



Chicagoland's premiere Theatre for Young Audiences since 1987!

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

STUDY GUIDE



CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS: Literature Based, Music & Dance, Friendship, Kindness, Reading Reinforcement

DEAR EDUCATOR,

As an organization that values the arts and education, we have created this Study Guide as a helpful resource. 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 State Standards and to integrate the arts with your core curricular subjects.

– The ABS Team

ABOUT US: AlphaBet Soup Productions mission is to provide Chicago area youth, teachers and families a unique theatrical experience that will entertain, educate and inspire

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

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 (or costumes) and make-up to help create the different characters they play.
- There is much more to 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

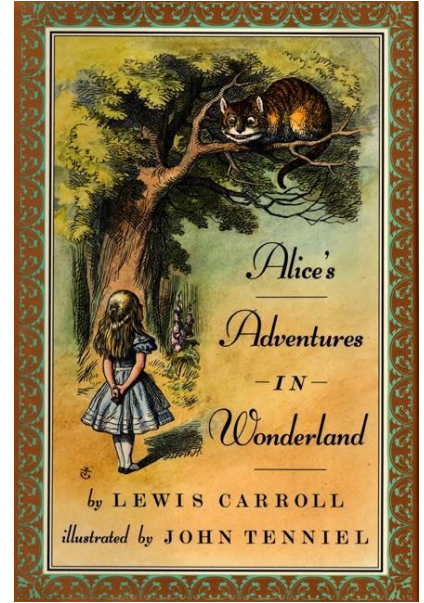
4. **Discuss the role of the audience and proper theater etiquette.**

- 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. This performance will run approximately one hour in length.
- Sing or participate if you are invited to do so. Your participation is often very important!
- Listen to how the music sets the different 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, dance or joke, and of course at the end of the show!
- Most importantly... **have fun!**

About *Alice in Wonderland*

History:

- *Alice in Wonderland* is an 1865 novel written by English mathematician Charles Lutwidge Dodgson under the pen name Lewis Carroll.
- It tells of a girl named Alice falling through a rabbit hole into a fantasy world populated by peculiar characters and creatures.
- The tale plays with logic, giving the story lasting popularity with adults as well as with children.
- It is considered to be one of the best examples of the literary nonsense genre. Its narrative course and structure, characters and imagery have been enormously influential in both popular culture and literature, especially in the fantasy genre.



Our Show:

Our adaptation follows Alice down the rabbit hole and into a whirlwind adventure! Someone has stolen the Queen of Hearts prized tarts, and Alice is the prime suspect. With the help from her new friends, the Cheshire Cat, the Dormouse and the Mad Hatter, can Alice prove her innocence? It's a wild and wacky musical romp through Wonderland!

Characters:

In the AlphaBet Soup version, you will see many fun characters such as:

- Alice • White Rabbit • Chessy, the Cheshire Cat • Mad Hatter
- Queen of Hearts • King of Hearts • The Caterpillar
- The Knave of Hearts (*The Spy*) • The Fashion Flowers • The Dormouse
- Sir Ralph & Sir Norton (*Two Playing Cards*)

About the Author

Lewis Carroll

Lewis Carroll was the pen name of Charles L. Dodgson, author of the children's classics *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking-Glass*.

Born on January 27, 1832 in Daresbury, Cheshire, England, Charles Dodgson wrote and created games as a child. At age 20 he received a studentship at Christ Church and was appointed a lecturer in mathematics. Dodgson was shy but enjoyed creating stories for children. His books including *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* were published under the pen name Lewis Carroll. Dodgson died in 1898.



Carroll suffered from a bad stammer, but he found himself vocally fluent when speaking with children. The relationships he had with young people in his adult years are of great interest, as they undoubtedly inspired his best-known writings and have been a point of disturbed speculation over the years.

Carroll loved to entertain children, and it was Alice, the daughter of Henry George Liddell, who can be credited with his pinnacle inspiration. Alice Liddell remembers spending many hours with Carroll, sitting on his couch while he told fantastic tales of dream worlds. During an afternoon picnic with Alice and her two sisters, Carroll told the first iteration of what would later become *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. When Alice arrived home, she exclaimed that he must write the story down for her.

He fulfilled the small girl's request, and through a series of coincidences, the story fell into the hands of the novelist Henry Kingsley, who urged Carroll to publish it. The book *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* was released in 1865. It gained steady popularity, and as a result, Carroll wrote the sequel, *Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There* (1871). By the time of his death, *Alice* had become the most popular children's book in England, and by 1932 it was one of the most popular in the world.

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? (ie; 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 or time of day? 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 (ie; a day at school, a trip to the store, 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 (ie; 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 in the play. How is it different from the kinds of dancing that the class might know? What purpose could dance have in a play?

5. PRODUCTION

- Make a list of all the personnel needed for a play or musical. (ie; directors, actors, musicians, playwrights, set designers, costumes designers, light & sound designers, stagehands, choreographers, producers, etc.)

