



TEACHER'S GUIDE

2018-2019 Class Acts season supported by  PNC

Aesop Bops!

Friday, February 1, 2019
10:30 AM & 12:30 PM



Welcome to Class Acts at the University of Illinois Springfield! We hope this guide will help you expand on concepts found in this particular performance and incorporate them into your classroom teaching, both before and after the performance. We want students to think of the arts as an integral part of their lives – not just a one-time event.

Before arriving, you can prepare your students by helping them understand the story or by sharing basic information about the art form they are going to see. We also ask you to review the theater etiquette information with your students (found on pages 2-3 of this guide) to help prepare them for attending a live performance.

After the performance you can talk to your students about their experience. Did they enjoy the performance? What did they learn? How was the performance different than what they expected? We hope the information and activities included in this guide will help your students gain a deeper understanding of the performance.

We look forward to seeing you! If you have any questions about these materials or about the performance, please contact me at (217) 206-6150 or azepp2@uis.edu.

Amy Zepp

Audience Development Coordinator



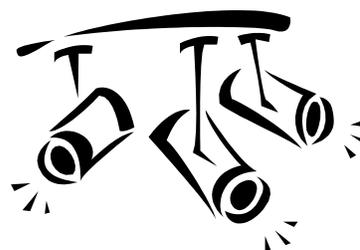
Youth programming in the Class Acts series is supported in part by the Helen Hamilton Performing Arts Endowment for Youth Fund, gifts from Elizabeth and Robert Staley, and a grant from the Illinois Arts Council Agency.



Theater Etiquette

Going to a live theatrical performance is different than watching a movie or TV show – the members of the audience are very important, and the way they behave will affect the performance. Therefore, theaters have their own special rules about behavior.

- **Ask the ushers if you need help with anything** – The people who wear red coats are volunteer ushers, and they want to make sure everyone is able to enjoy the performance. They will guide you to your seat, and they can help you find a restroom. In any emergency situation, the ushers will help guide your class to safety. There may be as many as 1700 people coming to see the performance! Please follow the instructions of the ushers at all times.
- **Turn off and put away cell phones and anything else that can light up or make noise** – These can be very distracting to the performers and your fellow audience members.
- **Do not eat, drink, or chew gum in the auditorium** – Even the quietest chewers and slurpers can be distracting to the performers and to the other people around you. Also, even if you are very careful, food and drinks can sometimes make a mess in the auditorium. We try to keep the auditorium as clean as possible so that it will be just as nice for the next audience.
- **Never throw anything in the auditorium** – This is distracting and dangerous for the performers and people in the audience.
- **Do not put your feet on the back of the seat in front of you**
- **Please do not wear a hat inside the auditorium** – It is difficult for the people behind you to see the stage if you're wearing a hat.
- **Use the restroom before the performance begins** – As soon as your class arrives and is seated in the auditorium, the teacher can arrange visits to the restroom before the performance begins. The ushers will help you find the closest restroom. Of course, if you *must* use the restroom during the performance, please be as quiet as possible about leaving your seat. Once you get to the aisle, an usher will help you find the way.
- **When the lights begin to dim, the performance is beginning** – This tells the audience to stop conversations, get settled in their seats, and focus their attention on the stage. A person will come out and make an announcement before the performance begins. Pay close attention to the announcement because it might include special instructions that you will need to remember.



- **The overture (music at the beginning of the show) is part of the performance** – If the performance has music in it, there might be an opening piece of music called an overture before any actors appear on stage. Give this piece of music the same respect you give the performers by being quiet and attentive while the overture is played.

- **Do not take pictures or recordings during the performance** – The flashes can be distracting to performers, and it is against the law to take pictures or recordings of many performances.



- **Refrain from talking, whispering, and making noise during the performance** – Remember that live performers can see and hear you from the stage. It is very distracting to the performers and the other audience members if you talk during the performance. After all, the audience came to hear the professionals perform!

- **It's ok to react to the performance** – Spontaneous laughter, applause, and gasps of surprise are welcome as part of the special connection between the performers and the audience during a live show. However, shouts, loud comments, and other inappropriate noises are distracting to the actors and your fellow audience members.

