

Fort Wayne  
**youth**eatre  
EDUCATION GUIDE



THE  
*First Day*  
OF  
*School,*  
*Again.*



## 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:

**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.

### IN THE GUIDE

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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 director of *The First Day Of School, Again!*



## THOM GREVING



Thom Greving is thrilled to be working with the Fort Wayne Youtheatre! He is a proud Ball State alum, where he received his BFA in Musical Theatre. In 2024, he opened for late Broadway actor Gavin Creel at *The Cabaret* in Indianapolis, and devised *To Life... And All That Jazz* (under the direction of Sutton Foster, Megan McGinnis, and Michael Rafter), which he performed at Joe's Pub NYC. Local audiences may have also seen him in *The Curious Incident... (Christopher x2)*, *Something Rotten! (Shakespeare)*, and *The SpongeBob Musical (Squidward)*. When not performing, he enjoys working as an acting/audition coach and director/choreographer! [grevingthom.com](http://grevingthom.com)

# BEHIND THE SCENES

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

My first time in any sort of directing role was my Junior year of High School, when I got the chance to assist with my former Middle School's Fall Musical! It was an opportunity that I was lucky to be presented with, and made me realize how much I love working with actors!

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

Too many to count! But one of them is one of my BSU professors, Michael Rafter, whose advice plays in my head in any creative endeavor. "Don't put a hat on a hat".

**What does your process look like?**

Laying all the framework efficiently, so we can take time mining and playing with all of the small moments that make the piece special!

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

Study your own directors. Watch how they work. The best way to learn at first is by observing!



Thom as William Shakespeare  
in *Something Rotten!*,  
Fort Wayne Civic Theatre (2023).



Thom as Christopher Boone in  
*The Curious Incident of the Dog in  
the Night-Time*,  
Ball State University (2022).



Thom as Christopher Boone in  
*The Curious Incident of the Dog  
in the Night-Time*,  
Ball State University (2022).

# ABOUT: THE PLAYWRIGHT

Now that you know the director, learn about the writer, Jeremy Dobrish!



Jeremy Dobrish is a stage director, playwright, artistic leader, and teacher whose main focus has been developing and directing new plays and musicals.

As a New York City based director, Jeremy has directed at Second Stage, MCC, Amas, WPA, Joe's Pub, The Westside Arts, The Promenade, The Variety Arts, The Century, Actor's Playhouse, Soho Playhouse, Zipper, etc. His productions have received several Lortel and Drama Desk nominations, and the New York Times has described his directing as "Adroit, Canny, Comic, Funny, Gleeful, Ingenious, and at Double Espresso Speed".

Jeremy has directed at all of the major New York festivals, including NYMF, SPF and the Fringe, where his productions have received multiple festival awards including, most recently, the NYMF award for exceptional direction. Regionally, Jeremy has directed at The Old Globe, Barrington Stage, North Shore, The O'Neill, New York Stage And Film, Goodspeed and The Village Theatre.

His adaptation of *Curious George* and his productions of *The Teacher From The Black Lagoon*, *Virtually Me* and *Paul Revere* tour the country with Theatreworks USA.

Jeremy is a seven time published playwright whose plays have been described by the New York Times as "Delightfully Theatrical, A Gleeful Romp, and Stylishly Daffy". His plays have been produced across the country, and in New York most notably at the Atlantic and Vineyard theatres.

Jeremy began his career as the founder and Artistic Director of the aesthetically innovative adobe theatre company which he ran for thirteen years, and where he directed and/or produced over twenty productions. adobe moved several shows Off-Broadway and was called "One of the canniest theatre companies anywhere in town" by the New York Times who went on to conclude that adobe's work "often seems as crisp as a freshly ironed shirt" due to "acting based on a mathematical precision of detail and a restrained stagecraft."

Since adobe, Jeremy has served as an Artistic Associate at Second Stage, and recently he co-founded Midtown Direct Rep, a theatre company in Maplewood, NJ, where he lives, dedicated to bringing the Broadway talents of his community to his community.

