Number the Stars

Tuesday, March 15, 2016
10:00 AM & 12:30 PM
Dear Educator,

Welcome to Class Acts at Sangamon Auditorium, UIS! We hope this guide will help you expand on concepts from 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 isolated event.

Before arriving at the Auditorium, you can prepare your students by helping them understand the story or by sharing basic information about the performing 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 activity ideas included in this guide will help your students gain a deeper understanding of the performance they see.

We look forward to seeing you! If you have any questions about these materials, please feel free to contact me at 217.206.6150 or azepp2@uis.edu.

Amy Zepp
Audience Development Coordinator

Youth programming in the Class Acts series and in conjunction with other Sangamon Auditorium events 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, a state 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, beeping watches, or 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 make a great deal of noise in the auditorium! The noise is very 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.
• **Remember that the overture 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 rude and 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.
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.*

The experience of attending a live performance is a unique format that can greatly enhance a student’s understanding of an important topic or theme.

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.

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**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

Class Acts  
Sangamon Auditorium, UIS  
One University Plaza, MS PAC 397  
Springfield, IL 62703-5407

We love sharing student work with our Class Acts sponsors, so they can see the impact of their donations.
About GreatWorks Touring Theatre

Our History...
GreatWorks Theatre began as the educational programming arm of Irish Repertory of Chicago. In 2006, the educational programs were spun off as their own entity, with Matt O'Brien shifting from Artistic Director of Irish Rep to taking on GreatWorks as our full-time Producing Director.

In the years since, GreatWorks has grown to include a lineup of 15 social studies and literature-based touring shows, playing to tens of thousands of students every year throughout the midwest.

In 2014, GreatWorks acquired Cinema Academy, our former booking agency, and both companies are now part of a new entity, Cinema Academy/GreatWorks, Inc.

What We Do...
Our goal is to make your students' experience a good theatrical event as well as an educational event. Every show has multiple layers of humor and meaning written into them, so that everyone watching - student and teacher alike - is getting something unique and personal out of the production.

The shows are performed by some of the best acting talent in the city, artists who bring the same level of commitment and theatrical quality to your school as they do in their "night jobs" in Chicago's busy professional theatres.
**Number the Stars Author’s Note**

The Importance of Caring

From the time I was eight or nine, I wanted to be a writer. Writing was what I liked best in school; it was what I did best in school.

I was a solitary child, born the middle of three, who lived in the world of books and my own imagination. There are some children, and I was this kind of child, who are introverts and love to read — who prefer to curl up with a book than to hang out with friends or play at the ball field. Children like that begin to develop a feeling for language and for story. And that was true for me — that’s how I became a writer.

I also moved a lot as a child. My father was a career military officer — an army dentist — so I lived all over the world. I was born in Hawaii, then moved to New York, and lived during World War II in my mother’s hometown of Carlisle, Pennsylvania. From ages 11 to 13 my family resided in Tokyo, Japan, where I learned about cultural differences and what it feels like to be an outsider. From there we returned to New York City, and then I went to college in Rhode Island. Even after marrying, I continued the frequent relocations of military life, since my husband was a naval officer. My early exposure to different places and cultures continues to influence my writing. Everything a writer experiences as a young person goes into the later writing in some form.

Today I live and write in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in a house dominated by a very shaggy Tibetan terrier named Bandit. My hobbies include gardening, knitting, and photography. (In fact, my own photos appear on the covers of my books *Number the Stars* and *The Giver*.)

The idea for *Number the Stars* came from the remarkable and wonderful history of Denmark during the Nazi occupation, as told to me by my Danish friend Annelise, who was a child there at the time. It is set in a different culture and era from our own, but it tells of the role that we humans play in the lives of our fellow beings.

I think it is my own children, all of them grown now, who have caused me to expand my view. One of my sons was a fighter pilot in the United States Air Force; as a mother during the Gulf War, I realized the need to find a way to end conflict. One of my daughters has become disabled as a result of the disease of the central nervous system; through her, I have a new and passionate awareness of the importance of human connections that go beyond physical differences.

And I have grandchildren now. For them, I feel a greater urgency to do what I can to convey the knowledge that we live intertwined on this planet and that our future as human beings depends upon our caring more, and doing more, for one another.