- **Clap at the appropriate times** – If you are enjoying the performance, you can let the performers know by clapping for them. During a play or musical, you can clap between scenes (during a blackout) or after songs. During a music concert or dance performance, you can clap after each piece is performed. In a jazz music concert it is ok to clap in the middle of a song when a musician has finished a solo. If a music ensemble plays a piece with several sections, called movements, the audience will usually only clap at the very end of all the movements.

- **The performers will bow when the performance ends** – This is called a curtain call. You should applaud to thank the performers for their hard work, but you should not begin to leave the auditorium until the curtain call is over and the lights become brighter. If you really enjoyed the performance, you are welcome to give a standing ovation while you applaud. This is reserved for performances you feel are *truly outstanding!*

- **Respect the hard work of the performers** – You may not enjoy every performance you see, but I hope you will recognize that each performance requires a tremendous amount of dedication on the part of the performers and those who work backstage. It is polite to keep any negative comments to yourself until you have left the building.



Class Acts and Learning Standards

Attendance at any Class Acts event can help teachers meet **Common Core Standards**. The clearest example can be found in the Standard for Speaking and Listening, #2:

Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

Additionally, in the Common Core Standards for Reading, the definition of the word “text” can be expanded to include non-printed works such as dance, music, theater, and visual arts. This makes the arts an important part of all standards in the Reading category, at every grade level.

Class Acts attendance can also help your students meet elements of the new **Illinois Arts Learning Standards**, which have gone into effect starting with the 2018-2019 school year. These standards reflect best practices and identify what is important for students to know and be able to do in dance, media arts, music, theatre, and visual arts. You can learn more at www.illinoisartslearning.org.



About the Show

The show *Aesop Bops!* is an interactive storytelling performance. You will only see two performers on stage – storyteller David Gonzalez and keyboardist Daniel Kelly. The performance will include several stories in the style of Aesop’s Fables. The activities in this guide will be based on the version of the story of *The Lion and the Mouse* as found in *The McElderry Book of Aesop’s Fables* by Michael Morpurgo with illustrations by Emma Chichester Clark.

What is storytelling?

Storytelling is the social activity of sharing stories for the purposes of entertainment, education, cultural preservation, or instilling moral values. It can be as simple as a parent talking with a child or a more formal theatrical performance in which one person dramatically tells a story to a group. As opposed to using lots of costumes and props, the storyteller will use his or her body, voice, and facial expressions to portray all the characters in the story.

For this performance, with just a voice, a guitar, and a keyboard, the storyteller will make many different sounds that help tell you what is happening in each story. During the show, students should listen for sounds that represent:

- the tip-toeing of the mouse
- the roar of the lion
- the turtle walking through mud

What is a fable?

A fable is a short story that teaches a lesson. Many fables use animals as the main characters who often have distinct human-like personalities. The most famous collection of fables is known as Aesop’s Fables. Aesop was a Greek storyteller thought to have lived between 620 and 560 BC.

Many versions and collections of Aesop’s Fables exist. A free interactive version is available online through the United States Library of Congress at <http://www.read.gov/aesop/index.html>.

What is a moral?

A moral is the lesson you are supposed to learn by reading or hearing a fable story. In most versions of Aesop’s Fables, you will find a short sentence at the end of each story that summarizes what you should have learned from the experiences of the characters in the story.

About the Performer

David Gonzalez is a professional storyteller, poet, playwright, musician and public speaker. He is a cultural ambassador for the U.S. State Department, and is the proud recipient of the International Performing Arts for Youth *Lifetime Achievement Award for Sustained Excellence*. Mr. Gonzalez was named a Fellow of the Joseph Campbell Foundation and was nominated for a Drama Desk Award for “Unique Theatrical Experience” for *The Frog Bride*. David has created numerous productions, including the critically acclaimed *¡Sofrito!* with The Latin Legends Band, and *MytholoJazz*, both of which enjoyed sold-out runs at New Victory Theater. *Sleeping Beauty* was co-commissioned by the New Jersey Performing Arts Center, Brooklyn College, and The McCallum Theater. David was a featured performer at the *National Storytelling Festival* and appeared for three seasons at the Royal National Theatre in London. *The Man of the House* was commissioned by and premiered at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in 2013.





