

Plaza Theatrical Productions, Inc

STUDY GUIDE FOR

The Wizard of Oz

TO THE TEACHER

The following study guide has been provided to help your class benefit the most from experiencing a live theatrical event. The activities described herein are only suggestions. Please feel free to pick and choose the things that will most benefit your students in the time you have available. It is our hope that the performance your students attend is not only entertaining, but is a valuable educational experience as well.

You will find that some of the activities contained in this guide are geared for younger, some for older students-- but there is something for everyone. Please feel free to reproduce and distribute any of the enclosed pages and activities for use by your students.

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History of the Story

Lyman Frank Baum was born on May 15, 1856 in the state of New York. After he grew up he was an actor, printer, chicken farmer, newspaper editor, and traveling salesman, among other things.

He wrote his first book, *Mother Goose in Prose*, in 1897. His second book, *Father Goose, His Book*, was written in 1899. These two books were enormously popular. *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* was published in 1900, but surprisingly, it didn't sell very well at all. But over the years (and especially after the success of the MGM film) it has sold millions and millions of copies.

Some interesting trivia about the story:

- ☛ The character of Dorothy was based on Baum's beloved niece, who died at an early age.
- ☛ Baum developed the story by telling bits and pieces to his neighborhood children. When asked by the children for the name of the place Dorothy had landed after the twister, Baum looked around the room and saw his filing cabinet. The last drawer was labeled "O-Z."

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Theatre Etiquette

- 1> Attending a theatrical performance is a social event. Just as the way you act (and behave) in church is different than the way you act on the playground, there is certain behavior that is appropriate in a live theatre. Discuss with your students the type of behavior that is appropriate when they are members of an audience.
- 2> Explain that they need to act differently when they're watching a live play than if they're watching a movie in a theatre. Live actors can hear their laughter and applause as well as their talking to their neighbor or rustling papers. And their responses-- appropriate or not-- really do affect the actors' performance. The end line is: How would they want to be treated if THEY were up on the stage.
- 3> Audience Participation. Normally, audience members should never talk during the play--and especially not talk directly to the actors (it distracts other audience members and may even make the actors forget their lines). The plays by KMR Scripts, however, are unique in that they offer our audiences special opportunities to participate in the production. They will probably not be asked to come onstage, but there are various times throughout the production where the actors will ask them questions. At those times we encourage the audience to answer them wholeheartedly (but not in an overly loud yell). Over the years, this has become one of the hallmarks of KMR Scripts productions.

Tornadoes

In the story, a twister (tornado) brought Dorothy to the land of Oz. Tornadoes are scary things. A tornado looks like a funnel with the fat part at the top (sometimes they are even called *funnel clouds*). Inside it may have swirling winds around 300 miles per hour. If it goes through a town, the tornado could flatten houses and buildings, lift up cars and trucks, shatter mobile homes into splinters. Sometimes the path is narrow, but everything in the path is wrecked. You don't always see the funnel; it may be raining too hard, or the tornado may come at night. Listen for the tornado's roar. Some say it sounds like a thousand trains.

The National Weather Service is the organization that follows the weather and tells us when tornadoes are close by. They have developed a system to let us know when a tornado has developed:

TORNADO WATCH The Weather Service forecasts that a tornado may develop later. The sky may be blue at the time you hear the watch. Don't be fooled. Listen to the TV or radio for the latest news.

TORNADO WARNING A tornado has been sighted. It may move toward you. Dark clouds boil in the sky. There may be thunder, lightning and hail. Or, it may be eerily still and quiet just before the tornado hits. Seek shelter.

Some people get the "warning" and the "watch" confused. Think of it this way: **Watch out for the Warning!**

WHAT TO DO!

IN YOUR HOUSE:

- ▶ When you hear the tornado watch keep your eye on the sky for signs of a possible tornado and listen to the radio for the latest advice from the National Weather Service, weather radio, The Weather Channel, or local TV/Radio. When you hear the warning, act to protect yourself.
- ▶ Get away from windows. They may shatter, and glass may go flying.
- ▶ Go to the basement. Get under a heavy workbench or the stairs.
- ▶ If there is no basement, go to an inside closet, bathroom, or hallway on the lowest level of the house.
- ▶ Get under a mattress. Protect your head from flying glass and other debris.

OUTSIDE:

- ▶ Get out of a car and inside a house or building.
- ▶ Don't try to outrun a tornado in a car. Tornadoes can pick up a car and throw it through the air.
- ▶ If you're caught outside, lie in a ditch. Or crouch near a strong building or under a bridge..
- ▶ Cover your head with your hands.

IN SCHOOL:

- ▶ Follow directions.
- ▶ Go to an inside hall on the lowest floor.
- ▶ Crouch near the wall. Bend over with your hands on the back of your head..
- ▶ Keep away from glass and stay out of big rooms like the gym, cafeteria, or auditorium.
- ▶ Keep a battery radio on. Listen for news about the tornado. Have a NOAA Weather Radio on hand to hear the latest warnings and advisories.

