

The Wonderful Wizard of Oz Study Guide

Objectives

The Wonderful Wizard of Oz is an entertaining and educational epic production that facilitates learning across all age groups. This study guide is an aid for parents and teachers to help children gain important and relevant knowledge of our adaptation, theatre etiquette, performing arts and puppetry. Included are applicable South Carolina standards, a synopsis of the show, types of puppetry used and discussion topics for before and after the show.



South Carolina Educational Standards

Kindergarten - 8th Grade: Visual and Performing Arts

TK-T1-7.3 Describe emotions evoked by theatre experiences.

TK-T8-7.1 Identify audience etiquette to be used during theatre activities and performances.

TK-T3-6.1 Compare and contrast theatre activities and experiences with those encountered in other disciplines.

TK-T5-8.2 Experience live or recorded theatre performances.

T1-T5-6.4 Use theatrical conventions (for example, puppets, masks, props) in theatre activities.

T1&T2-7.2 Describe the characters, setting, events, and technical elements of a particular theatrical experience.

T3-T5-7.2 & T6-7.3 Give oral and written responses to live and recorded theatre performances.

T4-T8-5.3 Research information about various

careers in theatre.

T4-T5-6.1 Demonstrate the understanding that theatre incorporates all arts areas.

T6-8.2 & T7-8.3 Recognize ways that live and recorded theatre relates to real life.

Kindergarten-8th grade: English Language Arts

RL Standard 6: Summarize key details and ideas to support analysis of thematic development.

RL Standard 7: Analyze the relationship among ideas, themes, or topics in multiple media, formats, and in visual, auditory, and kinesthetic modalities.

RL Standard 8: Analyze characters, settings, events, and ideas as they develop and interact

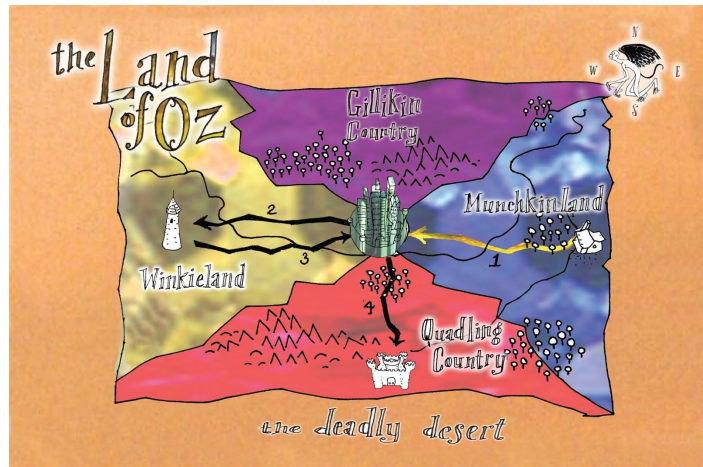
within a particular context.

Context

The Wonderful Wizard of Oz, first published in 1900, is written by L. Frank Baum and illustrated by W.W. Denslow. It is one of the most beloved children's books of all time. Its 1939 film adaptation is equally renowned; it routinely appears on lists of the greatest films in cinema history. The novel's characters and setting of the Land of Oz are firmly entrenched in American pop culture.

In the introduction to the story, Baum writes that "it aspires to being a modernized fairy tale, in which the wonderment and joy are retained and the heartaches and nightmares are left out." This is one of the explanations that he gives for the inspiration for The Wonderful Wizard of Oz.

Our original adaptation of the story, while abridged, draws more heavily from the book than the movie. Two noticeable departures from the movie are the Silver Slippers (as opposed to Ruby Slippers) and Dorothy's trek to the South (Quadling Country) after the Wizard accidentally leaves her behind in the balloon. We also try to convey the geography of Oz as laid out in the map provided in the novel, and the colors associated with each land:



Munchkinland in the East is Blue
Gillikin Country in the North is Purple
Winkieland in the West is Yellow
Quadling Country in the South is Red
Emerald City, located centrally, is Green

Characters

Dorothy

A young and sprightly girl, Dorothy lives with her aunt and uncle on the bleak Kansas prairie. She is energetic and delights in her dog Toto. After a whirling cyclone lands her house in Oz, she embarks on a journey to the Emerald City to ask the Wizard of Oz how to return to Kansas. Dorothy is sweet and simple and represents traditional and idealistic moral values. She lives in the present and does not trouble herself with much anxiety or worry. Throughout her journey, her goal is to return home despite the wonders and magic of Oz.

