

BEFORE YOU SEE THE SHOW

The Cat in the Hat

By Katie Mitchell
Adapted from the Book by Dr. Seuss



WHAT THE PLAY IS ABOUT

It's a dreary old rainy day and Sally and her brother are stuck inside their house, staring out the window with nothing to do. But everything quickly changes when they hear a "bump" and in walks a cat wearing a red and white striped hat! Sally and her brother quickly discover that the Cat in the Hat is the most playful and mischievous cat they will ever meet. Suddenly the day is transformed by the Cat and his games. Playing indoors has never been so much fun. The pet fish, however, does not approve. He thinks the Cat should leave at once. The Cat declares that he does not wish to leave and then decides to show the children a new game. He promptly bring in a big red box and introduces Thing One and Thing Two to Sally and her brother. Playtime gets crazy with their antics and the children realize the Things must be stopped. They are finally able to catch the Things but the house is in complete disarray! Will their house ever be the same? Can the kids clean up before mom comes home? With some tricks (and a fish) and Thing Two and Thing One, with the Cat in The Hat, the fun's never done!

ABOUT CHILDSPLAY

Childsplay is a nonprofit professional theatre company of adult actors who perform for young audiences and families.

Our Mission is to create theatre so strikingly original in form, content or both, that it instills in young people an enduring awe, love and respect for the medium, thus preserving imagination and wonder, those hallmarks of childhood that are the keys to the future.

CONNECTION TO STANDARDS

THE BIG IDEA

Power of Imagination

LITERACY

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.K.7

With prompting and support, describe the relationship between illustrations and the story in which they appear (e.g., what moment in a story an illustration depicts).

EARLY LEARNING STANDARDS

Approaches to Learning (Arizona ELS-K.S.4.C1): *Engages in inventive social play.*

STEAM

Science/Health (Arizona PreK.S2.C1.PO3): *Recognize how peers can influence healthy and unhealthy behaviors.*

VISIT OUR
ONLINE RESOURCE CENTER

www.childsplayaz.org/resources

BEHIND THE SCENES OF A TOUR

What is a touring show?

Childsplay creates a play with professional actors, a full set, costumes, props, and sound, then packs everything in a van and brings the show to venues across the nation. We perform in theatres, gyms, cafeterias, and multi-purpose rooms.

How does it all come together?

The design team and production staff have many challenges when creating a tour. They have to consider how many months the production will be on the road, how to fit all the elements (including the actors) into a van, and how to make the load-in, assembly of the set, pre-set of props and costumes, sound check and load-out as easy for the actors as possible. This is accomplished by countless meetings and planning sessions that occur as much as a year before the first performance.

Where do we go and how do we get there?

We travel all across the nation in a large van. In a week's time, a touring company may perform up to 14 shows in as many as 8 different locations. Tours can be on the road anywhere from 6 to 12 months, sometimes even longer. By the end of the tour, the actors may have performed as many as 200 performances.

How do you put everything in just one van?

All of the scenery, props, and costumes that you see in a Childsplay tour must fit into a van. The scenery usually comes apart into several pieces and then stacks, folds or nests together in the van. There is also room in the van for the sound system, toolbox and the cast – which could be as many as 5 actors. If the cast is lucky there is usually room to squeeze in a few suitcases when they go out of town!

What happens when you arrive at a theatre?

Once the cast arrives at to their destination, they have to set everything up in less than one hour, and depending on the size of the cast, with as few as 3 people. The Childsplay scene shop uses what they like to call “tool-less technology” to create tour shows. This means tour sets get assembled with as few tools as possible, sometimes none! Pieces are held in place by screwing in knobs; pieces interlock or rest on posts and sometimes fabric appliqués are Velcroed on to hard scenery frames. Tours also have a portable sound system with sound effects pre-programed on a computer. Once the sound system is set up all the actors have to do is hit one button on the computer to run sometimes very complicated sound sequences.

TALK ABOUT THEATRE ETIQUETTE

It's helpful to review the rules of theater etiquette before seeing a show, especially since this may be the first live theater experience for some of your students.

Please take a moment to discuss the following pointers prior to seeing the performance:



- Use the restroom before seeing the show as we do not have intermission during our school performances.
- Stay seated during the performance.
- Be respectful to the performers and other people in the audience by not talking during the performance.
- Appropriate responses such as applause or laughter are always welcome.
- Food, candy, gum and beverages will not be allowed in the theater/during the performance. Bottled water is allowed.
- Use of cell phones (including text messaging), cameras or any other recording device is not allowed during the performance at any time.

QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE SEEING THE SHOW

- What do you know about *The Cat in the Hat*? What are some pictures you remember seeing in the book?
- How do you think the play will be like the book? How will it be different than the book?
- When you play with a brother, sister, or friend, what sorts of things do you do?
- When the weather isn't nice outside and you can't go swimming or ride a bike, what can you do inside for fun?
- If you didn't have TV, computers, or other electronic devices to watch or play with, what would you do to play?
- What are the rules in your house? What are the rules in your classroom? What happens when rules are broken?
- What does it mean to be responsible? What are some things you are responsible for?



CLOSE READING ACTIVITY

Props Designers as Close Readers

Props Designers are asked to create the objects that the actors hold or use in a play. They start off by reading the script and then have design meetings with the director and the other designers to exchange ideas. The designers pull information about the world of the play from the text to inspire their design choices. For *The Cat in the Hat*, props designer Jim Luther paid close attention to the illustrations in the book to create the props for the show.

Activity: What can you learn from a picture?

Look at illustrations in the book *The Cat in the Hat* on pages 24 & 25 (Now look at what you did!) and page 55 (That is good, said the fish). Describe what you see. What is in the illustration? Who are the characters? What are the characters doing? Can you tell how the characters feel? Now compare the illustration to the photos on the next page. Identify (by circling or pointing) how the illustration and photos are different, and how they are similar.

Extension: Imagine that your bedroom was going to be the inspiration for the props design of Childsplay's next play. Create a drawing of your room for the director and other designers that includes all of your important things.

BOOKS TO CHECK OUT

FIND MORE RESOURCES FOR FURTHER LEARNING

www.pinterest.com/ChildsplayAZ



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WHERE EDUCATION AND IMAGINATION
TAKE FLIGHT

Penny and Her Song by Kevin Henkes
The Dot by Peter Reynolds
Tuesday by David Wiesner
Let's Do Nothing! by Tony Fucile
Pretend by Jennifer Plecas
Princess Super Kitty by Antoinette Portis
Martin on the Moon by Marine Audet
If All the Animals Came Inside by Eric Pinder
Not a Box by Antoinette Portis
Rain! by Linda Ashman
Rainstorm by Barbara Lehman
Cloudette by Tom Lichtenheld

