Read below to learn about the people in this play.



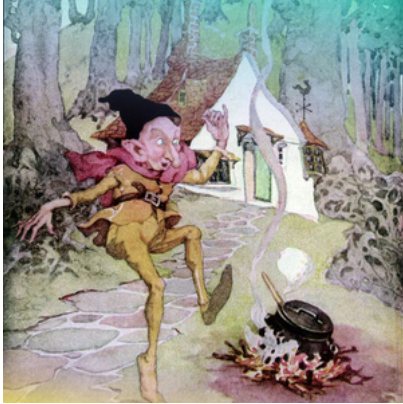
Hansel and Gretel are resourceful siblings who, after being abandoned by their parents in a forest, use their wits to escape a murderous witch living in a gingerbread house.

Sleeping Beauty is a princess cursed by an evil fairy to sleep for a hundred years after pricking her finger on a spindle, only to be awakened by true love's kiss.



Rapunzel Rapunzel is the spirited, artistic Princess who escapes her secluded tower and abusive kidnapper, Mother Gothel, with 70 feet of magical golden hair to explore the world and find her true family.

CHARACTERS



Rumpelstiltskin is a malicious, magical imp from a Brothers Grimm fairy tale who spins straw into gold for a miller's daughter in exchange for her firstborn child, only to lose the bargain when she discovers his secret name.

The Frog Prince is about a spoiled princess who, after breaking a promise to a frog that retrieved her golden ball, is forced to house him, eventually breaking a witch's curse through her action of kissing him to transform him back into a handsome prince.



Cinderella is a kind-hearted and resilient young woman who, despite being reduced to servitude by her wicked stepfamily, rises above her circumstances with the help of her fairy godmother to marry a prince and live happily ever after.

DISCUSSION AND STUDY QUESTIONS

This activity is best suited for grades 1-6

Pre-Show Discussion:

1. What is your favorite fairy tale? Why?
2. What fairy tale do you think is the most famous?
3. Have you ever been somewhere that felt like it was straight out of a fairy tale?
4. Have you ever heard of the Grimm Brothers?
5. Who do you think is the worst villain in a story you've ever heard of? Why?

Post show discussion:

6. Who was your favorite character in the play? Why?
7. Did anything happen you were not expecting at all?
8. Were you surprised the Grimm Brothers wrote any of the stories? Who did you think wrote the story?
9. Why do you think people add a villain?
10. What character would you have liked to be if you were in the play?

DISCUSSION AND STUDY QUESTIONS

This activity is best suited for grades 7-12.

Pre show discussion:

1. Morality and Virtue: Are "good" characters truly good, or just lucky? How is goodness rewarded, and wickedness punished, in tales like *Cinderella* or *Snow White*?

2. Characters and Survival: In many tales, younger siblings or underdogs gain power. What are the common strategies for survival and success used by heroes in the tales?

3. Gender Roles: How are men and women portrayed differently in these stories? Consider the roles of kings, stepmothers, witches, and princesses.

4. The Role of Magic: Is magic in these stories a force for good, or is it neutral? How do the characters interact with magical objects or creatures? (Think magic mirror)

Post show discussion:

5. Adaptation and Change: Compare a Grimm tale (like Rapunzel or Cinderella) with a modern version (such as a Disney film). What details were changed, and why?

6. Fractured Fairy Tales: What happens when you change the setting of a classic tale to the modern day? Rewrite the story of The Elves and the Shoemaker in a modern context.

REVIEW

All ages can use this template to write a review of the performance!

Title: _____

Director: _____

Genre of show:

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| ☐ Abstract | ☐ Historical |
| ☐ Adventure | ☐ Musical |
| ☐ Autobiographical | ☐ Puppetry |
| ☐ Comedy | ☐ Tragedy |
| ☐ Drama | ☐ Other |
| ☐ Fairytale | |

Plot: Give a short summary of the show.

Setting: Where was the show set? Did it help tell the story?

REVIEW

Characters: What character/s stood out to you? Why?

Review: What parts did you like? Were there any you didn't?

My Rating:



WEAVE LIKE RUMPELSTILTSKIN

Best suited for Grades 2 and up.