As a teacher, Jeremy currently serves on the faculty of NYU. He has taught playwriting, directing and acting at Juilliard, The National Theatre Institute, the New York Film Academy, Fordham, Washington Irving High School, and in Prague through Western Michigan University. Jeremy is a member of the Dramatists Guild and SDC. He is represented by Paradigm.

# ABOUT: THE STORY

What's a time loop? Read below to find out!

## What is a Time Loop?

A time loop happens when a character wakes up at the same time and place every day, no matter what they did the day before.

1. The Loop: Usually lasts for one day, but can be shorter or longer.
2. The Reset: When the time ends (like midnight or upon falling asleep), the day resets, and everything starts over as if for the first time.
3. The Memory: Often, only one person remembers the previous loops, while everyone else around them does not.

## Where Have You Seen Them?

Time loops are popular in movies, books, and TV shows:

1. Groundhog Day (1993): The classic movie where a man is stuck reliving the same day in a small town.
2. The First Last Day: A book about a girl who wishes the last day of summer would last forever—and it does!
3. Video Games: Many games use this idea where you have to play the same level over and over, learning new skills each time until you win.

## Why Do Characters Get Stuck?

In stories, loops happen for different reasons:

1. Magical Mistakes: A character might use a spell or a special item that breaks time.
2. Mysterious Curses: A curse forces them to learn a lesson or change their behavior before they can move on.
3. Scientific Glitch: A science experiment gone wrong might trap them in a "closed timelike curve".

## What Would You Do?

If you were stuck in a time loop, you could do anything you wanted without permanent consequences!

1. You could eat nothing but dessert.
2. You could learn a new talent, like playing the piano or speaking a new language, because you have all the time in the world.
3. You could learn from your mistakes to make the day perfect.

## Is it Real?

No, humans can't really get stuck in a time loop. While scientists know that time can pass differently in space (like near a black hole), and that we are all traveling forward in time, repeating the same day is just for stories

# SOCIAL STUDIES

## The First Day Of School

The first day of school is often a chaotic mix of excitement and "first-day jitters" that can feel pretty scary! From navigating new teachers and strict rules to the fear of tripping in front of everyone or not finding your classroom, it is normal to feel nervous.

### Common First-Day Fears:

1. The Unknown: Meeting new teachers, navigating new classrooms, and making new friends.
2. The Mix-ups: Getting lost, losing your lunch, or forgetting your schedule.
3. Awkward Moments: Mispronouncing your name or tripping in front of classmates.
4. Separation Anxiety: Feeling sad or anxious when saying goodbye to parents, especially in new situations.
5. Bullying: Worrying about mean behavior from other students.

### Why the First Day Can Feel "Horrible"

Even in the best schools, the first day is a massive adjustment from summer, with many children feeling overwhelmed by new routines. Teachers often spend the day going over endless rules about using the restroom or raising your hand, which can feel boring or stressful. Additionally, those nerves might be shared with parents who are also anxious about leaving you.

### How to Make it Better

1. Talk about your worries: Letting your parents or teacher know what you are scared of can make it easier.
2. Prepare ahead: Picking out clothes and packing your backpack the night before can reduce morning chaos.
3. Say goodbye: Having a special, quick goodbye routine with your parents can make leaving easier.

**Remember it's temporary:** Most of these "new" worries and "horrors" go away after the first few days once you get used to the new routine.



# DISCUSSION AND STUDY QUESTIONS

This activity is best suited for grades 1-6

## Pre-Show Discussion:

1. What can make the first day feel exciting?
2. What can make the first day feel scary?
3. Déjà vu the strange, sudden feeling that a new experience or situation has happened before, even though you know it hasn't; have you ever felt déjà vu?
4. Would repeating the same day be fun or frustrating?
5. What advice would you give someone that is nervous for their first day?

## Post show discussion:

1. What do you think Megan learned by repeating the same day?
2. Which character would you want to be friends with? Why?
3. What would you do if you were in Megan's shoes?
4. What makes a good friend?
5. If someone new comes to your school, how can you help them feel more welcomed?

# DISCUSSION AND STUDY QUESTIONS

This activity is best suited for grades 7-12.

## Pre-Show Discussion:

1. What is déjà vu? Have you ever felt it?
2. What pressures do students feel on the first day? Did you experience any?
3. What does it mean to “live in the moment”?
4. How do anxiety and overthinking affect decision making?
5. Think of a day you made a decision the regret; would you go back and make a different one?

