



## **STUART LITTLE**

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*Applause Series Curriculum Guide*  
March 28, 2014

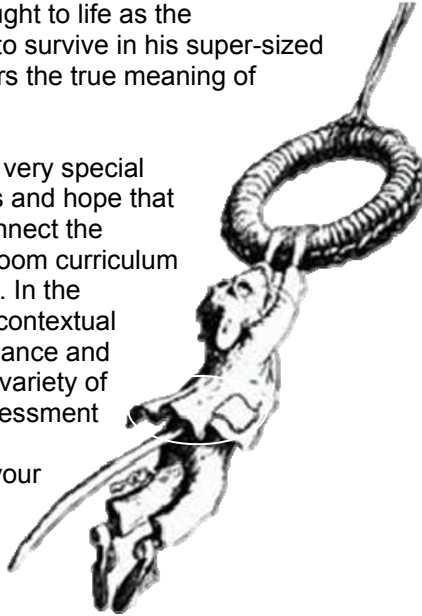


# STUART LITTLE

## Dear Teachers,

Thank you for joining us for the Applause Series presentation of *Stuart Little* based on the classic tale by E.B. White, with illustrations by Garth Williams. *Stuart Little* tells the surprising story of a most unusual mouse who happens to be born into an ordinary New York family. All the charm, wisdom, and joy of E. B. White's classic novel are brought to life as the mild-mannered Stuart learns to survive in his super-sized world of humans and discovers the true meaning of family, loyalty and friendship.

We thank you for sharing this very special experience with your students and hope that this study guide helps you connect the performance to your in-classroom curriculum in ways that you find valuable. In the following pages, you will find contextual information about the performance and related subjects, as well as a variety of discussion questions and assessment activities. Some pages are appropriate to reproduce for your students; others are designed more specifically with you, their teacher, in mind. As such, we hope that you are able to "pick and choose" material and ideas from the study guide to meet your class's unique needs.



See you at the theater,

Des Moines Performing Arts Education Team

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This study guide was compiled and written by Michelle McDonald and edited by Karoline Myers.

# ABOUT DES MOINES PERFORMING ARTS



Des Moines Performing Arts is a private, nonprofit organization and is an important part of central Iowa's cultural community. It is recognized nationally for excellence as a performing arts center and is committed to engaging the Midwest in world-class entertainment, education, and cultural activities.

Des Moines Performing Arts presents professional touring productions, including theater direct from Broadway, world-renowned dance companies, family programming, comedy, and concerts.

Education and Community Engagement programs are core to Des Moines Performing Arts' mission as a nonprofit performing arts center.

**Public education programs** allow audience members and local artists to make meaningful and personal connections to the art they experience on our stages. Guest lectures and Q&As with company members allow audiences to explore the inner workings of the performance. In addition, master classes, workshops, and summer camps taught by visiting performers give local actors, dancers, and musicians the chance to increase their skills by working directly with those who know what it takes to succeed on the professional stage.

Through its **K-12 School Programs**, Des Moines Performing Arts strives to ensure that central Iowa students have affordable access to high quality arts experiences as part of their education. More than 50,000 students and educators attend curriculum-connected school matinee performances through the Applause Series annually. In addition, Des Moines Performing Arts sends teaching artists into the schools to provide hands-on workshops and residencies in special opportunities that engage students directly in the creative process. And, through its partnership with the John F. Kennedy Center, Des Moines Performing Arts provides teachers with in-depth professional development training on how to use the arts in their classrooms to better impact student learning.

## DID YOU KNOW?

More than 350,000 people visit Des Moines Performing Arts venues each year.

Des Moines Performing Arts opened in 1979.

Des Moines Performing Arts has three theater spaces:

- *Civic Center, 2744 seats*
- *Stoner Theater, 200 seats*
- *Temple Theater, 299 seats (located in the Temple for the Performing Arts)*

No seat is more than 155 feet from center stage in the Civic Center.

Cowles Commons, situated just west of the Civic Center, is a community gathering space that is also part of Des Moines Performing Arts. The space features the Crusoe Umbrella sculpture by artist Claes Oldenburg.

As a nonprofit organization, Des Moines Performing Arts depends on donor funding to support facilities, programming, and education programs.

The Applause Series started in 1996. You are joining us for our 18th season of school performances.



# GOING TO THE THEATER . . .



## YOUR ROLE AS AN AUDIENCE MEMBER

Attending a live performance is a unique and exciting opportunity. Unlike the passive experience of watching a movie, audience members play an important role in every live performance. As they act, sing, dance, or play instruments, the performers on stage are very aware of the audience's mood and level of engagement. Each performance calls for a different response from audience members. Lively bands, musicians, and dancers may desire the audience to focus silently on the stage and applaud only during natural breaks in the performance. Audience members can often take cues from performers on how to respond to the performance appropriately. For example, performers will often pause or bow for applause at a specific time.