Uncle Henry

Dorothy's uncle and husband to Aunt Em. He is a Kansas farmer.

Aunt Em

The wife of Uncle Henry and aunt to Dorothy.

Wicked Witch of the East

Killed when Dorothy's house landed on her after the cyclone dropped it in the land of Oz, she wreaked havoc on the Munchkins for years by enslaving them. After her death, Dorothy takes the magic silver slippers from her feet.

Witch of the North

One of the two good witches, the Witch of the North greeted Dorothy upon her arrival in Oz. She is small and elderly and very kind. Although she cannot help Dorothy get back to Kansas, she offers her advice.



The Scarecrow

Rescued by Dorothy from his dull life in a farmer's field, the Scarecrow's greatest wish is to procure brains for himself from the Wizard of Oz. Despite his perceived lack of brains, however, the Scarecrow is exceedingly intelligent and resourceful.

The Tin Woodman

Rescued by Dorothy after rusting in the forest, the Tin Woodman desires a heart from the Wizard of Oz. He used to be a real man and was in love with a Munchkin girl, but due to the Wicked Witch of the East's evil machinations he lost his limbs and eventually became a man of tin without a heart.

Despite his belief that he lacked emotion, he proves himself a kind and sensitive man.

The Cowardly Lion

The Lion encounters Dorothy, Toto, the Scarecrow, and the Tin Woodman in the forest. He claims to be a coward and wishes for the Wizard of Oz to give him courage. However, he proves himself courageous in many situations.

The Wizard of Oz

The Wizard reveals himself to be a ventriloquist and balloonist from Omaha, Nebraska, who accidentally ended up in the land of Oz and was taken for a powerful sorcerer by its Munchkin inhabitants. He prolonged the illusion and had them build the beautiful Emerald City. The Wizard is unmasked by Dorothy and her companions when they return to claim the promises he made them if they were successful in killing the Wicked Witch of the West. He helps the Scarecrow, Tin Woodman, and Lion with their wishes and tries to take Dorothy back to Kansas in a hot air balloon, but it unfortunately departs without her.



Wicked Witch of the West

Given the task to kill the Wicked Witch of the West, Dorothy and her companions venture into her land. The Witch sends the Winged Monkeys to destroy or capture them. Powerful, bitter,

and full of rage, the Witch is happy to enslave Dorothy and the Lion like she had enslaved the Winkies before them. She covets Dorothy's magic slippers, recognizing their power, and tries to take them from her, but this proves her undoing when Dorothy throws a pail of water on her and she melts away into nothingness.

Glinda

The Good Witch of the South, Glinda is young and beautiful. Dorothy appeals to her to help her return to Kansas, but Glinda reveals to her the power of the silver slippers that can take her there right away.

Toto

Dorothy's trustworthy and loving dog.

Hammer-Heads

The Hammer-Heads guard the hill outside of the Country of the Quadlings. They have no arms, but they can extend their heads to hit foes. They try to prevent Dorothy and her friends from crossing the hill, but together they hatch a plan to get past them.

The Wonderful Wizard of Oz Themes



There's No Place Like Home

The Kansas prairie is vast and monochromatic, with dangerous cyclones and an absence of color and beauty. Oz, by contrast, is stunningly gorgeous and fantastical. It is peopled with strange folk, a marvelous emerald city, verdant fields of flowers and miles of healthy farmland, deep forests, and adventures galore. Most of its inhabitants are cheerful, helpful, and virtuous. It seems strange that Dorothy would want to leave this land for her home. However, the importance of realizing the significance of one's roots prevails. Dorothy never questions her return. She is from Kansas, her guardians are there, and she has duties to fulfill. She finds much to love about Oz but knows it is not where she belongs. This is an understandable mindset for a child - no matter how fascinating or exotic a place, it is always more comforting to be in a familiar setting. Baum understood his intended audience well.