Things You'll Need:

- Marking pen
- Scissors
- Various colors of yarn

- Empty cardboard box
- Round cup



Cut out a coffee cup sized cardboard circle. Label numbers 1-8 and cut small notches at each number.



Poke a hole in the middle of the circle with a pen.



Tie 7 pieces of yard together at one end, measuring 25 inches long.



Thread the knot through the center hole.



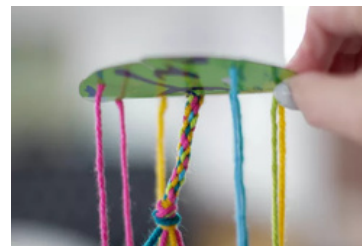
Place one piece of thread in each notch leaving one empty.



Take the thread 3 notches from the empty space, and place in the empty space. Move thread 3 to space 8.



Count three notches from the new empty notch. Place thread 6 into empty space 3.



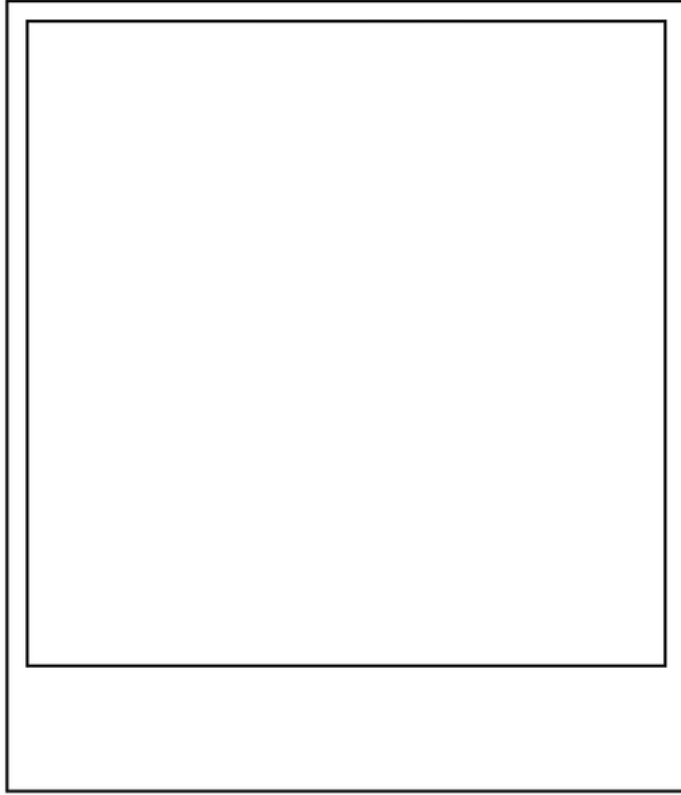
Continue counting three notches from the newly formed empty notch and placing that third thread into the empty notch.



Every once in awhile you'll need to pull down on the knot underneath the cardboard.

WRITING

Create your own Fairy Tale and draw a leading character. Best suited for Grades 2-5.



MORAL OF THE STORY

The lesson(s) characters learned. Best suited for Grades 2-8.

Title of the story

Important Characters

What is the moral of the story?

How can you include this moral in your everyday life?

MATCH THE NAME

Best suited for grades 1-5.

Use the descriptions below to identify each of these characters from Grimm in 60.

1) Sleeping Beauty

2) Cinderella

3) Hansel & Gretel

4) The Frog Prince

5) Rapunzel

6) Rumpelstiltskin

A. A 4,000 year old stalker who helps women on the condition they give him their first born child.

B. A woman who literally naps through an entire plot and is still the star.

C. A girl who has never had a significant interaction with anyone except her abductor.

D. A formerly vain human, who still thinks he's the most beautiful creature in the grove.

E. A girl who ruins her step-sister's plan, by having better feet for the job.

F. They achieved free lodging by eating public property.

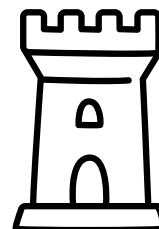
Answer key

A) 6. B) 6. C) 5. D) 4. E) 2. F) 3.

RAPUNZEL MAD LIBS

Fill in the word blank prompts. Best suited for grades 1-6.