As you experience the performance, consider the following questions:

- \* What kind of live performance is this (a play, a dance, a concert, etc.)?
- \* What is the mood of the performance? Is the subject matter serious or lighthearted?
- \* What is the mood of the performers? Are they happy and smiling or somber and reserved?
- \* Are the performers encouraging the audience to clap to the music or move to the beat?
- \* Are there natural breaks in the performance where applause seems appropriate?

### A SPECIAL EXPERIENCE

Seeing a live performance is a very special experience. Although it is not required, many people enjoy dressing up when they attend the theater.

## THEATER ETIQUETTE

Here is a checklist of general guidelines to follow when you visit the Civic Center:

- \* Leave all food, drinks, and chewing gum at school or on the bus.
- \* Cameras, recording devices, and personal listening devices are not permitted in the theater.
- \* Turn off and put away all cell phones, pagers, and other electronic devices before the performance begins.
- \* Do not text during the performance.
- \* Respect the theater. Remember to keep your feet off of the seats and avoid bouncing up and down.
- \* When the house lights dim, the performance is about to begin. Please stop talking at this time.
- \* **Talk before and after the performance only.** Remember, the theater is designed to amplify sound. Other audience members and the performers on stage can hear your voice!
- \* Use the restroom before the performance or wait until the end. If you must leave the theater during the show, make sure the first set of doors closes before you open the second — this will keep unwanted light from spilling into the theater.
- \* Appropriate responses such as laughing and applauding are appreciated. Pay attention to the artists on stage — they will let you know what is appropriate.
- \* Open your eyes, ears, mind, and heart to the entire experience. Enjoy yourself!

GOING TO THE THEATER information is adapted from the Ordway Center for the Performing Arts study guide materials.

# CIVIC CENTER FIELD TRIP INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS



**Thank you for choosing the Applause Series with Des Moines Performing Arts. Below are tips for organizing a safe and successful field trip to the Civic Center.**

## ORGANIZING YOUR FIELD TRIP

- \* Please include all students, teachers, and chaperones in your ticket request.
- \* After you submit your ticket request, you will receive a confirmation e-mail within five business days. Your **invoice will be attached to the confirmation e-mail.**
- \* Payment policies and options are located at the top of the invoice. **Payment (or a purchase order) for your reservation is due four weeks** prior to the date of the performance.
- \* Des Moines Performing Arts reserves the right to cancel unpaid reservations after the payment due date.
- \* Tickets are not printed for Applause Series shows. Your invoice will serve as the reservation confirmation for your group order.
- \* Schedule buses to arrive in downtown Des Moines at least 30 minutes prior to the start of the performance. This will allow time to park, walk to the Civic Center, and be seated in the theater.
- \* Performances are approximately 60 minutes unless otherwise noted on the website and printed materials.
- \* All school groups with reservations to the show will receive an e-mail notification when the study guide is posted. Please note that study guides are only printed and mailed upon request.

## DIRECTIONS AND PARKING

- \* Directions: From I-235, take Exit 8A (Downtown Exits) and the ramp toward 3<sup>rd</sup> Street and 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue. Turn onto 3<sup>rd</sup> Street and head south.
- \* Police officers are stationed at the corner of 3<sup>rd</sup> and Locust Streets and will direct buses to parking areas with hooded meters near the Civic Center. Groups traveling in personal vehicles are responsible for locating their own parking in ramps or metered (non-hooded) spots downtown.
- \* Buses will remain parked for the duration of the show. At the conclusion, bus drivers must be available to move their bus if necessary, even if their students are staying at the Civic Center to eat lunch or take a tour.
- \* Buses are not generally permitted to drop off or pick up students near the Civic Center. If a bus must return to school during the performance, prior arrangements must be made with Des Moines Performing Arts Education staff.

## ARRIVAL TO THE CIVIC CENTER

- \* When arriving at the Civic Center, please have an **adult lead your group** for identification and check-in purposes. You may enter the building through the East or West lobbies; a Des Moines Performing Arts staff member may be stationed outside the building to direct you.
- \* Des Moines Performing Arts staff will usher groups into the building as quickly as possible. Once inside, you will be directed to the check-in area.
- \* Applause seating is not ticketed. Ushers will escort groups to their seats; various seating factors including group size, grade levels, arrival time, and special needs seating requests may be used to assign a group's specific location in the hall.
- \* We request that an **adult lead the group into the theater and other adults position themselves throughout the group**; we request this arrangement for supervision purposes, especially in the event that a group must be seated in multiple rows.
- \* Please allow ushers to seat your entire group before rearranging seat locations and taking groups to the restroom.
- \* As a reminder, children under the age of three are not permitted in the theater for Applause performances.

