

Young Audiences of Massachusetts

Educational Materials

Please forward to teachers

7/21/09

ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE

“Characters” Educational Theater: *Beatrix Potter*

Grade Level: 2

Miss Potter brings several of her books, including Peter Rabbit, Jemima Puddleduck, and The Tailor of Gloucester, to your classroom and has a cozy conversation with your students. She reveals how she became an author and talks about her childhood and school days, contrasting these with those of the children gathered before her. She explores the differences amount fact, fantasy, and fiction and concludes her visit with a reading and an original drawing for the class to keep!

LEARNING GOALS:

1. To learn about Beatrix Potter as an author, illustrator, child, and citizen.
2. To hear such words as author, illustrator, publisher, and margin used and described.
3. To understand how to differentiate among fact, fiction, and fantasy and to find examples of all three concepts in Miss Potter’s books.

PRE-ACTIVITY SUMMARY: *Fact/Fantasy*

Read some of Beatrix Potter’s stories and discuss the concepts of reality and fantasy in her work. Discuss the characteristics of the animals in Beatrix Potter’s books. Make sure students understand the fantastical aspects of the stories.

POST-ACTIVITY SUMMARY: *Writing About Pets*

Do you have a class pet? Do students have pets? Discuss the differences between students’ and Beatrix’s pets. Have the students write and illustrate a story about their pets that includes elements of both reality and fantasy.

CURRICULUM LINKS:

English Language Arts, Theater, Women’s Studies, Literature, History and Social Science

PRE-ACTIVITY: *FACT/FANTASY*

LEARNING GOAL:

To understand the difference between fact and fantasy in stories, using Beatrix Potter's books as examples

MATERIALS/PREPARATION:

Beatrix Potter books, sentence strips with fact/fantasy sentences

TIME:

1 hour

TIPS FOR THE TEACHER:

- * Prior to the lesson, write sentences, fact and/or fantasy, on sentence strips.
- * Good internet source for Potter's stories: www.wiredforbooks.org/kids.htm

STEP 1:

Read one of Beatrix Potter's short stories aloud that includes both factual and fantastic narrative.

STEP 2:

Ask the students which parts of the story could really happen and which could not. Discuss the appearance, characteristics, and actions of the animals.

STEP 3:

Discuss how the fantastical characteristics of these animals make the story different than one based in reality. Think of other stories that include both fact and fantasy.

STEP 4:

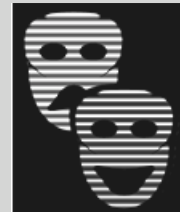
Distribute sentence strips to pairs of students. Ask them to determine whether their sentence is fact or fantasy. If their sentence is fact, have them turn it into fantasy and vice versa. They must use the same idea more or less.

STEP 5:

Share findings with the class.

EXTENSIONS:

- * **List** some activities that people did in the past. List some activities that people do today. How are they different? How are they the same?
- * **Make** a list of things we have in our culture today that came from England (i.e., English muffins, English wool, tea, china).
- * **Read** a few of Beatrix Potter's little books. List which animals are domestic and which are wild. Add types of animals to the list that are not in her books.



POST-ACTIVITY: WRITING ABOUT PETS

LEARNING GOAL:

- * To improve writing skills
- * To differentiate between fact and fantasy

TIME:

1 hour

TIPS FOR THE TEACHER:

- * Examples of illustrations can be found at:
<http://wiredforbooks.org/kids.htm>

STEP 1:

Introduce the class to their new class pet. If this is not possible, talk about an imaginary pet.

STEP 2:

Ask students what types of pets they have. If they do not have any pets, ask them what kind(s) they would like. Discuss why Beatrix Potter had different pets. Discuss the differences between country and city pets. What are the responsibilities of owning a pet?

STEP 3:

Re-read one of Beatrix Potter's books and discuss the role of the animals in the story.

STEP 4:

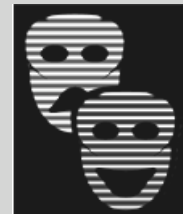
Have students write a story and draw a picture of their own pet(s), or one they would like to have.

STEP 5:

Have students exchange and read each others' papers. Have them write down the factual and fantastic parts of the story on a separate sheet of paper.