About the Stories

All three stories told in this performance are in the spirit of Aesop's Fables, with animal characters and morals. You might recognize *The Lion and the Mouse* as classic Aesop. To create *The Turtle's Shell*, David Gonzalez combined an Aesop fable with a South American folk tale. The resulting story is also a pourquoi tale, a story that explains how something came to be. *The Fisherman and His Wife* is a Grimm's fairy tale. You can use the following short summaries to introduce the stories to your students.

The Lion and the Mouse

One day while a lion sleeps, a mouse runs across his paw. The lion wakes up with a big ROAR! He wants to eat the mouse, but then the mouse says something that makes the lion laugh. If the lion sets him free, the mouse says he might be able to help the lion someday. Do you think a little mouse could help a big lion? How?

The Turtle's Shell

Why do turtles' shells look like they do? The answer comes from the story of the world's first turtle. The turtle loved the blue sky and wanted to live there. Then he met a big bird called a vulture. The vulture let the turtle climb on his back. They began to fly, but there was one problem. The turtle complained about the vulture's smell, and that made the vulture mad. What will happen to the turtle?

The Fisherman and His Wife

One day, a fisherman catches a magic fish. The fish says he will grant all the fisherman's wishes if the fisherman lets him go. When the fisherman tells his wife what happened, she makes him go back. "Ask the fish to make you the king and me the queen," she says! When the fish grants those wishes, the wife asks for more. Will the fish keep granting the wife's wishes?



Activities

These activities can be used together in any combination that works for the teacher. It would be best to do some activities before the performance, to give students context for the performance they will experience, and some activities after the performance, to reinforce what they have seen.

Pre-show Discussion Questions

Discuss the different types of performing arts (music, dance, theatre) to help students understand that they are going to see people perform. Ask if they have ever experienced a live theatre performance before. What did they see? What was it like?

How is live theater different than movies and TV?

- There are real people on the stage.
- The performance will never be exactly the same again.

Post-show Discussion Questions

After attending the performance, it is very important to talk to your students about their experience, memory, and reaction to the live performance. Below are some possible questions. These can be used for a classroom discussion or for a journaling activity.

- Which story was your favorite? Why?
- If you could be any of the characters, which one would you be? Why?
- Choose two of the stories to compare. How are the two stories alike and different?
- Tell me about what you saw and heard during the performance.
- What surprised you about the performance? How was it different than what you were expecting?
- What did you like about the performance? What didn't you like about the performance? It's ok if you didn't like the performance, but you should think about why you didn't like it or what you would have done differently if you were in charge of the show.

Arts-Integration Activities

Theatre – Storytelling is a special form of theatre performance. Any time you read a story aloud to a group of students, you are performing! The three performance elements of storytelling are:

- Voice
- Gesture
- Facial Expression



When you read a story aloud to your class, especially if it's a story you've read to them before, talk with your students about what the characters' voices should sound like. ("What do you think the lion's voice sounds like? Does the lion have a low, loud voice or a high, squeaky voice? What do you think the mouse's voice sounds like?")



Dance/Movement – In building on the three elements of storytelling (voice, gesture, and facial expression), you can make your storytelling and read-aloud time more interactive for your students by incorporating movements and gestures. The story of *The Lion and the Mouse* is an easy way to start because there are only two characters in the story. Students can be interactive participants in your reading/storytelling by doing gestures with you as you read. Look for descriptive action words that could be used as opportunities for gestures.

If you have a large space, you can use movement to help reinforce the learning about opposites and comparison words by moving like a lion and like a mouse. Some versions of the story use the word "stalking" to describe the lion's movements and "scampered" to describe the mouse's movements. Ask your students to show you how to move like a mouse with small quick steps and then like a lion with slow stalking steps.

Music – You can continue the learning about opposites and comparison words through a rhythmic music activity. Start by having students chant the following phrase with you, which is the moral of the story of *The Lion and the Mouse*:

KINDNESS IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN STRENGTH.

Once they know this simple pattern, have your students repeat it in different ways, changing the dynamics, pitch, and tempo.

- Dynamics – the volume, how loud or soft
- Pitch – how high or low the sound of your voice is
- Tempo – the speed, how fast or slow





Write to Us!

We would love to hear from you and your students! If your students write about the performance they saw or create artwork related to it, you are welcome to send it to us via email to azepp2@uis.edu or through the mail to:

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