## IN THE THEATER

- \* In case of a medical emergency, please notify the nearest usher. A medical assistant is on duty for all Main Hall performances.
- \* We ask that adults handle any disruptive behavior in their groups. If the behavior persists, an usher may request your group to exit the theater.
- \* Following the performance groups may exit the theater and proceed to their bus(es).
- \* If an item is lost at the Civic Center, please see an usher or contact us after the performance at 515.246.2355.

### QUESTIONS?

Please contact the Education department at [education@desmoinesperformingarts.org](mailto:education@desmoinesperformingarts.org) or 515.246.2355

Thank you!



# VOCABULARY



Photo by Karen Almond



macaulay.cuny.edu

**Central Park:** A large park in Manhattan, half a mile wide and over two miles long.

**drain:** a pipe or channel that carries off water.



Ericsplumbinganddrain.com



Anoldfashioned.com

**handkerchief:** a small fabric square used especially for wiping one's nose, eyes, face.

**ice skate:** to glide or propel oneself over ice.



Wirednewyork.com

**illustration:** a drawing, picture or other type of artwork that helps make something clear or attractive. Picture books use illustrations to help tell stories.

**mammal:** warm-blooded animals that give birth to live young and are more or less covered in hair.

**mouse:** a small mammal belonging to the rodent family with rounded ears, pointed snout and hairless tail.



**mouse hole:** the entrance to a mouse's burrow or home.



Space.com

**New York City:** a seaport city in the state of

New York along the Hudson river, comprised of the boroughs of Manhattan, Queens, Brooklyn, the Bronx, and Staten Island.

**Ping-Pong:** a game resembling tennis, played on a table with small paddles and a hollow plastic ball.



Stanfordflipside.com

**schooner:** a ship that usually has two masts with the larger mast located toward the center and the shorter mast toward the front.



Schoonerman.com



Blindalley.com

**shade:** a roll of cloth or plastic that is hung at the top of a window and that can be pulled

down to cover the window.

**travel:** to go on a journey, usually by car, train, plane, or ship.



lboomer.com



Commons.wikimedia.org

**whiskers:** the long, stiff, bristly hairs growing around the mouth of certain animals.

# ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE



Fans of the book *Stuart Little* will delight in this one act play that brings the pages of the classic story to life. This well-loved story celebrates the themes of family, loyalty and friendship.

**Run Time:** Approx. 60 minutes

## PAGE TO STAGE

*Stuart Little* was written by E.B. White and illustrated by Garth Williams. The book was first published in 1945.

Over the years, there have been many adaptations of the beloved story *Stuart Little*. These adaptations range from film and television to theater. You will have the thrill of watching Stuart's story unfold live and see how this little mouse made a big name for himself.

"..many years ago I went to bed one night in a railway sleeping car, and during the night I dreamed about a tiny boy who acted rather like a mouse. That's how the story of *Stuart Little* got started" -E.B. White

## SYNOPSIS

Stuart Little tells the surprising story of a most unusual mouse who happens to be born into an ordinary New York City family. In no time at all, his life becomes a series of adventures and misadventures as he learns to survive in his super-sized world of humans.

First, the well-dressed Stuart is trapped in a window-blind while doing his exercises, and Snowbell, the malevolent family cat, places his little hat and cane outside a mouse hole, panicking the whole family. Stuart then sails to victory in an exciting boat race in Central Park.

Very soon, the Little family adopts a beautiful bird named Margalo who becomes Stuart's best friend. Unfortunately, Margalo is forced to flee the city when she is warned that one of Snowbell's friends intends to eat her. Leaving his home and family behind, Stuart sets out in a gasoline-powered model car on his most thrilling adventure of all—to see the country and bring Margalo home.

Along the way, he encounters a variety of colorful characters and exciting situations that test his spirit. Hopeful and determined in his quest to find Margalo, Stuart discovers the true meaning of life, loyalty and friendship.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR BEFORE THE SHOW

1. What is theater? What is the difference between live theatre and a movie or television?
2. Imagine you are an actor on stage. What kind of part would you like to play?
3. How would you like the audience to respond to your performance?
4. Why do we applaud at the end of a performance?
5. How do you think the play *Stuart Little* will be like the book? How do you think it will be different?

'About the Performance' information adapted from Dallas Children's Theater press release materials.



