

SEUSSICAL STUDY GUIDE

This study guide has been developed to assist you in preparing your students for this theatrical experience. It will help develop your curriculum so your trip here is as meaningful as possible. This guide will provide some pre and post productions exercises, in addition to specific themes of LOYALTY, COMMUNITY, NATURE AND CONSERVATION, AND LANGUAGE.

BACKGROUND:

Our play is based on several Dr. Seuss stories including "*Horton Hears a Who*," "*Horton Hatches the Egg*" and "*Gertrude McFuzz*." It is adapted especially for young audiences from the Broadway version of "*Seussical*."

SYNOPSIS:

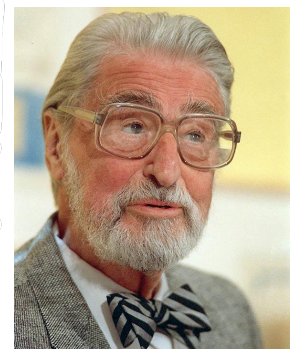
After an introduction to the characters in a song called "*Oh, the Things You Can Think*," the story centers on Horton the Elephant, who finds himself with a double challenge to not only protect his tiny friend Jojo (and all the invisible Whos) from a world of naysayers and dangers, but he must guard an abandoned egg, left to his care by the irresponsible Mayzie. Although Horton faces ridicule, danger, kidnapping and a trial; the intrepid Gertrude McFuzz never loses faith in him, the only one who recognizes "his kind and powerful heart." Ultimately, the powers of friendship, loyalty, family and community are challenged and emerge triumphant, in a story that makes you laugh and cry.

CHARACTERS:

CAT in the HAT
Horton the Elephant
Amazing Mayzie
Gertrude McFuzz
Jojo

ABOUT DR. SEUSS:

The pen name Dr. Seuss was chosen by Theodor Seuss Geisel (1904-1991) when he dropped out of college to work in advertising, drawing political cartoons and writing children's books. By the time he died, he had written and illustrated 44 children's books which were translated into 15 languages and for which he won the Pulitzer Prize. Nearly thirty of his books have been adapted for television or video in addition to development of a Broadway musical and at least one major motion picture.



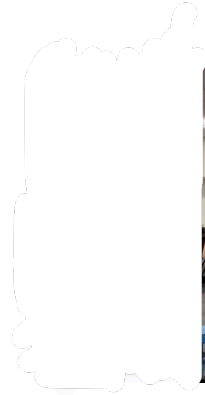
BEFORE AND AFTER SEEING THE MUSICAL:

1. Have your students read "*Horton Hears a Who*", "*Horton Hatches an Egg*" and "*Gertrude McFuzz*."
Reviews the plots and characters.
2. How was the play different than the books they have read.
3. Within the musical there are pieces of several different stories – how many can your students identify?

THEME: LOYALTY

"I meant what I said
And I said what I meant,
An elephant's faithful
One hundred percent." - Horton the Elephant

1. Have your students look up the word loyalty in the dictionary. What does it mean?
 2. Horton promises to care for Mayzie's egg. How does he keep his promise?
- * Who else is loyal in the show?
 - Discuss examples how you can be loyal to someone.
 - Is it difficult to be loyal like Horton?
 - Why are so many promises broken and responsibilities ignored?



THEME: COMMUNITY

"The Whos in Your World."

If we are all to live well together in this world it is important we feel compassion for people we know and people who we don't know. For example the people in North Carolina who lived through hundreds of tornados or the people in Japan who have to deal with the destruction caused by the tsunami.

- Ask your students to identify someone in your school, state, etc. (depending on their age) they do not know.
- Encourage them to make a list of questions that they would like to ask this person if they had the chance.
 - * Example: What questions would they ask a child their age about living through a tornado?



NATURE AND CONSERVATION:

By putting them in a safe place where he can watch over them, Horton makes sure the “Whos” are safe.

- Define and discuss a species/animal that is becoming extinct.
- What are some ways that humans can help protect other species of animals?
- If humans move animals to a new habitat how does that affect the Animal and how will it affect the other animals left in the habitat?



LANGUAGE

- Dr. Seuss is known for creating nonsense words in his stories. Can you think of any made up words in his books. What made up words are in the musical?
- One song in the show is called “Oh the Thinks you can Think.” Discuss what a “think” is? What kind of thinks did Horton and Jojo think?

FINAL ADVICE FROM DR. SEUSS TO YOUR STUDENTS:

“You have brains in your head. You have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself any direction you choose. You’re on your own. And you know what you know. And YOU are the one who’ll decide where to go.”

