



AlphaBet Soup Productions

Professional Theatre for Young Audiences

Entertaining and educating children of all ages since 1987!

PO Box 85 Lombard, IL 60148 | (630) 932-1555 | www.absproductions.com

STUDY GUIDE



Dear Educator,

As an organization that values the arts and education, we have created this Study Guide as a resource for teachers. Our Study Guides are designed to be a valuable tool for teachers in two ways: helping you to prepare your students before the show, and enriching and extending their experience after.

Our goal is to serve principals, teachers and students in their pursuit of Illinois Learning Standards and to integrate the arts with your core curricular subjects.

-- The ABS Team

Mission Statement:

AlphaBet Soup Productions exists to provide Chicago area youth, teachers, and their families a unique theatrical experience that will entertain, inspire, and educate through our professional theatre company.

About Us:

- Winner of the 2008 Illinois Theatre Association Award for Excellence in Theatre for Young Audiences
- Winner of two National Children's Theatre Awards for the scripts *Beauty and the Beast* & *The Jungle Book*

Pre-Performance Questions

1. **How many of you have experienced a live theater performance? What performance did you see?**

2. **What are some of the differences between going to the theater and watching television or going to a movie?**

- Theater features live on-stage actors. They have spent many weeks rehearsing for the performance.
- The audience is a very important part of the performance. Appreciation and enthusiasm for the performers is shown by close attention and participation and applause at the proper times.
- The theater is a very special place. Its atmosphere is entirely different from your home where the television is always available.
- It is easy to identify with live actors. You can see how they use their bodies and voices to convey different emotions.
- Actors wear clothing and make-up to help create the different characters they play.
- There is much more to most live performances than actors. Special sets, lighting, music, costumes, and of course, the audience add to the total experience.

3. **Introduce your students to the following theatrical terms:**

Play • Acts & Scenes • Producer • Program • Spotlights

Costumes • Props • Director • Stage • Curtain Call • Stagehand • Lobby • Usher

Musical Theater • Orchestra Pit • Playwright • Scenery • Makeup • Actor

4. **Discuss the role of the audience and proper theater etiquette.**

- Arrive on time so that you do not miss anything, and so that you will not disturb the rest of the audience.
- It is easier for you (and the rest of the audience) to see and hear the performance if you stay in your seat and listen very carefully.
- In long performances, there will be an intermission. There is no intermission in our production. Each AlphaBet Soup Production runs approximately 60 minutes in length.
- Sing or participate **if** and **only if** you are invited to do so. Your participation is often very important.
- Listen to how the music sets the moods and affects your own feelings.
- Show the cast and crew your appreciation for their hard work with applause. Do this when you like a song or dance or joke, and of course at the end of the show!
- Most importantly... **have fun!**

About *The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs*

Book and Lyrics by Robert Kauzlaric * Music by Paul Gilvary and William Rush

Based on the book by John Scieszka and Lane Smith

THE SYNOPSIS:

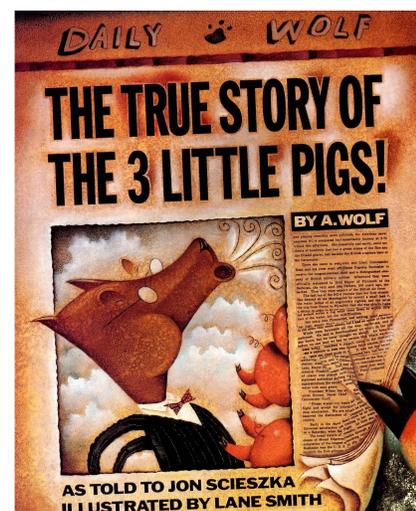
While we may believe that the wolf who visited the three little pigs huffed and puffed to blow the pigs' houses down, it turns out that he simply had a bad cold and had a powerful sneeze. Who could blame him for eating the pigs that died when their houses fell as a result of his sneezing? Furthermore, the wolf was only visiting the pigs in the first place to borrow a cup of sugar to make a cake for his grandmother's birthday. The pigs wouldn't even give him any sugar! When the third pig insulted his grandmother, A. Wolf "got a little crazy." The police found him trying to break down the pig's door, and news reporters wrote the story that we have come to know.

THE CHARACTERS:

- **Lillian Magill**, an outspoken news-piggy
- **Rocky**, the Bailiff
- **Julia**, the Prosecutor pig who has yet to lose a case
- **Judge Prudence**, a hard-headed hog who secretly loves musical theatre
- **A. T. Wolf**, or Al, the wolf on trial for the death of two of the three Little Pigs
- **Boffo Billy**, a medical expert
- **Martha Henderson**, witness
- **Maxwell Rigby**, the third little pig, who built his house of bricks

THE SONGS:

- Piggy World
- Piggsylvania National Anthem
- The Case for the Prosecution
- Cheeseburgers Ain't Cute
- The Pointy, Pointy Maneuver of Blame-osity
- Hurrah! Hooray!