# ABOUT DALLAS CHILDREN'S THEATER



*Stuart Little* comes to Des Moines from a theater company called Dallas Children's Theater from Dallas, Texas.

## WHO THEY ARE

In response to the growing need for professional family theater, Robyn Flatt and Dennis Vincent founded Dallas Children's Theater in 1984. Since then, DCT has grown to be one of the top five family theaters in the nation. DCT serves over 250,000 young people each year through its local main-stage productions, national tour, educational programming and outreach activities.

As the only major organization in Dallas focusing on theater for youth and families, DCT produces literary classics, original scripts, folk tales, myths, fantasies and contemporary dramas that foster multicultural understanding, confront topical issues and celebrate the human spirit. Each season is thoughtfully chosen to produce plays that are engaging, enriching, and educational.

## TOURING PROGRAM

Dallas Children's Theater travels coast to coast with professional large-scale productions designed with the mission to stir the heart, stretch the mind and promote education. With such a vast and impressionable audience to serve, DCT's productions usually target a different age range every other touring season.

DCT's local touring program began in 1985 and expanded to statewide and regional venues in 1989. In 1996, DCT launched its first national tour. September 2006 marked DCT's introduction to the world stage, as the theater was honored with an invitation to perform at the 2006 *Shanghai International Children's Culture and Arts Expo* in Shanghai, China.

Dallas Children's Theater most recently appeared at the Civic Center in April 2013 with their adaptation of Jon Scieszka's *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs*.

## PAST TOURING PRODUCTIONS

*African Tales of Earth and Sky*

*And Then They Came for Me: Remembering the World of Anne Frank*

*Cinderella or Everyone Needs a Fairy Godmother*

*Coyote Tales*

*Giggle, Giggle, Quack*

*Heidi*

*If You Give a Pig A Party*

*Jack and the Giant Beanstalk*

*A Midnight Cry The Underground Railroad To Freedom*

*Most Valuable Player*

*Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters*

*The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fair(l)y (Stoopid) Tales*

*Young King Arthur*

*The True Story of the Three Little Pigs*



# ABOUT THE AUTHOR AND THE ILLUSTRATOR



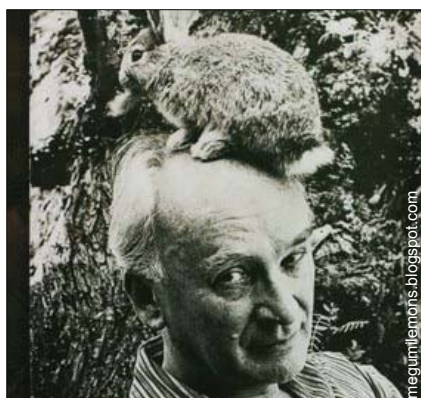
www.mutantspace.com

Every piece of art — a book, a painting or a performance — is created by a person or a group of people. Learn about E.B. White and Garth Williams, the artists who created the book that inspired the show.



www.glossophila.org

Author E.B. White.



megumlemons.blogspot.com

Illustrator Garth Williams.

## E.B. WHITE, THE AUTHOR

Elwyn Brooks White was born in Mount Vernon, New York in 1899. For many years, he was contributing editor of *The New Yorker* magazine. However, E.B. White is best known for his children's books.

The character of Stuart Little first appeared to E.B. White in a dream in the 1920's. White wrote a few episodes about this boy who looked like a mouse and then tucked the stories away in a drawer, thinking he might someday share them with his nieces and nephews. Some twenty years later he expanded and collected the stories as *Stuart Little*, published in 1945. It was White's first children's book.

His second book was *Charlotte's Web*, in 1952, which is one of the most popular children's books of all time and was named as "the best American children's book of the past two hundred years" by The Children's Literature Association.

From 1933, E.B. White lived on a farm in Maine with his wife, Katherine. He died in 1985.

ABOVE: Artist Thomas Allen creates book art by cutting illustrations to create a 3D image. Above is a piece he created using a Garth Williams illustration from *Stuart Little*.

## GARTH WILLIAMS, THE ILLUSTRATOR

Garth Williams was born in New York City in 1912. His parents were from England and were both artists. His father was a cartoonist and his mother was a landscape painter. He studied architecture and worked for a time as an architect's assistant before deciding to become an artist.

Generations of children picture their favorite fictional characters as drawn by Garth Williams: the dapper mouse Stuart Little; the kindhearted spider Charlotte and her friend Wilbur in *Charlotte's Web*; and characters in *The Little House on the Prairie* books by Laura Ingalls Wilder. He also wrote the text for seven children's books, but it is primarily as an illustrator that his work is cherished.