## Post show discussion:

1. Which moment in the play felt the most relatable?
2. How did Megan’s relationships change through the play?
3. What would you do differently in Megan’s shoes?
4. How did Megan make the loop end? Was there a lesson to be learned?
5. Do you think people should have second chances?

# REVIEW

Using the template below, write a review after the play!

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Director: \_\_\_\_\_

## Genre (check all that apply)

- ☐ Abstract
- ☐ Adventure
- ☐ Autobiographical
- ☐ Comedy
- ☐ Drama

- ☐ Fairytale
- ☐ Historical
- ☐ Musical
- ☐ Puppetry
- ☐ Tragedy
- ☐ Other

## Plot

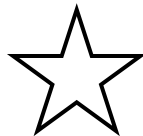
## Setting

# REVIEW

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

My Review

My Rating



# SCIENCE EXPERIMENT

This activity is best suited for grades 1-5.

## How to Make a Water Clock

Practice time related STEM knowledge with this experiment.

### Supplies you will need-

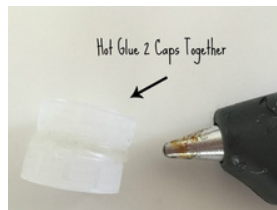
- 2 water bottles
- Coffee straw/stirrer
- Sharpie marker
- Timer

Ask an adult!

- Hot glue gun
- Drill



1. Empty the water bottles and keep the lids. Using a hot glue gun, glue the tops of the two lids together.



2. Find a drill bit to match the width of your straw and drill two holes through the two caps.



3. Cut the straw in half and place them through the holes with one long and one short facing each side. Trim off the extra. And hot glue around the edges of the straw to secure them in place.



4. Fill one bottle with water and screw the lids back on to both bottles.



5. Flip the bottle over and time how long it takes the water to flow from one bottle to the other. Mark with a line at each minute on both bottles.

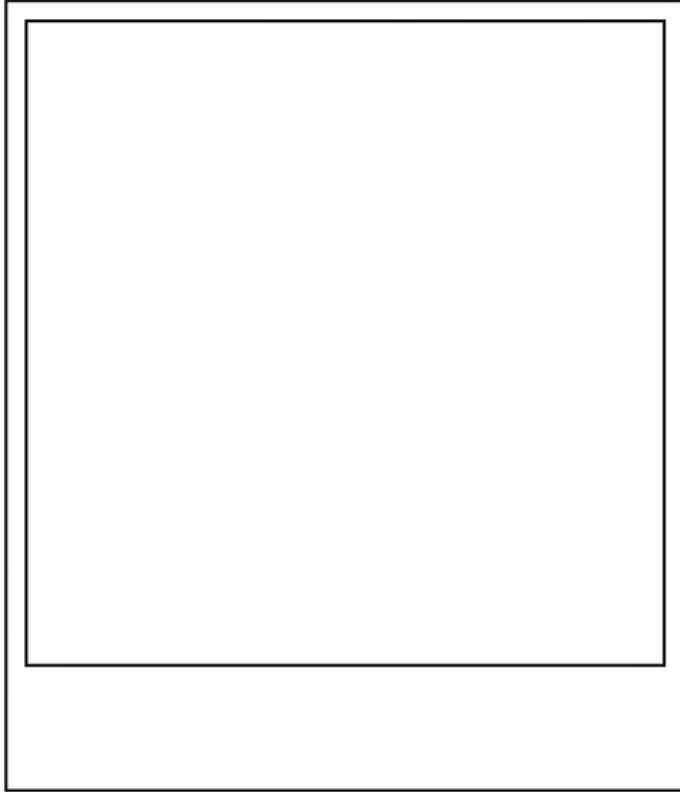


6. The water clock can be used as a regular timer for games or activities.



# WRITING

Write about a day you wish you could live over and over again.



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# YOUR TURN!

Best suited for 1-5 grade.

## Time Travel Improv Game

Actors perform a scene that jumps between different time periods—past, future, or just minutes apart—based on a host's commands, while keeping the characters and storyline connected. It challenges actors to build strong, consistent characters and maintain continuity while reacting to rapid changes.