Once upon a time princess _____ lived in a very very tall _____ hidden
girl's name type of building
in a Secret _____ Forest. She had long _____ hair that she braided everyday so
adjective color
she would not trip on it. One day, the princess was singing a song called
" _____ " when prince _____ heard her. He rode toward the
name of song personality trait
music on his gallant _____. After traveling for _____ hours the prince found the lovely
animal number
princess singing through the window. The prince shouted up, "Beautiful princess let down
your hair! I shall _____ up and save you from this prison!" The princess yelled back,
verb
" _____ ! I'm not trapped, I live here with my _____ ! The front door is
exclamation noun
unlocked. Would you like to join me for dinner? I'm making _____ !" The prince
food
felt _____ by her generosity. He _____ inside where the princess
emotion verb
showed him her favorite art, books, and her famous _____. They ate dinner, and
noun
then played _____ together. The prince and princess became _____
game adjective
friends, and they lived _____ ever after.
adjective



TRUE OR FALSE

Who is the author of these famous fairy tales? Best suited for grades 1-5.

Write "T" for true if the Brothers Grimm are the authors of the story, and "F" for false if they are not!

1. _____ Rumpelstiltskin

8. _____ The Brave Little Tailor

2. _____ The Little Match Girl

9. _____ Rapunzel

3. _____ The Frog Prince

10. _____ Snow White and the
Seven Dwarfs

4. _____ Cinderella

11. _____ Beauty and the Beast

5. _____ The Little Mermaid

12. _____ Little Red Riding Hood

6. _____ The Princess and the Pea

13. _____ The Fisherman and His
Wife

7. _____ Ali Baba and the Forty
Thieves

Answer key:

1) T. 2) F. 3) T. 4) T. 5) F. 6) F. 7) F. 8) T. 9) T. 10) T. 11) F. 12) T. 13) T.

MAP THE STORY OF THE PLAY

Best suited for grades 1-5.

Beginning What happens at the beginning? Who are the main characters? Where is it set? How are the characters feeling?	
Build up What happens next? How does the story hint at a problem? How are the characters feeling?	
Problem What is the problem within the story? How are the characters feeling?	
Resolution How is the problem resolved/sorted out? How are the characters feeling?	
Ending How does the story end? Is there a plot twist? Does it end happily? How are the characters feeling?	

YOUR TURN!

Best suited for grades 1-12.

WHAT IF?

Ask groups to choose a fairytale and then to take a few minutes to compile a number of "What if?" questions, such as:

1. What if... Jack's Mom climbed the beanstalk?
2. What if... Rapunzel cut off her hair?
3. What if... the Ugly Duckling turned out to be a turkey?

The groups should choose their favorite question from the list (or combine one or two of them) and prepare a short skit to perform to the other groups.

Director's Tips:

You can ask students to bring a fairytale up to date.

Who would the Three Bears be if the story was transposed to a modern setting?

What contemporary object or device could you use to represent Jack's beanstalk?