IN A MOBILE HOME:

- ▶ If you live in a mobile home, get out. Even if it's tied down, a mobile home can be shattered by a tornado. The whole thing can be lifted up and dropped. Get out and into a safer place. Some mobile home areas have a designated storm shelter go to it immediately. If you can't get to a shelter, lie in a ditch and cover your head with your hands.
- ▶ Remember, when there's a tornado there also can be a lot of lightning along with it.
- ▶ Stay away from anything that uses electricity and stay away from anything metal like faucets, radiators, sinks, and tubs.
- ▶ Tornadoes are scary. They pack a lot of energy; enough to blow down a whole town. But you can live through a tornado if you think and use your safety rules. Don't panic! Be smart, know what to do, and do it. Talk over what you would do with your family and loved ones if a tornado should come to call.

SOURCE: NOAA (NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION)

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Arts and Crafts

- 1> Story Quilt. Tell students they will each get to make a square for the paper patchwork quilt. Hang a piece of dark colored butcher paper (3' X 6') on the wall. Have each student design a square about a part of the story on a piece of art paper (10" X 10 "). Cut the edges of the squares with pinking shears before pasting them onto the quilt.
- 2> Class play. Using the production you saw as a guide, have the class come up with their own version of THE WIZARD OF OZ (or another fairy tale). Write the script, cast and rehearse the play and perform it for another class.
- 3> Draw a picture of their favorite character or event in the play. Display it on the wall or bulletin board. Or, send it to the theatre with a class letter. The actors LOVE to receive mail from their audiences. PLEASE make sure the **teacher's name and complete address** are included in the packet with the student letters.

Our Address:

[Place your theatre's mailing/email address here]

- 4> Have the students color (and use) the bookmarks found elsewhere in this guide.
- 5> Have the students color the drawing found elsewhere in this guide.

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English

BEFORE THE PERFORMANCE:

- 1> **Vocabulary.** Here are some of the words and phrases the children will encounter during the performance:

tornado	munch	revenge	experience	ferocious	exterminate	fragrance
Emerald	mortals	sourpuss	destroy	magic charm	grace/graceful	
coordinate	dignity	impressive	awkward	knowledge		
conferring	Steak Tartar	Disco dancing		army in the trenches		

- 2> Read the story to the class. Discuss what the story means--what lessons can be learned from it. Share the history of the story with them. If time is available, read them different versions of the story.
- 3> Compare the version(s) you read with the film. Explain why there may be more than one version of a particular story.
- 4> Have your class make up their own version of THE WIZARD OF OZ. Most likely they will use parts from the film version, parts from other versions you have read to them. They may write it down or you may act as class transcriber. Illustrations by the class will add a lot to the final product.
- 5> Story Circle. Allow the whole class to make up their own version of the story. Have the class sit in a circle. Pick one child to begin the story and go clock-wise around the circle, allowing everyone a chance to add to the story. Depending on the class, you may have to limit each child's contribution to one story event (some children are avid storytellers!).
- 6> Setting. Explain that the setting of a story is where it takes place. How many different settings do the students remember from the book or movie? Because of the physical limitations, a stage version of the story will have fewer settings. Why is that? Have the students guess what settings the stage version will use and which ones would be difficult to use "in real life."
- 7> Fictional Characters. Explain the difference between fictional (Winnie the Pooh, Donald Duck, etc.) and factual (Davy Crockett, Johnny Appleseed, etc.) characters. Explain why the Scarecrow, Tinman, and Lion are fictional characters. What would really happen to someone who chopped his arms and legs off with an ax-- as did the Tinman?

AFTER THE PERFORMANCE:

- 1> Write a letter to the actors. Have the class write to the Company, their favorite actor, or to their favorite character. Use the handy scroll page located elsewhere in this guide. The actors love to receive mail from the audience. AND--they will send a reply to your class (not individual students). The actors receive a lot of letters, so PLEASE make sure the **teacher's name and complete address** are included in the packet with the student letters.

Our Address:

[Again, place your address here]

- 2> Discuss the version of the story. Have the class discuss how the version they saw on stage was different from the film or from other versions you have read. Why was it different? Was the message of the play different from the message of the story or film? This may lead to the exploration of "stage conventions"--why some things have to be adapted differently to be performed on a stage.
- 3> Have the students write a review of the play. What were their favorite parts? Their least favorite? Did anything happen that they didn't understand or seemed confusing? Did they like the music or did it "get in the way of the story?" What did they think of the costumes and scenery? Help them understand that their opinions are most certainly valid but will most likely differ from that of others (and that is OK). Being able to objectively discuss their opinions and others' is definitely a skill that will benefit them the rest of their lives.
- 4> Possible themes for papers or oral reports:
 - ▶ What was your favorite character in the story? Why?
 - ▶ If you were the Wizard of Oz, what would you do to have fun?
 - ▶ If you could live during another time in history, which would it be? Why?
 - ▶ What would you do if your dog or cat suddenly turned into a person?
 - ▶ What would you do if you woke up tomorrow and you were in a strange land?
- 5> Visit the Playwright's web site where you'll find lots of interesting information about this show and about many other aspects of theatre and entertainment for kids.

