

Main  
Street  
Theater

THEATER FOR <sup>all</sup> ^ YOUTH  
STUDENT  
ACTIVITY  
GUIDE

MAINSTREETTHEATER.COM





# WELCOME TO MAIN STREET THEATER!

We hope these supplemental materials will help you integrate your field trip into your classroom curriculum. We've included a number of activities and resources to help broaden your students' experience. Please make sure that each teacher that will be attending the play has a copy of these materials as they prepare to see the show.

Before you come to the theater, please take some time to talk with your students about what to expect. Going to a live play is an experience unlike any other, and many students are more familiar with going to the movies or sporting events. Please help them prepare for what they'll see and how they should act.

## **Here are some things to think about:**

- ★ How is a play different from a movie or a television show?
- ★ How is a play different from real life?
- ★ Can the actors see and hear the audience?
- ★ Which of the following is appropriate behavior for a theater audience?  
Clapping, talking, eating, laughing, running, leaving during the performance.

Ask students who have seen a play before to talk about what it's like to be in the audience.

*Have students write letters or draw pictures to the cast of their favorite show with their thoughts and comments on the production. All correspondence should be sent to:*

School Bookings  
Main Street Theater  
3400 Main Street, Suite 283  
Houston, Texas 77002



# BEFORE YOU SEE THE PLAY

**Read the book as a class and describe what you see in the illustrations and what happens in the story.**

- ★ Who are the characters in the story?
- ★ Talk about the setting. Where does the story take place?
- ★ What kind of transportation is used?
- ★ What kind of community members are mentioned or seen?
- ★ What do you think of the colors and drawing style?

**Make some predictions.**

- ★ Which characters do you think will be in the play?
- ★ What do you think will be the main message of the play?
- ★ What do you think the set will look like?

Talk about the rules of the theater.  
Discuss some theater terminology.

**Encourage the students to think about what book they would like to see made into a play.**



# HOW SHOULD I PREPARE MY STUDENTS FOR A TRIP TO THE THEATER?

Being in a live performance is very different than seeing a movie in a movie theater or at home. The setting is much quieter and noises created by viewers can interrupt the show and distract the performers. Remember, that real people are on stage and they deserve your respect while they perform.

**Here are some guidelines and rules to attending live theater:**

- ★ No talking. Even whispers can be quite loud in a quiet room.
- ★ If you have a cell phone, it must be turned off AND put away during the show. The light can distract performers.
- ★ Keep bags, feet and bodies out of the aisles. Sometimes actors walk through them during shows.
- ★ Do not put your feet on the chairs in front of you or sit on your feet in the seats.
- ★ No food or drinks are allowed in the theater.
- ★ Cover your mouth for yawns, coughs or other noises.
- ★ If you think something is funny, feel free to laugh. The actors are energized by interaction from the audience.
- ★ Don't stand up or switch seats during the performance.
- ★ Use the restroom and get comfortable before the show starts.





**All electronic devices should be switched off BEFORE the performance.** It is impolite and disruptive to the actors and the other audience members to hear a ringing phone or a patron talking on the phone. In addition, please do not leave the theater to take a phone call unless it is an emergency. You will have to climb over several other patrons to exit the seats and will disturb each one of them.



**No photography or video taping of any kind is allowed during any performances.** It is a disturbance to the performers because photography generates noise which creates a distraction both to audiences and performers. The sudden burst of flash photography blinds vision and can endanger the safety of the performers on stage. The only photography and recording rights are reserved for archival purpose. It is also against our contractual arrangements with the publishers to allow videotaping and photography.

### **As You Near the End of the Show, Remember...**



**Discussion and comments** that you have about the performance should be left until you leave the theater or the question and answer session after the show.



Some audiences **leave the show** when it is nearing the end because they want to beat the crowds that are exiting at the same time. It is very disrespectful to the actors and the other patrons for people to get up before the show is over. Please stay seated until the very end.



## ADAPTING A PLAY FROM A BOOK

An adaptation is a change made in something so that it can fit a new use. Most of our plays are **adaptations** of a book, which is meant to be read, turned into a play, and performed and viewed.

**Consider these questions for discussion before you attend the MST production:**

- ★ What kinds of things does a playwright have to consider in writing a script of the story?
- ★ What kinds of things would the author be concerned about with an adaptation of their story?
- ★ Do you think the performance will be shorter or longer than the book?
- ★ What will the characters look like? How will they match the descriptions by the author? What differences can you expect?
- ★ What about the story? What changes might you expect in adapting it for the stage?
- ★ Why would these changes be necessary?

**After the performance, consider these questions:**

- ★ Were there any characters or events that were in the book but not in the play? Why do you think these choices were made?
- ★ Did the changes make the story stronger or was it weaker because of them?
- ★ What do you think the set and costume designers need to consider when bringing the story to the stage?



# JOBS IN THE THEATER

## WHAT IT TAKES TO PUT ON A PLAY



**Director:** The show's director decides how they want the show to look and feel. They choose actors and make decisions on sets, costumes, sound, lighting, etc. Coaching the actors and deciding how and where they move (called blocking).



**Actors:** The actors are also sometimes called the players. These people perform a role as a character or characters in the show. They must learn their lines and decide how they want to present their personality. They work closely with each other and the director to match the show's tone.



**Choreographer:** A choreographer creates the show's dances or complicated movements. This person designs the moves with the director's approval and then teaches the actors how to perform.



**Lighting Director:** This person designs how the intensity and color of the lighting will appear on the stage. The colors can change how the set looks and create a feeling for the audience.



**Musical Director:** The musical director learns all the show's music. They then must teach and lead any musicians, singers, and others involved in producing the piece.