Self-sufficiency

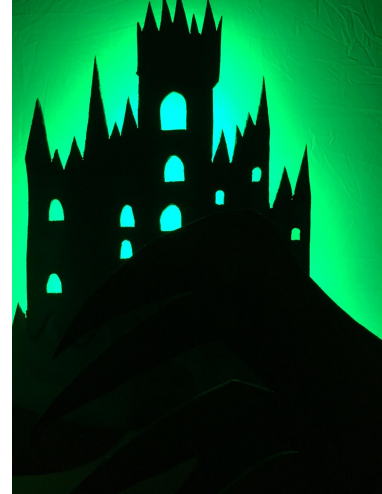
The Scarecrow does not think he possesses brains, the Tin Woodman laments his lack of a heart, and the Lion believes himself bereft of courage. Of course, the viewer will see right away that none of these characters are correct: the Scarecrow is the most intelligent of the bunch, the Tin Woodman is filled with compassion, and the Lion is full of courage and nobility. All of them already possess what it is they think they lack, but they are unable to see this for themselves. The same suffices for Dorothy, who was already wearing the silver shoes that could have taken her home without help from the Witch. As a fairy tale, the moral of finding one's inner strength is enduring.

The Importance of Friendship

The novel makes it clear how important friendship is. First, Dorothy's only friend on the bleak and windswept Kansas prairie is her faithful canine companion, Toto. But the even more pronounced benefits of friendship come from Dorothy's interactions with the Scarecrow, Tin Woodman, and Lion. All three provide emotional and physical assistance to the young girl as she travels to the Emerald City to try and get back to Kansas. Her friends provide counsel and advice and together solve the journey's thorniest problems.. All three of them volunteer to accompany her on her final leg of the journey to Glinda's castle, although they all had other duties to fulfill. All in all, it is unlikely Dorothy would have gotten very far without them.

Good and Evil

Good and Evil are literally and figuratively diametrically opposed to each other in The Wonderful Wizard of Oz. There are two Wicked Witches and two Good Witches. They reside across from each other on the geographic axis of North, South, East, and West. The evil witches are distinguished by their enslavement of the people who live in the land they made their home, and their quest for power. The Wicked Witch of the West tried to destroy Dorothy and her friends numerous times. The Good Witches, however, provide counsel and guidance.



The Value of the Journey

Dorothy's route back to Kansas is not simple. Even though there was a simple solution from the beginning - the silver shoes - she did not know about it and profited far more from the lengthier, more dangerous journey it took to get back to Kansas. This journey provided her with several life lessons. She learned the value of friendship through her three traveling companions. She came face-to-face with the reality of duplicity and lies through the Wizard's shocking reveal as an ordinary man. She saw the fight between Good and Evil play out through the Witches. And, finally, she learned to trust herself and that the answers to her problems lie within her. She benefited from the company of others but the solution of how to get back to Kansas could be found within all along. This journey, then, gave her much more insight into herself.

Types of Puppets used in the Show

Marionettes: Puppets controlled from above by strings. In our performances, the puppeteers are hidden, standing on bridges six feet above the stage. The marionettes are 9.5' tall from their controls to their feet.

Rod Puppets: Puppets controlled by rods (control sticks) from behind or below.

Discussion Topics

Before the Show:

- *What is a marionette?
- *What is appropriate theatre etiquette?
- *How is live performance different than watching a movie or tv?
- *Compare and contrast different types of live performance (puppet shows, magicians, music, circus, dance etc)
- *What types of live performance or puppetry are your students/child already familiar with? (Some suggestions: Sesame Street, the Muppet Movies, and various characters from Star Wars, such as Yoda, Jabba the Hutt, and BB-8)

*Review the basic outline of the stories in this show with a description of characters

After the Show:

*Describe the different visual aspects of the show (lights, types of puppets, set design, etc)

*What was the main idea? Describe the characters, how they interacted and why it was important to the story.

*Discuss the plot elements and themes. How were the stories similar or different from versions

they may have read or seen before?

*Draw a picture of the puppet show with the characters and let them describe to other students

who the characters were and what they did within the story.

*Which parts of the performance did you like? Which did you not like? Why?

*What do you think it would be like to be a puppeteer? What goes into making a show? (writing, building, planning, music, lights performance, etc)

Thank you for coming to the show!

We would love your feedback! If you or your students would like to send us a letter, please address to:

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