

Student Guide

Study Guide
materials
provided by
Eckerd Theater
Company

Adapted by
Cece Daratany

The Hundred Dresses

**Adapted by Bill Williams
from the book by
Eleanor Estes**



Wanda Petronski, the new girl in Room 13, wears the same faded blue dress to school every day but insists that she has a hundred bright, shiny new ones at home. As Wanda's story unfolds, her classmates learn the secret of the hundred dresses and with it, a lesson in tolerance, in taking responsibility and in living with the consequences of one's actions. **Eckerd Theater Company** presents this adaptation of the well-loved 1945 Newbery Honor Book by Eleanor Estes.

Cast:

Ricky Laub as Tommy Allen
Magali Naas as Wanda Petronski
Soolaf Rasheid as Peggy Wilson
Reginald Robinson as Mr. Mason
Gi Young Sung as Maddie Smith

The Story

Wanda wears the same faded blue dress to school every day -- yet she says she has one hundred beautiful dresses at home, "all lined up". The other girls don't believe it and when Peggy starts a daily game of teasing Wanda about the hundred dresses, everyone joins in. Maddie, Peggy's best friend, goes along with the game but she secretly wonders whether she can find the courage to speak up in Wanda's defense. It's not until Wanda fails to come to school one day that her classmates learn the truth about the hundred dresses and Maddie and Peggy learn the meaning of kindness and generosity.

Vocabulary

American Dream: an ideal suggesting that any American can obtain wealth and prosperity

discrimination: treatment in favor of or against people based on differences like race or gender

immigrant: a person who migrates to another country, usually to take up permanent residence

oppression: unjust or cruel exercise of authority or power

refugee: a person who flees to another place or a foreign country to escape danger or persecution

regime: style of rule or management in government

prejudice: pre-judging; making a decision about a person or group of persons without sufficient knowledge

diversity: different or varied. The population of the United States is made up of people from different races, cultures and places.

Before the Show - Discussion Questions

1. What do you know about your own family history and the origin of your last name? Have you ever talked to your parents or grandparents about how your family came to this country? What have you discovered?
2. Have you ever seen people teased because of their name or the way they look? If so, how did that make you feel?
3. How does it feel when someone makes fun of *you* or leaves you out of an activity because you are different from them in some way?

Sunshine State Standards: LA.A.1.2, SS.A.1.2, SS.A.5.1



Turning a Book into a Play

The Hundred Dresses is an **adaptation** of a book. Adaptation means change. Changing a book into a play usually requires making some changes in the story. Playwrights adapt stories for the stage in the following ways:

- Characters and events may be combined, simplified or left out completely
- Characters and events may be added
- Settings may be simplified to avoid complicated scene changes

Now You Try It!

1. Write a paragraph about a problem between two people. (Examples: your sister won't let you into her room or the coach won't put you in the game).
2. Share your paragraph with a friend, choose roles, and act out the problem you described in writing. You will have to improvise your lines. (That means that you will make them up).
3. Now write a short play script about the problem. Make sure you identify the characters and what lines they speak.

So, was that difficult? How long did it take you to write your script? Which takes longer - reading the paragraph out loud or acting out the script?

Sunshine State Standard: LA.D.2.2

The Very Important Person (VIP) Project

Here's a class project that gives everyone a chance to shine. Make a schedule and assign each person in your class to his or her own week. When it is your week, decorate a tri-fold board (the heavy cardboard "science project" board) with your name and the following items:

1. My family history: Research your heritage (with help from your parent/guardian) and find out where your ancestors came from and when they came to this country. If you are a first- or second-generation American, write about why your family wanted to come here.

2. My favorite things: Make a list of your favorite things and people. For instance, you can include your best friend, favorite television program, video game, website, food, sport, book, song, vacation place, color and animal. For each favorite thing you list, explain why it's your favorite. If you have a favorite toy or book or photograph that makes you feel special, you may want to bring in that item to place in front of your display.

3. Who I want to be: Imagine that you are looking at yourself 30 years into the future. What would you like to be doing (example: first woman President)? How would you like your friends to describe you (examples: honorable, funny, smart)?