www.kmrscripts.com

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Social Studies & Geography

- 1> **Improvisation.** One of the purposes of Social Studies is to understand the customs and traditions of other people, to see that there is more than one way to live-- or do anything. A good way to help the students think along these lines is to have them do some role play (improvisations). Have the students make up short skits about *The Wizard of Oz*. They don't need to do the whole story-- just a part of it. They don't need to confine themselves to only the characters in our play (or the film or story)--they can be creative in putting other characters into the situation. The important thing is that they walk in the shoes of someone different, seeing how life can look different from another perspective.
- 2> **Make A Map.** Dorothy began her travels in Munchkinland and traveled to the Emerald City, meeting up with the Scarecrow, Tinman, and Lion along the way. Have your students make a map of the Land of Oz. Have them show where the castles of the Witches of the North, South, East, and West might be located and where the Scarecrow, Tinman, and Lion were found. They might also draw the Yellow Brick Road. Most copies of the Baum book will have a map you may use as a guide. You might also include a scale of miles (1" = 1 mile). On their maps, have the students figure how far Munchkinland is from the Emerald City or how far Tinman was from the Scarecrow.

Math

- 1> **Introduce a graphing activity** by asking which of the characters in *The Wizard of Oz* your students liked the best. Label the different characters of the story on a bar graph (perhaps put a picture on it, too). Survey the class and record the numbers on the graph by coloring one space per student above the correct character. Discuss the information revealed on the graph by asking: Which character was liked the most? Which character was liked the least? Were any characters liked the same? You might also graph their favorite scene or part of the story or whether they liked the book, film, or play better.



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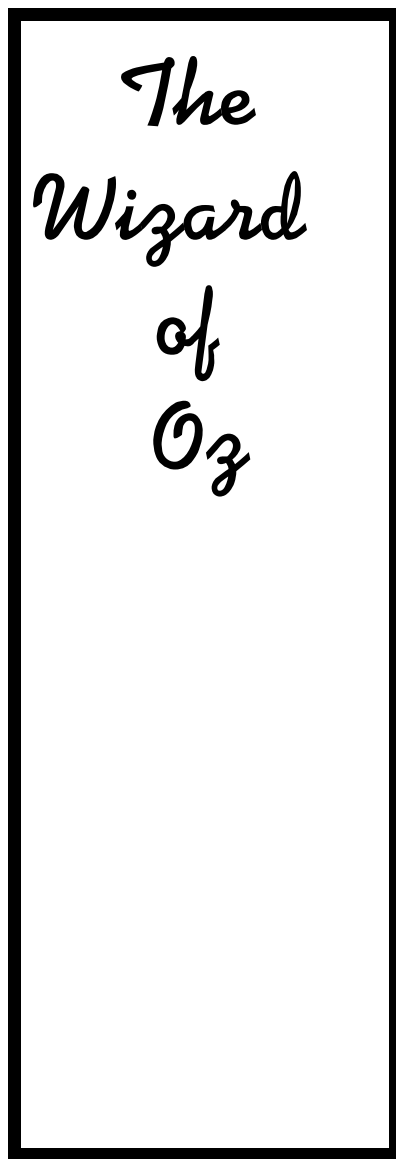
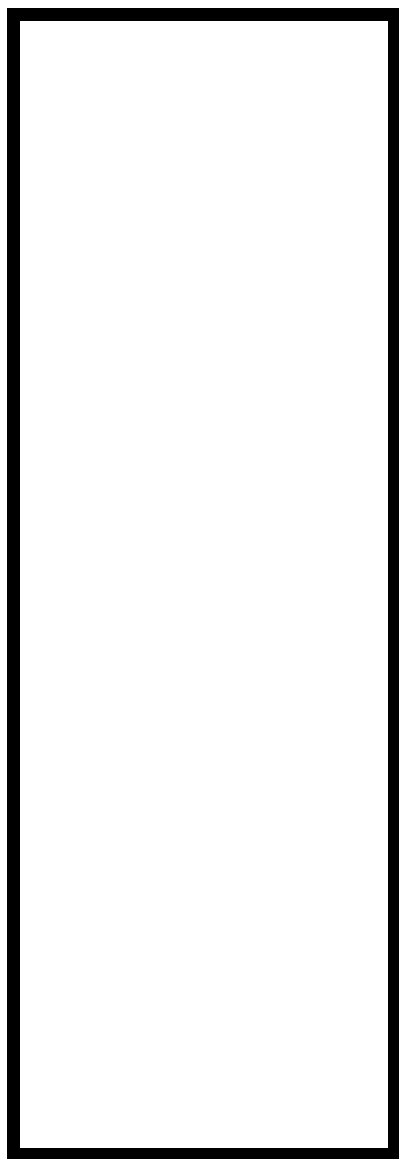
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