Post-Performance Questions

1. MUSIC

- Was music used in the performance? Was it live or recorded? How could you tell? When was the music used? Why? Did it help develop the plot? What types of music was used, or were different types used?
- Can you describe how different kinds of music would make you have different kinds of feelings?
- When a play is a musical, an actor must have additional skills. Can you name some?
- A musical costs much more to produce. Can you name some additional expenses? (i.e. a music director, a practice piano, a choreographer, etc.)

2. SETS

- Describe the sets used in the play you just saw. What props or details were used to suggest specific times or settings? How could lighting be changed to create a mood, season, time of day, etc.? What materials might have been used in building the sets? How were the sets and props moved on and off the stage? Describe a simple scene (a day in school, a trip to the mall, a ride in the car or on the bus), ask students to describe a basic set for the scene.

3. COSTUMES

- What would you need to know to create costumes for a play (Historical research, sewing, theatrical effects, etc.)?
- Why is the right costume important to the character in the play?

4. DANCE

- Describe the kind of dancing, if any, in the play. How is it different from the kinds of dancing that the class might know? What purposes could dance have in a play?

5. PRODUCTION

- Make a list of all the personnel needed for a play. (director, actors, author, designers-set, costumes, lights & sound, stagehands, choreographer, producer, etc.)

The People of the Court

In *The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs*, the Wolf finds himself on trial. Many of the characters are people you would find in a courtroom.

JUDGE - The judge is in charge of the courtroom. It is the judge's job to listen to everything that everyone says in court. When in court, people call the judge "Your Honor" when they talk to him or her. Another part of the judge's job is to know the law and to decide if there is enough evidence to prove the law was broken.

JURY - Group of people called to a court of law who listen to the facts of a case and decide its outcome.

ATTORNEY - A lawyer whose profession is to give legal advice and to speak for their clients in the court of law.

DEFENDANT - In a criminal case, the person accused of the crime. In this musical, Alexander T. Wolf is the defendant.

PROSECUTOR - To prosecute means to charge someone with a crime. A prosecutor tries a criminal case on behalf of the government.

BAILIFF - A bailiff enforces the rules of behavior in the courtroom.

WITNESS - A person called upon by either side in a lawsuit to give testimony before the court or jury.

COURT REPORTER - A person who makes a word-for-word record of what is said in court and produces a transcript of the proceedings upon request.



Your Review!

Often, plays and musicals will get reviewed by a critic. Now it's your turn! Write a review of *The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs*. Who was your favorite character? What did you like or dislike about the costumes or scenery? Did you like the songs? What was your favorite part?

25
cents

The form is designed for a student to write a review. It includes a decorative banner at the top, a large empty box for a title, and two columns of lined writing areas. The right column includes a section for 'ABOUT THE AUTHOR' with a small box for a picture.

Art & Writing Activity

- Draw a picture of your favorite part of the story. Describe what is happening in your picture below.



Be an Actor Activity

Actors have to be good at remembering – remembering their lines and remembering their moves. They also have to be able to change the way they talk and move to play different roles – with lots of people watching too! Some of our actors in our show have to play multiple different parts. Actors must also be good at speaking and singing clearly so that the audience can always hear what they are saying – otherwise they won't be able to follow the story!

- **Choose a character** from *The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs* and make a list of words to describe them.
 - How do they talk? How do they walk?
 - Are they young or old?
 - Are they a human or an animal?
 - Are they smart? Silly? Friendly? Grumpy?
- **Try walking around the room** as each of these character types. How does playing a character make you walk differently? Now give them a voice – how do they talk?
- **Improvise** little scenes with each other, then see if you can swap characters and play the scenes again. How does it change?
Which character do you find it easier to be?

Thinking of Themes

Advanced Activity

Objective:

Using *The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs*, students become familiar with recognizing themes in a story.

Materials: *The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs* book (written by Jon Scieszka)

Vocabulary: Theme, Plot, Characters, Setting

Lesson:

Discuss the meaning of theme

A theme is an underlying message meaningfully created and connected to the story's plot, characters, and setting.

Ask students to take five minutes to think about the theme of the story in *The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs*.

Think about what message the author was trying to send to the reader. Students can then share their opinions about the theme(s) of *The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs*. Themes will vary from student to student. Point out that sometimes a book is read for the first time and the reader forms an idea of the initial theme. Later, the same book is read again and a different theme emerges depending on the maturity of the reader.

Ask students to choose a particular theme and draw a picture of the scene in which the theme is best articulated to the reader.

Next, students should write a summary explaining the theme, how it is exemplified in the story, and what is drawn on the picture. Ask students to share their summaries and illustrations with the class.