[http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/article/number-stars-authors-note](http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/article/number-stars-authors-note)
**Number the Stars Discussion Guide**

**About the Book**

In *Number the Stars*, the family of 10-year-old Annemarie Johansen takes in Annemarie's best friend, Ellen Rosen, as German troops begin their campaign to "relocate" all the Jews of Denmark. Annemarie's family conceals Ellen by pretending she's part of the family. Through Annemarie's eyes, readers witness the Danish Resistance smuggling nearly the entire Jewish population of Denmark across the sea to Sweden.

**Vocabulary Words**

- rucksack
- cocoon
- frothy
- contempt
- exasperated
- wryly
- sneering
- bellowed
- staccato
- defiantly
- disdainfully
- condescendingly
- hoodlums
- sabbath
- typhus
- occupation
- synagogue
- extinguished
- absorbed
- dubiously
- rummaging
- impassive
- rabbi
- protruded
- crocheting
- imperious
- hobbled
- troussseau
- intoned
- donned
- intricate
- abruptly
- latticed
- dawdled
- tentatively
- brusque
- rationed
- gnarled
- tantalize
- haughtily
- appliqued
- taut
- swastika
- ruefully
- insolently
- curfew
- specter
- caustic
- permeated
- casket
- lunged
- deftly
- strident
- deprivation

**Vocabulary Activity**

One way to make vocabulary lessons fun is to use the words in a "Funny Fortune" activity.

**Step 1:** Explain that students should first look up the word, then write a one-line fortune using the word. For example:

- Today you'll find your missing pen in your rucksack.
- Don't worry — there's no casket in your near future.
- This month you should stop sneering about homework and do it!

**Step 2:** Students can place their fortunes in a box and take turns picking one, reading it to the class, and discussing the underlined word.
**Pre-Reading Questions and Activities**

1. Discuss Germany’s occupation of other European nations during World War II including Denmark, Belgium, Norway, and The Netherlands. Talk about the fate of many Jews under the Nazi regime.

2. Read aloud the book’s title, *Number the Stars*, and ask students to speculate on its meaning. Write their ideas on a poster pad to review when they reach Chapter 10.

3. Have students read through the list of chapter titles and make inferences about the story. Draw their attention to the number of titles that are questions. What do so many questions suggest about the story? (*that it depicts a time of uncertainty*) What other words jump out from these titles? (*words of death and darkness — “long night,” “dark-haired one,” “death,” “casket,” “dark path”*)

**Post-Reading Activities**

**Words With Life**

The author's use of personification provides an opportunity to introduce this literary device.

**Step 1:** Explain that personification is when a writer gives human characteristics to inanimate objects or animals. Give these examples from the text:
- “seagulls soared and cried out as if they were in mourning.”
- “dawn would wake”
- “trees and bushes closed around her”

**Step 2:** Challenge students to find other examples in *Number the Stars* or other texts.

**Step 3:** Encourage students write their own examples of personification.

**Interview a Character**

**Step 1:** Match each student with a partner. One partner will select a character from *Number the Stars* to portray. The other partner will be an interviewer.

**Step 2:** Ask the partners to work together to formulate at least three questions and answers about the character's part in the action and how the character felt as the action unfolded.

**Step 3:** Encourage interviewer and character partners to perform their interview for the class. Direct them to improvise their interview from notes rather than read from a script.

**Step 4:** Grade students on the importance and depth of their questions, along with the fullness and accuracy of the answers. Also grade on the partners' ability to maintain a conversational tone.
**Write a Journal Entry**

**Step 1:** Have students look back at the characters in *Number the Stars*. Talk about how Annemarie and Ellen are similar and different.

**Step 2:** Challenge students to write a journal entry from each girl's point of view about life in Nazi-occupied Denmark. Encourage students to use some of the content area and support words in their journal entries.

**Step 3:** After students have written their journal entries, have them explain how they portrayed their character's feelings about the events. Ask students to point out the first-person pronouns they used.

**Teaching First-Person Narrative**

Recall with students that journal entries are first-person narratives and that the pronouns *I, me, my,* and *mine* are used throughout. First-person narratives are usually informal and express feelings.