He said that he used his illustrations to try to "awaken something of importance . . . humor, responsibility, respect for others, interest in the world at large." Garth Williams died in 1996.

# THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE PRODUCTION



There are many jobs in the theater. From the people who develop the show to the performers on stage, it takes a lot of effort and teamwork to bring a story to the stage.

Help your students think about the many jobs in the theater by reviewing the following about the people who work to create the play *Stuart Little*.

## AUTHOR

Some musicals and plays are inspired by books. E.B. White's *Stuart Little* was adapted for the stage production that you will see.

## WRITER OF THE STAGE ADAPTATION

A play based on a book has to be adapted for the stage. The writer must take the story from the book and figure out what to keep, take out, or add to make the story work for the stage.

## DIRECTOR

The director is in charge of telling the actors where to go on stage and how to interpret their characters. The director guides all the designers to make sure everyone is telling the same story.

## ACTORS

Actors are all of the people who you see on the stage. They work together as a team to rehearse the play, memorize their lines, and tell the story.

## SET DESIGNER

The set designer creates the world where the actors tell the story. The set designer imagines and draws all of the pieces that you see on the stage. The set designer also figures out how the stage changes from scene to scene.

## COSTUME DESIGNER

The costume designer works with the director to create the clothes and costumes that the actors wear to help them become the characters. Each actor may have many "costume changes."

## LIGHTING DESIGNER

The lighting designer makes sure the audience can see what they are supposed to see and use lighting and effects to create a mood or scene.

## PROPS MASTER

The props master carefully reads the script and collects, buys, or makes any of the objects that an actor picks up or carries.

## BACKSTAGE CREW

There are lots of people backstage who build and operate the scenery, costumes, props, lights, and sound during the performance. They rehearse with the actors to learn their "cues" and make the show run smoothly.

## STAGE MANAGER

During the show, the stage manager "calls the cues," which means he or she makes sure all the show elements, like lights, sound, and actor entrances and exits are timed correctly.

## AUDIENCE

There can be no performance without you, the audience. You are a collaborator in the performance and your polite attention and applause is one of the most important parts of any live show.





# ALL ABOUT MICE

In the show, the Little family welcome a son into their family, who happens to also be a mouse. Learn more about mice and how you might be able to take care of a mouse if it lived in your house.

## WHAT IS A MOUSE?

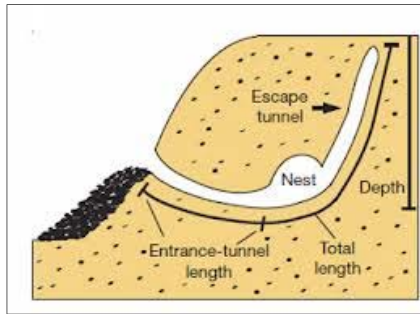
A mouse (plural: mice) is a small mammal belonging to the order of rodents, characteristically having a pointed snout, rounded ears and a long almost hairless tail. There are many varieties of mice. Mice are good jumpers, climbers and swimmers. They also have very keen hearing.



Mice that live in homes often eat human food.



A female house mouse can have up to a dozen babies every three weeks. This means she could have as many as 150 offspring in a single year!



Burrows typically have long entrances and are equipped with escape tunnels/routes. Image: Phenomena.nationalgeographic.com

## HABITAT AND HOME

Mice are found in nearly every country and every type of terrain. The common house mouse lives in association with humans and can cause damage to crops or stored food. In some places, certain kinds of field mice are also common. They are known to invade homes for food and occasionally shelter.

In the wild, mice build nests in burrows, stumps, brush piles, buildings, hollow trees, old bird or squirrel nests and under logs. Nests are made with grass, leaves, hair, feathers, milkweed, silk, shredded bark, moss, and cloth. Some mice dig burrows on beaches in warmer climates.

## FOOD

Despite their tiny bodies (and even smaller stomachs), mice eat between 15 and 20 times a day. Because of their frequent eating habits, they prefer to build their homes near food sources.

In nature, mice are herbivores and will consume any kind of fruit or grain from plants. However, mice adapt well to urban areas and are known for eating almost all types of food scraps.



A mouse family in their nest of grass.

## MICE AS PETS

Well looked-after mice can make ideal pets. They can be playful, loving and can grow used to being handled. Like pet rats, pet mice should not be left unsupervised outside as they have many natural predators.

Mice are careful groomers and as pets they never need bathing. Some essential items to care for a pet mouse are a small cage with a secure door, special pellets and seed-based food, and bedding usually made of hardwood pulp or shredded, ink-free paper.

