



# Fairy Tales And Folktales

## Study Guide

**Discussions - Background information - Classroom Activities**

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## About the Performance

The "nearly world-famous" DuffleBag Theatre performs well-known Fairy Tales and classic stories but in a new and fun way. They take the stories and make them come alive through improvisation. In improvisation there is no script. The performers have a rough idea of the storyline and then they make up or adjust the story as they go along. During the show, they also invite audience members to come up and take part in the play. All of the students become involved by having to listen for certain 'cue words or phrases to which they must respond. (e.g. to "When the Narrator says "Prince Charming" everyone says "Your Majesty!")

## About the Company

DuffleBag Theatre specializes in improvisational story theatre for young audiences. They formed in 1992 for the London International Children's Festival but are now based in Toronto. The theatre company performs extensively throughout Ontario, all across Canada, into the United States, and overseas in countries like Singapore, Brunei, Malaysia, and Vietnam. Because they travel so much that's why they call themselves the "nearly world-famous" DuffleBag Theatre.

## About the Guide

This guide will help teachers to prepare their students for the performance. It also provides pre and post show discussion and activities related to the Primary Ontario Curriculum. Although this guide for Duffle Bag's fairy tales and folktales is intended for Primary, it includes content suitable for grades 4-8 for those occasions where more than one grade level attends the performance.

## **Learning Goal**

You will be able  
to create  
characters from  
stories.



## **Success Criteria**

- you will use simple props
- you will create characters by changing body language and voice
- you will explain how to create a character
- you will retell familiar stories through characterization.

## PRE-SHOW DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITIES

### DISCUSSION

**Make a chart to answer the 5 questions. Teacher fills in the chart with the students responses.**

- Who do we meet in fairytales?
- Where do many fairytales take place?
- What kinds of characters are there?
- What kinds of things happen to the characters (good and evil)?
- What often happens at the end of the story?



## POST-SHOW DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITIES

### ***“Play”-ing with DuffleBag Theatre***

DuffleBag Theatre adapts the story through improvisation, using their actors and members of the audience.

#### **DISCUSSION**

- How did the audience get involved in the story? (e.g. Having audience members in the play. Having the audience shout specific words or phrases when certain characters are mentioned)
- How did the Narrator/Storyteller shape the performance? (advance the story, help the audience actors know what to do)
- How did the actors change into different characters? (costumes, props, physicality)
- How did the actors use their voices to make different characters? (change pitch, high/low for good or evil)
- List the props that were used and who used them. (Props are the things that actors hold or use in the show.)
- Compare the DuffleBag story to other versions of the story they have seen or heard. (book, movie, television show, other theatre)

#### **ACTIVITIES**

##### **PICTURE RELAY: Small groups**

##### **(Primary)**

Each group sits around one large piece of art paper. The children are numbered from 1 to x. All of the #1's go to the teacher who gives them a word that relates to Fairy/Folktale characters (perhaps taken from the charts made during the discussion above.) Each child runs back to the group and draws the picture. The rest of the group must guess what the person #1 is drawing. The drawer must not speak, use hand signals or write numbers or letters. When the group guesses the correct answer, person #2 goes to the teacher and is given a new word to draw. Continue until all the children have had a turn or until the list of words is finished.



## POST-SHOW DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITIES

### ***“Play”-ing with the Setting***

One of the elements of story that DuffleBag Theatre plays with in their re-telling, is the Setting or where the story takes place. DuffleBag also adds things from our time period that are out of place with the Setting.

### **DISCUSSION**

- Where did the story take place?
- How did the actors show the different locations?
- Did the storyteller “paint a picture” in your mind of the location?
- What descriptions were given?
- What things did they mention from our time period that seemed out of place? (cell phone, contemporary music, rubber chicken)



## POST-SHOW DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITIES

### ***“Play”-ing with Props and costumes***

The Dufflebag performers often use props and costumes to help them create the characters and to tell the story (e.g. a crown, a bowl, a shoe). The prop/costume helps the imagination of the audience as well as the actor to create the character and the action on stage. Sometimes the same prop/costume can be used to represent more than one object. (e.g. a saucepan can be for cooking, but then placed on a head for a helmet. This is part of the magic of theatre. Things are not always what they seem.