Coloring Page for Alice in
Wonderland



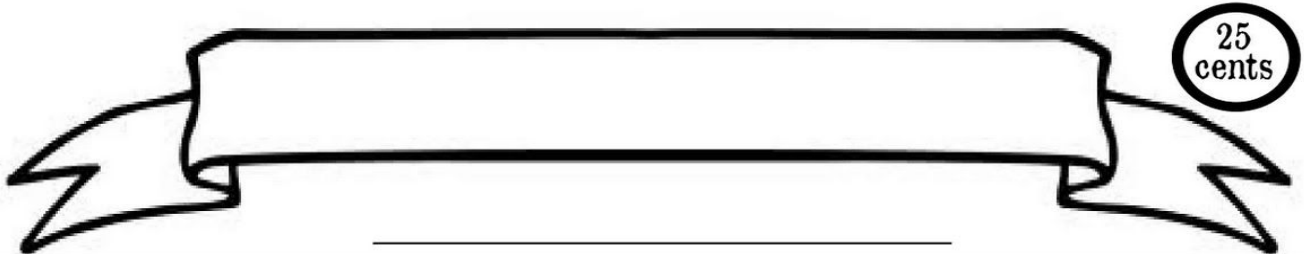
Art & Writing Activity for *Alice in Wonderland*

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



Your Review of *Alice in Wonderland!*

Often, plays and musicals will get reviewed by a critic. Now it's your turn! Write a review of our production of *Alice in Wonderland*. 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?



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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 *Alice in Wonderland* 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 *Alice in Wonderland*, students become familiar with recognizing themes in a story.

Materials: *Alice in Wonderland* book by Lewis Carroll

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 *Alice in Wonderland*.

Think about what message the author was trying to send to the reader. Students can then share their opinions about the theme(s) of *Alice in Wonderland*. 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.

Be a Dramatist

Advanced Activity

Alice in Wonderland was first written as a story by **Lewis Carroll**. When stories are written down, we are told them by the writer; when we see a play, stories are told by living characters on the stage in dialogue form.

Dialogue form is where you only write what is actually spoken by the people or characters in the story. Playwrights give the actors dialogue that tells us the story and lets us know all that we need to know so that we can follow the action.

Here is an excerpt from *Alice in Wonderland*. See if you can turn it into a play script in dialogue form. What things can you leave out of the story? What things do you have to add to make it make sense and be interesting?

“Get to your places!” shouted the Queen in a voice of thunder, and people began running about in all directions, tumbling up against each other; however, they got settled down in a minute or two, and the game began. Alice thought she had never seen such a curious croquet-ground in her life. The balls were live hedgehogs, the mallets flamingoes, and the soldiers had to double themselves up and to stand on their hands and feet, to make the arches. Alice soon came to the conclusion that it was a very difficult game indeed.

The players all played at once without waiting for turns, arguing all the while. She was looking about for some way of escape, and wondering whether she could get away without being seen, when she noticed a curious appearance in the air: it puzzled her very much at first, but, after watching it a minute or two, she made it out to be a grin, and she said to herself “It’s the Cheshire Cat! Now I shall have somebody to talk to.”

What are the problems encountered by the dramatist when adapting a story for the stage? Which bits of the passage were easiest to adapt?

Which did you find were the most difficult?

Literature Adaptations

Advanced Activities

Activity #1 – Updating a Classic Story:

The story *Alice in Wonderland* is a very well known novel by Lewis Carroll. It is considered to be one of literature's most famous stories. Other famous children's stories based on literature include... ***Peter Pan, The Wizard of Oz, The Jungle Book, Treasure Island, Robin Hood, Winnie the Pooh and Charlotte's Web.***

- Review the elements of a story (characters, setting, events and moral) with students.
- Have the students choose a story they are familiar with. Before students proceed with writing steps, discuss different ways in which each story might be updated. For example, *The Wizard of Oz* might be set in a modern-day world, where Dorothy uses a cell phone to find her way home, instead of the yellow brick road.
- As students present their ideas for updating the story, write these ideas on the board to help the students who may have more difficulty imagining these stories in a modern setting.

Prewriting

- Tell students to make these entries on a planning list: Characters (for example, a cat and a dog) Setting (for example, a vacant lot) Events (for example, a dog encounters a cat who has a piece of meat) Moral (for example, pick on animals your own size)
- Encourage students to follow the order of the original story or the order of events they listed and to begin writing a first draft.

Drafting

- Direct students to follow the order of the original story or the order of events they listed and to begin writing a first draft.

Revising/Proofreading

- Have students pair up and help revise each other's drafts, using the checklist or chart created with the help of the teacher.
- Students should check spelling, capitalization, punctuation and word usage.

Have students perform their stories for the class!

Activity #2 - Writing an Original Story

Using the stages of the writing process, have students write an original story that teaches one of the following morals:

- Pride leads to a fall.
- The grass is always greener on the other side.
- The early bird catches the worm.
- Look before you leap.
- Don't count your chickens before they hatch.
- Honesty is the best policy.
- You can't judge a book by its cover.

Before they begin writing, have students choose one of the stories and determine the point or moral that it tries to make. If necessary, narrate a story with animal or human characters involved in the situation in which the moral applies. Remind students that the action of the plot leads up to the lesson of the moral.

When students complete the writing process for their story, have them split up into small groups to perform them. The author of each story should serve as the narrator, with other students portraying the key characters. Allow time for the students to rehearse.

Have students perform their stories for the class!