### How to Play: Time Travel Improv

**Setup:** Two or three actors start a scene based on a suggestion, establishing clear characters, a setting, and a "what."

**The Time Leap:** A host (or facilitator) calls out a new time period, such as "5 minutes ago," "100 years in the future," or "25 years ago".

**Instant Shift:** The actors must immediately jump to that time, adopting the new era, while keeping the same characters or continuing the immediate storyline.

**Connection:** Even if the time changes drastically, the scene must remain connected to the original, often showing the causes or consequences of the original scene.

**Characters/Tags:** New characters can join to start a new connected scene. In some variations, actors "tag out" to go deeper into a character's history, going 2-3 scenes deep before returning to the original

### Tips for Success

**Embrace the Change:** When the time changes, you must immediately commit to the new reality—do not pause or try to "fix" the scene in the previous time.

**Keep it Connected:** The goal is to see how the past influences the present, or how the future will be affected.

**Strong Choices:** Because the scenes move quickly, make fast, bold choices about who you are in that moment.

# YOUR TURN!

Best suited for ages 6-12 grade

## Living Clock Improv Game

The "Living Clock" is a versatile improv and drama game that challenges actors to use physical storytelling, create strong character moments, and explore a character's daily routine. It is excellent for character development and enhancing physical theater skill

### How to Play: Living Clock

**Set the Stage:** Participants spread out throughout the performance space.

**Call the Time:** A facilitator (or leader) calls out a specific time of day (e.g., "5:45 a.m.", "1:00 p.m.", or "10:30 p.m.").

**Freeze and Mime:** Participants must immediately freeze in a pose, miming an action that a person or character would be doing at that time. Examples include brushing teeth, driving to work, or dancing at a club.

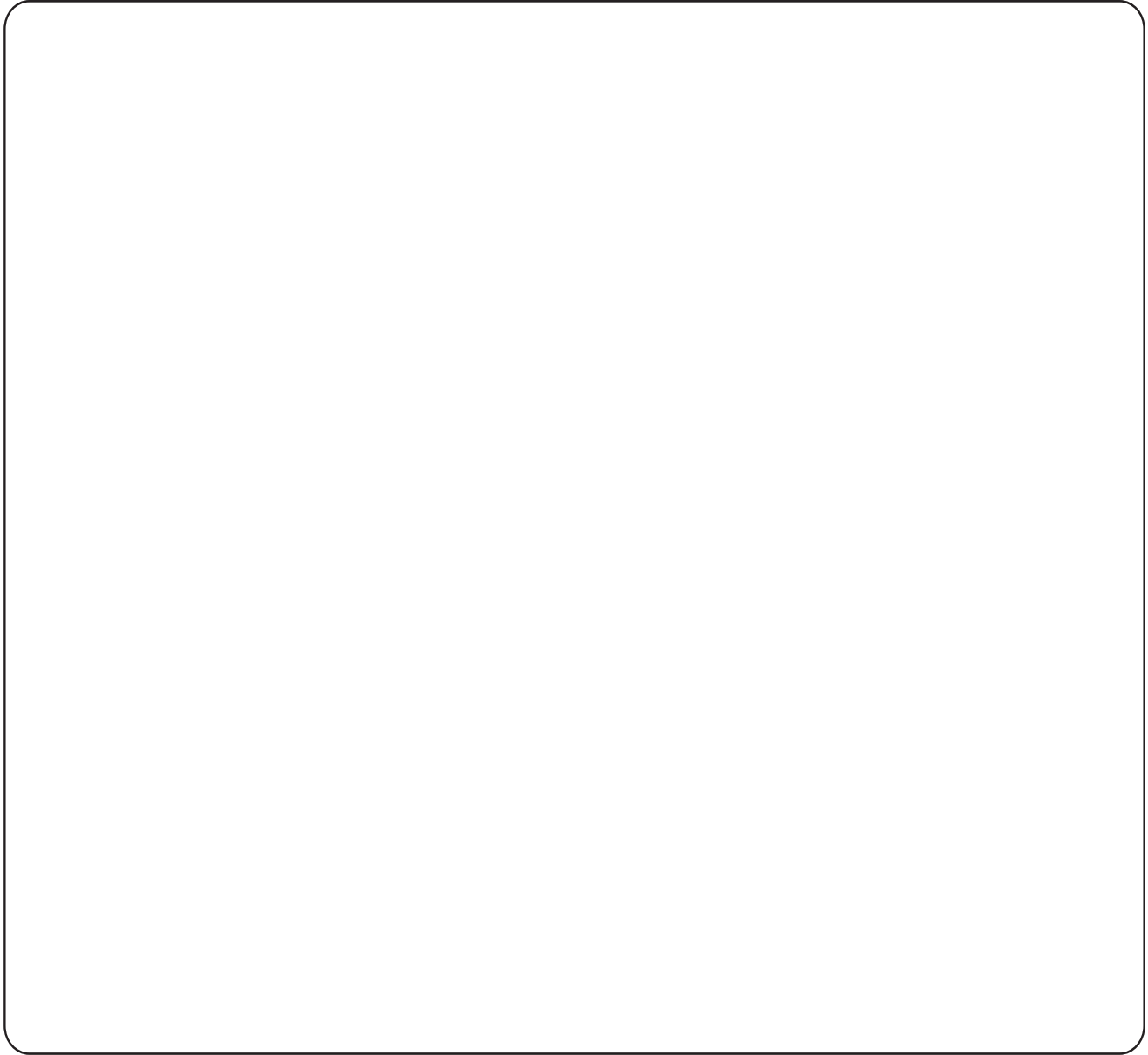
**Animate:** The facilitator walks around and taps a participant on the shoulder, calling their name.