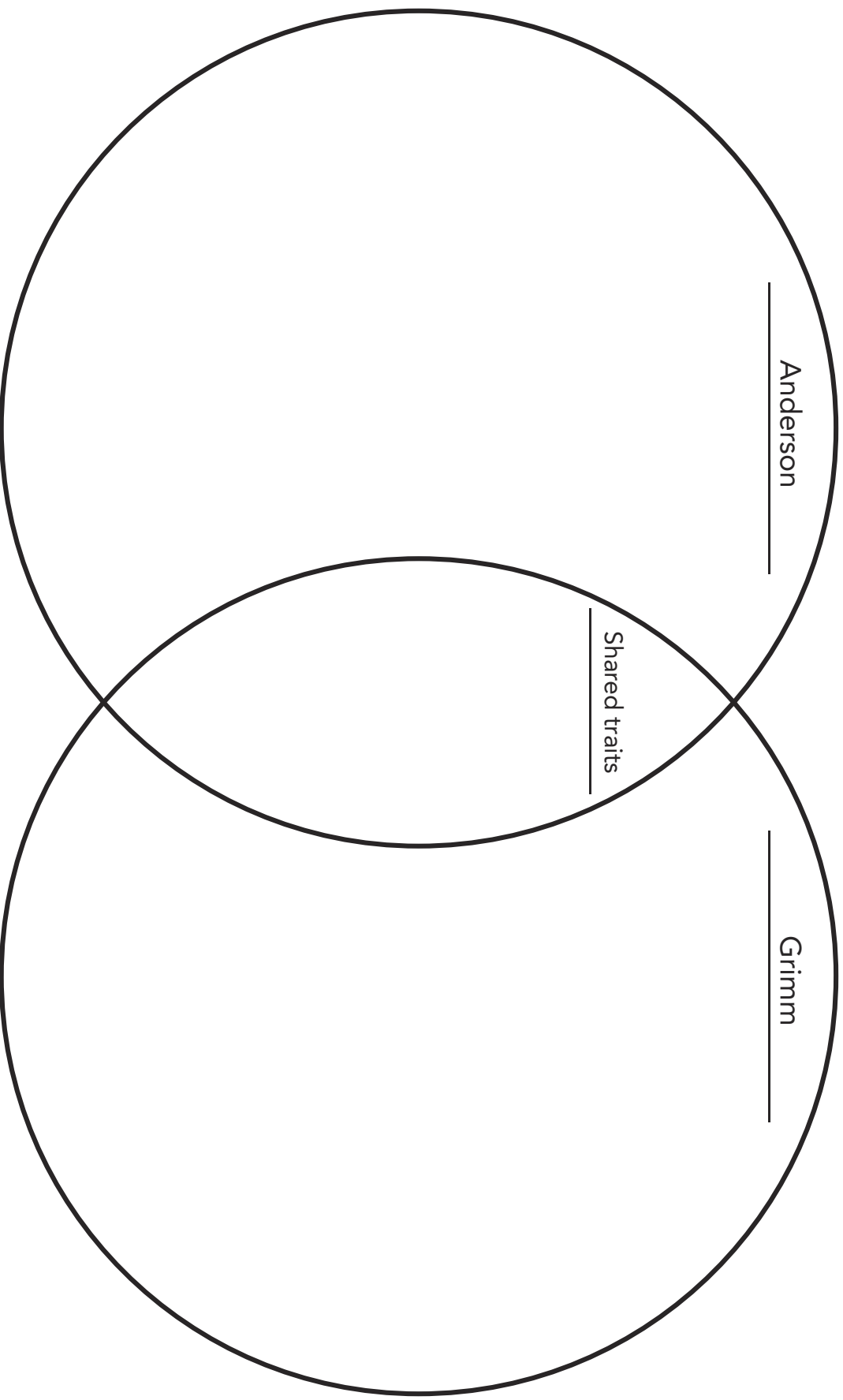
Give students free rein to have fun with the stories!



Venn Diagram

Compare the fairy tales of the Brothers Grimm with those of Hans Christian Andersen.

Best suited for 3-5 grade





GET INVOLVED

Fort Wayne Youtheatre
ACADEMY
of Performing Arts

ACTING | DANCE | VOICE
TECH THEATRE | PRIVATE LESSONS

**Learn More by visiting fwyt.org
or by scanning the QR code below!**



Write us a letter!

We'd love to know what you thought of the show, what other shows you'd love to see us perform, or any questions you have for our staff, cast, or crew about Youtheatre!

Send correspondence to:
Fort Wayne Youtheatre
2426 Lake Ave.
Fort Wayne, IN 46805

FURTHER RESOURCES

Want to dive even deeper? Here are some additional resources that connect to the themes of this production!

[Lesson Planning Tips and Ideas](#)

[From the Brothers Grimm: A Teacher's Guide](#)

[About the Brothers Grimm](#)

[TPT Resources](#)

[FREE Book PDF](#)

Suggested Reading

Elementary:

- Grimm's Fairy Tales, Retold by Eli Woollard
- The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales by Jon Scieszka
- The Paper Bag Princess by Robert Munsch

Middle:

- Grimm's Fairy Tales - Kid Classics by Jacob Grimm
- A Tale Dark and Grimm by Adam Gidwitz
- In a Glass Grimmly by Adam Gidwitz

High:

- Grimm's Fairytales by Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm
- The Hard Facts of the Grimms' Fairy Tales by Maria Tatar
- Who Were the Brother's Grimm? by Avery Reed



Language Arts

STANDARDS

Most Youth theatre 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.