## DID YOU KNOW?

- ◇ Mice are nocturnal.
- ◇ Mice range in color from bright white to a mixture of browns and grays.
- ◇ Mice can squeeze through a space as small as a dime.
- ◇ Most mice have tails that are as long as their bodies.
- ◇ Mice can jump up to one foot in the air.
- ◇ Mice use their whiskers to sense temperature changes and to detect surfaces they are walking on.
- ◇ Male mice tend to have a stronger odor than females.



# ABOUT NEW YORK CITY



*Stuart Little* lives with his family in New York City. Learn more about the big city that this little mouse calls home.

## GEOGRAPHY

New York City, nick-named “The Big Apple”, is located in the southern part of the State of New York, at the mouth of the Hudson River. New York City is made up of five boroughs—The Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, Queens, and Staten Island. As many as 800 languages are spoken in New York City.

Approximately 8.3 million people live in New York City!



New York City is located in the southern tip of the State of New York on the harbor.  
Image: enchantedlearning.com

## HOMES

Residents in New York City typically do not have yards covered in grass and trees. Instead, many people live in homes with little to no space between the buildings, such as Brownstone apartments. Some apartment buildings are as high as skyscrapers.

## CENTRAL PARK

Central Park is a public park located in the center of Manhattan in New York City. The park opened in 1857 and has now grown to 843 acres, including seven water bodies, lawns and woodlands and 24,000 trees. There is always something to do in Central Park. You can visit the Central Park Zoo, find one of the 21 playgrounds, view one of 48 fountains and sculptures, exercise, catch a local baseball game, or simply sit on the grass and enjoy a good book and a picnic.

## BROADWAY

New York City is the home of 40 professional theaters which make up the Broadway Theater District in Manhattan. Broadway is also the name of one of the streets that runs through this district.

ABOVE: Times Square at night with its many advertisement billboards lit up.  
Image courtesy of [timessquarenyc.org](http://timessquarenyc.org)



Brownstone apartments in New York City. Have you ever seen a building like this?  
Image: [www.stephenleven.com](http://www.stephenleven.com)



Central Park in New York City.  
Image: [www.powertripberkeley.com](http://www.powertripberkeley.com)

# PRE-SHOW EXPLORATION ACTIVITIES

## 1) PREPARE FOR THE JOURNEY

**Goal:** To prepare young students for what may be their very first performance experience.

**Explanation:** In this activity, lead a class discussion that a) accesses students' prior knowledge of performances and b) prepares them for what to expect when they visit the theater to see *Stuart Little*.

### Activity:

1. Ask students about their experiences with performance (watching older siblings in a school play, going to a concert, etc.)
2. Share the journey with them step by step. Talk about:
  - ◇ Going into a special 'theater' space.
  - ◇ Being an 'audience'. They are a very important part of the performance. The actors need them.
  - ◇ What is the job of the audience? To look and listen.
  - ◇ What is going to happen? They will be watching 'actors' tell a story with words, movement, and props.
  - ◇ A performance usually finishes with clapping.

### Follow-up Questions:

1. Why do you think going to a performance is special experience? How is it different from a movie?
2. Why is it important to look and listen during a performance?
3. What different things do you think actors have to do to prepare for a performance?



## 2) WORDS TO LIVE BY

**Goal:** To use the context of a sentence to explain quotations.

**Explanation:** Stuart Little loved famous quotations and "words to live by". In this activity, students will use the context of the sentence to figure out the meanings of different quotations and create new quotations.

### Activity:

1. Give students the following quotations. Students may work alone or in groups.

- ◇ "The way may be long but even a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step."
- ◇ "Size has nothing to do with it. It's temperament and ability that count."
- ◇ "Ice cream is important, Very important."
- ◇ "Never forget your summer times, my dears."
- ◇ "Sleep dwell upon thine eyes, peace in thy breast."

2. Have each student or group write down what they think each quotation means. You may need to have a dictionary available, if needed.
3. Have each group share what they think it means. Note that there may be more than one correct answer.
4. Next, have each student or group of students make up their own quotation or "words to live by". This can be related to the book or not.
5. Have the students share aloud their new quotations and meanings of the quotations.

### Follow-Up Questions:

1. What challenges did you face in this activity? Was it difficult to come up with a quotation?
2. How were the quotations that the class created similar? How were they different?

### Additional Questions for After the Show:

1. Did you hear Stuart use any of the quotations in the play?
2. What was your favorite part of the performance *Stuart Little*? Why?

# PRE-SHOW EXPLORATION ACTIVITIES

## 3) RETELL THE STORY WITH PUPPETS

**Goal:** To demonstrate reading comprehension through puppetry and performance.

**Explanation:** In this activity, students will re-tell parts of the story of *Stuart Little* using simple puppets.

**Preparation:** Before you begin this activity, prepare simple puppets to represent each character in the story *Stuart Little*.