**Ushers:** Ushers are the people who welcome you to the theater and help you find your seat. They can also answer many questions for theatergoers.



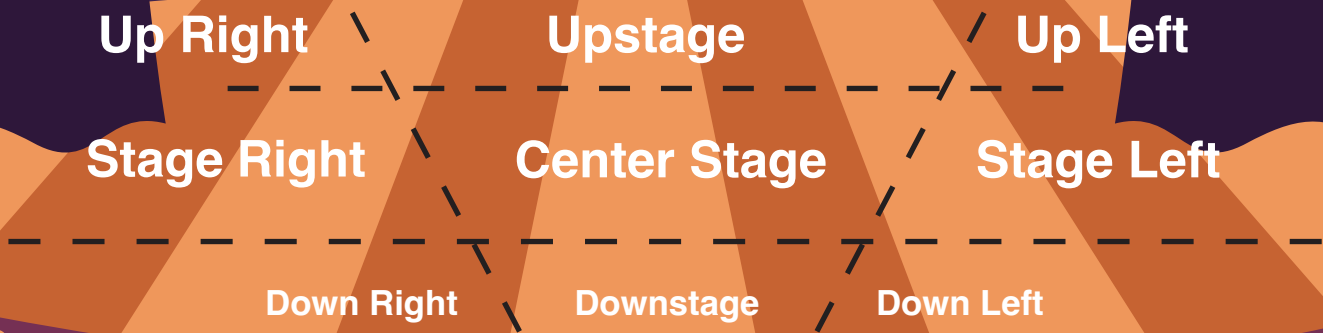
**Costumer or Costume Designer:** This person or team decides on and puts together costumes for all the actors. Sometimes they make the costumes, and sometimes they put existing pieces together.



**Prop Master:** The prop master ensures that anything used in the show is prepared and ready for actors to grab as they walk onto the stage. They also find the things that actors need to hold. Whether it's a basket, a flower, a glass, or a sword, the prop master is responsible for keeping these items clean, safe, and ready to go.

# THEATER TERMINOLOGY

**Why does what looks like the right is called the left?** The sides of the stage are spoken of as from the view of the actor facing the audience. That is why it seems opposite to the audience. The same is true of Upstage and Downstage.



**Gel** A slip of colored gel that is placed on top of a light to change its color

**Auditorium** The part of the theater that the audience sits in.

**(the) Book** The script, which has all the lines for the actors as well as the stage directions.

**Director** The person who controls the production, interacts with all designers (costume, set, lighting), decides on the blocking of actors, runs the rehearsals and more.

**Legs** Curtains used to cover the wings.

**Set** The scenery used during the play.

**Wings** The area just off of the stage left or stage right. The actors wait there before they go onstage.

**Proscenium** The part of a modern stage in front of the curtain.



# AFTER THE PERFORMANCE

Attending a play is an experience unlike any other entertainment experience. Because a play is presented live, it provides a unique opportunity to experience a story as it happens. **Main Street Theater** brings stories to life through its performances. Many people are involved in the process. **Playwrights** adapt the stories you read in order to bring them off the page and onto the stage. **Designers and technicians** create lighting effects so that you can feel the mood of a scene. **Carpenters** build the scenery and make the setting of the story become a real place, while costumers and **make-up artists** can turn actors into the characters you meet in the stories. **Directors** help actors bring the story to life and make it happen before your very eyes. All of these things make seeing a play very different from television, videos, computer games, or CDs of stories.



## Teacher Tip

Hold a class discussion when you return from the performance. Ask students the following questions and allow them to write or draw pictures of their experience at MST.

- ★ What was the first thing you noticed when you entered the theater?
- ★ What did you notice first on the stage?
- ★ What about the set? Draw or tell about things you remember/  
Did the set change during the play? How was it moved or changed?
- ★ Was there any space besides the stage where action took place?
- ★ How did the lights set the mood of the play? How did they change throughout? What do you think the house lights are? How do they differ from the stage lights? Did you notice different areas of lighting?
- ★ What did you think about the costumes? Do you think they fit the story? What things do you think the costume designers had to consider before creating the costumes?
- ★ Was there music in the play? How did it add to the performance?
- ★ What about the actors? Do you think they were able to bring the characters to life? Did you feel caught up in the story? What things do you think the actors had to work on in order to make you believe they were the characters?



## LABEL THE PLAY

Instructions: Read the lines from the play and then write a title for the play at the top. Next, use the words from the word bank to label all of the parts of the play. Use words from the word bank to complete the sentences.

### WORD BANK

rehearsal

colon

character

star

parenthesis

scene

playwright

dialogue

actors

act

script

actresses

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*Read the lines from the play, and then write a title here.*

Mom: What is wrong Shelly? You look like you're not feeling very well today!

Shelby: (moaning): My stomach really, really hurts, Mom! Even worse, our field trip is today and I don't want to miss it.

*From the script above, answer these questions.*

1. Mom is a \_\_\_\_\_ in the script.
2. What is this punctuation called?: (word) \_\_\_\_\_
3. The person who writes a play is a \_\_\_\_\_
4. The people who perform in a play are \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_
5. People practice the play during a \_\_\_\_\_
6. The \_\_\_\_\_ of a play can also be called a hero! \_\_\_\_\_



# WHAT'S IN A PLAY?

Instructions: Look at each vocabulary word. Why is this word an important part of a play? Write your response in the second column. Provide an example of the word in the last column.

VOCABULARY WORD	WHAT ROLE DOES THIS PERSON OR OBJECT HAVE IN A DRAMA?	PROVIDE A SPECIFIC EXAMPLE
actor		
actress		
script		
act		
scene		
dialogue		
playwright		
audience		
characters		
star		
parenthesis		
colon		
rehearsal		