### DISCUSSION

- What are some of the costumes that were used in the play to help create a character or an action?
- What did the actors wear to become the different characters?
- What happens when the actors changes their costumes?
- What costume would you choose if you were going to play the character? Draw a picture of yourself in the costume.
- What objects were used to represent more than one item in the story?
- How did you know what the prop was supposed to be? (e.g. by the way it was used, by who was using it, etc. )

### ACTIVITIES

#### **PASS THE OBJECT: whole group (Primary/Junior/Intermediate)**

The class sits in a circle. The Teacher begins by using an object, such as a marker, as something completely different. (e.g. uses it as if it is a toothbrush.) The class guesses what the teacher is miming. The teacher then passes the marker to the student on the left, who uses the marker as if it is something else. Each time the class guesses what it is. The second time around the circle, change the original object (a scarf, a pot, a pointer) and use it to represent the items in a folk/fairy tale.

**Hint:** *Tell children that it is okay to do the same object as some else, since they might do it differently. Also tell them it is okay to pass if they are stuck for an idea-this way the game doesn't get bogged down by the shy or reluctant child.*

## POST-SHOW DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITIES

### **COSTUME PIECES MAKE A CHARACTER: in pairs, small groups**

A set of non-related costume pieces is placed in the middle of the children's circle. One student selects a costume piece and starts describing a character (eg. my character wears a top hat to show he is rich). Each student adds to the character, by continuing the description and choosing another costume piece from the pile (e.g. a slipper, a hat, a scarf, a mask, a piece of material etc). The teacher may want to give the students an example to begin.

Note: students can dress themselves, another student, a doll, the teacher, or a large cut-out to display the character.

### ***"Play"-ing with the Characters***

Characters are a major part of a FairyTale or Folktale. They always have reasons for doing what they do, but don't always get to explain themselves.

## **ACTIVITIES**

### **CHARACTER STORY: individual**

Using the character created in the above activity, students write or tell a story that introduces their character. Other students can ask questions about the character that has been created.

### **INTERVIEWS: whole group**

The teacher takes the role of one of the characters, (e.g. the wolf in the three pigs). The children interview the "wolf" or "evil queen" to hear the other side of the story.





## POST-SHOW DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITIES

### ***"Play"-ing with the Story***

DuffleBag Theatre plays with all aspects of the story. Physicality is very important to convey what is going on in the story. Sometimes the audience sees what's happening before they hear it from the Storyteller.

#### ACTIVITIES

##### ILLUSTRATING THE STORY

###### **Step One: individually**

The children move around the room. On a signal, all freeze in a pose suggested by teacher from the chart. (Show me a king/queen, wizard, the big bad wolf.) Repeat with half the group watching and commenting while the other group performs.

###### **Step Two: individually or in pairs (Primary)**

Students draw one of the illustrations for the story and print the narration that accompanies it. Put the pictures together to create a class book.

###### **Step Three: whole group**

##### WRITING YOUR OWN FAIRYTALE

Using the chart from the pre-show discussion, children choose one item from each square and teacher asks leading questions about the choices to create a story. (eg. Whose crown is it? What is their name? Why are they wearing a crown?)

###### **Step Four: Individually**

Each child chooses 5 objects from the chart and writes and illustrates a simple story about their choices.

## POST-SHOW DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITIES

### ***“Play”-ing for an Audience***

Performing for an audience is the best way to see if you can convey the images and ideas from a story or Fairytale. It’s also a lot of fun.

#### **ACTIVITIES**

##### **TABLEAU**

##### **Step One: whole group**

Students stand in a circle. Teacher strikes a pose and the students imitate. After a few examples by the teacher, individual students lead this activity. Teacher explains that this pose is called a tableau.

##### **Step two: whole group**

Teacher suggests an activity (eg. Fishing, playing hockey, etc.) and students make a tableau demonstrating that activity. Half the students hold the pose while the other student observe and comment on what they see.

##### **Step three: small groups**

Teacher suggests an activity and students create a tableau together demonstrating that activity. Then present their tableaux to the class.

##### **Step four: small groups**

Students choose a scene from the DuffleBag story and create a tableau to demonstrate that scene. Then each group presents their tableaux to the class.