To do so, scan or photocopy a picture of Stuart Little, Mr. Little, Mrs. Little, George Little, Margalo and Snowbell from the book *Stuart Little*. Trim away excess paper. Laminate if you so desire. Glue or tape character cut-outs to popsicle sticks or paint sticks for students to hold onto.

### Activity:

1. Read excerpts from *Stuart Little* as a class.
2. Discuss the sequence of events. What happened first? What happened next? How did the family respond? What problems did they encounter?
3. Show students the puppets you have prepared.
4. As a class or in small groups, allow students to perform the excerpt of their choice from *Stuart Little* with the character puppets. Students may use the puppets to narrate the story in their own words.

### Follow-Up Questions:

1. Why did you choose that particular excerpt? What challenges did you face when you were acting it out with the puppets?
2. How did the Littles solve their problems in the story? How did you solve the problems you encountered?
3. What did you like about using puppets?

## 4) FAMILY, LOYALTY AND FRIENDSHIP

**Goal:** To explore examples of family, loyalty and friendship.

**Explanation:** In this activity, students will collect examples of people in the news, their neighborhood, stories that they read, etc. that exemplify the values of family, loyalty and friendship— themes discussed in the play and the book *Stuart Little*.

### Activity:

1. Ask students to work together to define the ideas of family, loyalty and friendship.
2. Encourage them to share examples of people or stories that they know that exhibit these values.
3. Create a display in the classroom that consists of three columns. Head each column with one of the values that *Stuart Little* finds important.
4. As students come up with examples, write a description of the person or character who exemplified the value or add a representative picture.
5. Continue to add to the display throughout the school year.

### Follow-Up Questions:

1. What does it mean to belong to a family? Can a family occur outside of the house in which you live?
2. What does it mean to be loyal? Why is it important or valuable? Are there ever times when you should not be loyal to someone or something?
3. What does friendship mean to you? What are some challenges of friendships? What are your favorite things about your friends?





# POST-SHOW DISCUSSION AND ASSESSMENT

## DISCUSSION

### Comprehension:

1. How was the play different from the book? How was it similar?
2. Many of the actors played animals. Did they look the way you expected?
3. What was the name of the cat who lived with Stuart? What was the relationship like between Stuart and the cat?
4. What was the name of the boat that Stuart sailed upon? What was special about this boat?
5. Why was Stuart concerned about Margalo sleeping in the living room?
6. Why did Margalo decide to leave the Little's home?
7. Why was Stuart asked to be a substitute teacher? What did Stuart teach about in the classroom?
8. Where was Stuart headed? What was he trying to do?
9. Did Stuart ever find Margalo? What types of things do you imagine Stuart did?
10. Stuart gave advice throughout the play and at the end. Do you remember what he said?

### Theater Experience:

1. What was our favorite part about our trip to the theater?
2. How did you know that the performance was beginning and ending? What happened that made you know?
3. Why is the audience such an important part of the show? What did the actors do to make the audience feel like they were part of the show?
4. What do you remember about the sets? The lights? The costumes? How did these elements help create the world of the story?

## 1) WRITE A LETTER

**Goal:** To reflect on the performance experience and to practice writing skills.

**Explanation:** In this activity, students will write a letter about their experience to Des Moines Performing Arts education donors whose support keeps Applause Series tickets accessibly priced for school groups.

### Activity:

1. After attending the performance, discuss the experience with your students. Use the following discussion questions to guide the conversation:

- ◇ What was the show about?
- ◇ What parts of the show were most exciting?
- ◇ Which character did you enjoy the most? Why?
- ◇ What did the characters learn?

2. Next, invite students to write a letter to Des Moines Performing Arts donors about their theater experience.

### Example letter starter:

Dear Des Moines Performing Arts Donors,  
Thank you for helping my class go to the Civic Center to see *Stuart Little*.  
My favorite part of the show was...  
While watching the show I felt... because ...  
I have drawn a picture of the scene when...  
This experience was special because ...

3. Mail the letters to:

Des Moines Performing Arts  
Attn: Education Department  
221 Walnut Street  
Des Moines, IA 50309

### Follow-up Questions:

1. What did you include in your letter? Why did you want to share that particular idea?

# POST-SHOW DISCUSSION AND ASSESSMENT

## 2) ACTING OUT A STORY

**Goal:** To use drama and imagination to demonstrate comprehension of a story.

**When:** after the performance

**Explanation:** In this activity, students will use drama and their imaginations to re-tell the story of *Stuart Little* by E.B. White to demonstrate their understanding of characters and key events using tableau.