**Voice the Thought:** The tapped participant "animates" for five seconds, moving and talking to express a thought or line of dialogue for their character.

**Repeat:** The process continues, encouraging the group to explore many different times over 24 hours.

# LITERACY

If you could travel through time, when/where would you go? Draw an illustration below!



I would travel to ...

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# GET INVOLVED



ACTING | DANCE | VOICE  
TECH THEATRE | PRIVATE LESSONS

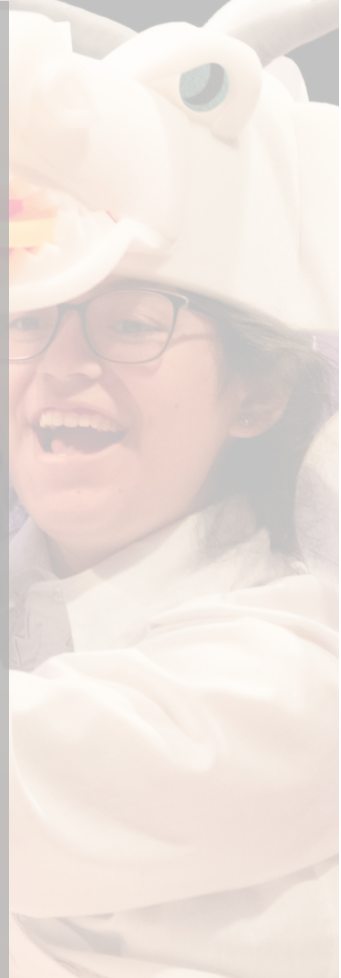
**Learn More by visiting [fwyt.org](http://fwyt.org)  
or by scanning the QR code below!**



## **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!

[Time Loop Book Recommendations For Teens](#)

[PBS Time Travel Worksheet, Lesson Plan, And Video](#)

[Time Loop Cards, Easy, Medium, and Hard](#)

[Free Time Resources](#)

[How To Make A Classroom Time Capsule!](#)

## Suggested Reading

### Elementary:

- First Day Critter Jitters by Jory John
- It's The First Day Of School...Forever! by R.L. Stine
- The Bad Seed by Jory John

### Middle:

- The First Last Day by Dorian Cyrone
- A Wrinkle in Time by Madeleine L'Engle
- Finn and Ezra's Bar Mitzvah Time Loop by Joshua S. Levy

### High:

- When You Reach Me by Rebecca Stead
- The Perks of Being a Wallflower by Stephen Chbosky
- Neverworld Wake by Marisha Pessl



# 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.