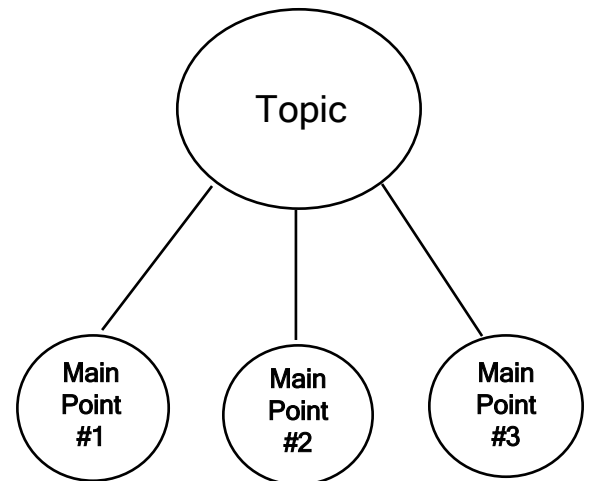
4. Awards: If you have ever won a spelling bee or competed in a piano recital or won a sports trophy, bring in the certificates to put on the table in front of your display.

When it is time for you to present your board in class, explain what's on and around the board to your classmates and teacher. You may also want to share any special skill that you have, like the great cookies you bake or a musical instrument you play.



After the Show - Writing Connections

In *The Hundred Dresses*, the characters learn that their actions have consequences. Having seen the show, which character did you identify with the most? **Write a brief essay about a time in your life when you felt like Maddie, Wanda, Tommy or Peggy. Explain what lessons you did (or didn't) learn from your own experience.**



Paragraph #1 - Introduction - In the first sentence, introduce your topic. In the next three sentences, state what your three major points are (one in each sentence). Finally, write a concluding sentence.

Paragraph #2 - In the first sentence, tell what your first major point is. Then, in the body of this paragraph, give lots of good details about your first major point. Finally, write a concluding sentence.

Paragraph #3 - In the first sentence, tell what your second major point is. Then, in the body of this paragraph, give lots of good details about your second major point. Finally, write a concluding sentence.

Paragraph #4 - In the first sentence, tell what your third major point is. Then, in the body of this paragraph, give lots of good details about your third major point. Finally, write a concluding sentence.

Paragraph #5 - Restate what you wrote in your first paragraph. This is your conclusion.

Sunshine State Standards: LA.B.1.2, LA.B.2.2

After the Show - Suggested Activities

1. Make an effort to get to know someone of a different culture, race, age or religion.
2. Invite someone new to join you and your friends in an activity.
3. Spend time with an elderly person or a person with a disability.
4. Ask someone from a different cultural or religious group if you can participate in a special event with them, such as Kwaanza, Chinese New Year or Passover.

5. In *The Hundred Dresses*, the students in Room 13 enter an art contest. Imagine that your class is participating in an art contest and you can draw anything you like. Use paper and paint, crayons, markers, colored pencils, etc. to create your own unique masterpiece. Consider the following elements as you work:

- Subject - What do you want the subject of your artwork to be? Will it be an object, a person, an experience or something that you imagine?
- Color - What do different colors represent to you? How will these affect what you create?
- Emotion - How do your feelings affect what you are creating?

Be prepared to explain your artwork to the rest of the class.

6. Write a **critique** of *A Hundred Dresses*. Use the following questions to guide you as you write: What was your opinion of the show? What did you like or dislike about this production? Would you recommend that your friends see this production? Why or why not?

Sunshine State Standards: HE.B.3.2, FL.B.1.2, VA.A.1.2, VA.B.1.2, VA.C.1.2, LA.E.2.2, TH.D.1.2

Suggested Reading

The Hundred Dresses, by Eleanor Estes; illustrated by Louis Slobodkin

Blubber, by Judy Blume

The Thanksgiving Visitor, by Truman Capote

Daphne's Book, by Mary Downing Hahn

Secret Friends, by Elizabeth Laird

Bullies Are A Pain In The Brain, by Trevor Romain

Maniac Magee, by Jerry Spinelli

Who Belongs Here? An American Story, by Margy Burns Knight

Resources

Teacher Guide and Student Spotlight for *The Hundred Dresses*, written by Meggin Weaver for Eckerd Theater Company, The Marcia P. Hoffman Performing Arts Institute, 2004.

"Turning A Novel into a Play", Cuesheet Example excerpted from Giving Cues - Recommended Guidelines for Writing and Designing Performance Materials for Young People, by John C. Carr and Lynne B. Silverstein, The Kennedy Center, 1998.

Peace Corps' *World Wise Schools* "Building Bridges" online lesson plans
www.peacecorps.gov/www/bridges

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Remember the "Kravis Rules":

Respect the building.

Respect the audience.

Respect the performers.



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