EXTENSIONS:

- * **Have** students draw a picture of an animal from their imagination, from a photograph, and then from real life. What are the differences? Beatrix Potter sometimes photographed her subjects before drawing them. Did this make it easier for her to draw? If so, how?
- * **Have** students make up a code as Beatrix did when she wrote in her journal. Ask them to write a friend a note in code and then try to "break" the code of this classmate.



“Characters” Educational Theater: *Beatrix Potter 2*

RESOURCES:

Lane, Margaret. The Tale of Beatrix Potter - A Biography. London: Frederick Warne & Co. Ltd., 1946.

Linder, Leslie. A History of the Writings of Beatrix Potter. London: Frederick Warne & Co. Ltd., 1971.

Taylor, Judy. Beatrix Potter - Artist, Storyteller & Countrywoman. London: Frederick Warne & Co. Ltd., 1987.

<http://wiredforbooks.org/kids.htm>

VOCABULARY:

author

publisher

illustrator

hedgehog

tailor

handkerchief

wainscoting

hen coop

margin

taffeta

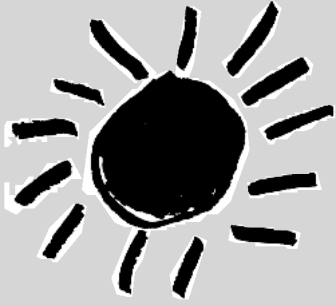
naturalist

ABOUT THE PERFORMER:

A graduate of the Rhode Island School of Design and a former teacher, Marcia Estabrook began performing her characters in 1982. In addition to her Characters Educational Theatre performances, Marcia has been a featured storyteller at the Three Apples and the Big Apple Storytelling Festivals, the John F. Kennedy Library, the Old South Meeting House, the Martin Van Buren Historical Site in Kinderhook, NY, the Deerfield Museum, Old Sturbridge Village, Channel 5's "Tank Away" and Fox 25's "Americana". Marcia has been the keynote speaker at the New England Kindergarten Conference and has also performed and conducted workshops at the CT Storytelling Festival. Marcia appeared in "The Raven and the Dove" and "Town Called a River". She has consulted for the Rhode Island Children's Museum and the National Park Service. Marcia is a member of Solo Together and Historical Entertainments, and is proud to have been twice a nominee for the National Performer of the Year Award from Young Audiences.

ABOUT YOUNG AUDIENCES:

Young Audiences of Massachusetts (YAMA) is the oldest, largest and most utilized arts-in-education organization in the state and one of the largest in a national network of 33 chapters. For over 45 years, YA has been serving as a link between teaching artists and the region's school children, providing dance, storytelling, music and theater programs to children in schools, libraries and hospitals in the form of assembly performances, workshops and residencies. The organization's mission is to encourage lifelong engagement with the arts by making them an integral part of every child's education.



Young Audiences of Massachusetts

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MASSACHUSETTS CURRICULUM FRAMEWORKS CONNECTIONS

“Characters” Educational Theater: *Beatrix Potter*

<i>Language Arts 2</i>	...pose questions, listen to the ideas of others, and contribute their own information or ideas in group discussions.
<i>Language Arts 3</i>	...make oral presentations that demonstrate appropriate consideration of audience, purpose, and the information to be conveyed.
<i>Language Arts 6</i>	...describe and analyze how oral dialects differ from each other in English.
<i>Language Arts 9</i>	...identify the basic facts and essential ideas in what they have read, heard, or viewed.
<i>Language Arts 12</i>	...identify, analyze, and apply knowledge of the structure and elements of fiction and provide evidence from the text to support their understanding.
<i>Language Arts 13</i>	...identify, analyze, and apply knowledge of the structure, elements, and meaning of nonfiction material.
<i>Arts-Theatre 1</i>	Acting...develop acting skills to portray characters who interact in improvised and scripted scenes.
<i>Arts-Theatre 5</i>	Critical Response...describe and analyze their own theatrical work and the work of others using appropriate theater vocabulary.
<i>Arts-Theatre 10</i>	Interdisciplinary Connections...apply knowledge of the arts to the study of English language arts, foreign languages, health, history, and social science, mathematics, and science and technology/engineering.