**Tableau:** a dramatic convention in which individuals use their bodies to create a “frozen picture” that expresses actions, locations, feelings or situations.

### Activity:

1. Read a section of *Stuart Little* aloud to the class.
2. As a class, brainstorm the characters in the story.
3. As a class, determine the plot or sequence of main events.
4. Break up the section of the story into small segments and assign each segment to a group of 3-4 students.
5. Students then create tableau (frozen picture that tells a story) of their assigned moment in the story. Together, students may represent the characters, objects, or setting of their assigned moment.
6. Have groups share their tableau in the order of the story.
7. Once a group is “frozen,” tap students on the shoulder one at a time. When a student has been tapped, they should “unfreeze” and briefly describe who they are and what they are doing in the scene.

### Follow-up Questions:

1. How would you describe the character or object you played?
2. What happened at the beginning of the story? In the middle? At the end?
3. How did you feel when you were depicting your tableau for the class?

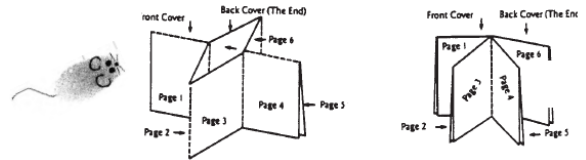
## 3) MAKE A THUMBPRINT BOOK

**Goal:** To encourage students to use their imaginations and practice creative writing.

**Explanation:** In this activity, students will make a thumbprint book about Stuart’s adventures, using the book template on page 17 and figures on page 18.

### Activity:

1. Cut along the thin-line outer border to make the pages look like Figure 1 (page 18).
2. Fan-fold the paper across the shorter horizontal lines as in Figure 2. Open and fold along the longer vertical lines so that the pages are facing you as you fold, as in Figure 3.
3. Open the paper and fold it in half across the middle (6.5 inch) dotted line. Cut along the center dark line through both halves, as in Figure 4.
4. Unfold and re-fold in half horizontally across the 8.5 inch length, as in Figure 5.
5. Fold the ends in so that page 2 is back-to-back with page 3, and page 6 is back-to-back with the back cover (see below). If assembled correctly, the front cover and back cover will be side-by-side facing the back when the book is standing. Close the pages to form a book.



6. Ask the students to brainstorm some of the adventures that Stuart Little went on in the play.
7. Have each student use a stamp pad and their thumbs to create drawings of Stuart, Margalo and any other characters they wish.
8. Then have the students write a narrative for the adventures their characters go on in their thumbprint book.

### Follow-up Questions:

1. How is your story like E.B. White’s *Stuart Little*? How is it different?
2. What challenges did you face as you created your thumbprint book?
3. What was your favorite part about creating your thumbprint book?

# POST-SHOW DISCUSSION AND ASSESSMENT

## 4) FRIENDSHIP COUNTS

**Goal:** To explore friendships and what makes them so special and learn acceptance.

**Explanation:** Stuart Little wants to be everyone's friend. He likes all kinds of people, most of whom are very different than he is. To Stuart, it doesn't matter if someone is a bird or human, short or tall. He simply accepts people as they are. In this activity, students will think about their own friendships and what makes them unique and special.

**Activity:**

1. After the play, have students think about their own friends. How are they like you? How are they different? What can you learn from friends who are different from you?
2. Have the students use the table below, and the reproducible on page 19, to organize their thoughts.

| FRIEND | HOW LIKE ME | HOW DIFFERENT | WHAT I CAN LEARN |
|--------|-------------|---------------|------------------|
|        |             |               |                  |
|        |             |               |                  |
|        |             |               |                  |

3. In the play, Stuart has a special friendship with Margalo, but can't become friends with Snowbell the cat. Have students write down what makes Stuart's friendship with Margalo so special. Why doesn't Snowbell want to be friends with Stuart?
4. Next, have students write or improvise a scene between Snowbell and Stuart where Stuart makes Snowbell his friend. Have students perform their scene for the class.

**Follow-up Questions:**

1. In the scene you created, why did Snowbell have a change of heart?
2. What actions or facial expressions would a mouse or a cat have? How are these different from your facial expressions?
3. How were your actions similar to the actors' actions in the play? How were they different?

## 5) MARGALO'S TRAVELS

**Goal:** To encourage students to use their imaginations and practice creative writing.

**Explanation:** In this activity, students will write Stuart Little a postcard as if they are Margalo, using the postcard template on page 20.

**Activity:**

1. Copy the postcard template from page 20 onto thicker white paper, if desired and distribute to students.
2. Have students pretend they are Margalo. Students will write a postcard to Stuart Little telling him about their travels. Where have you been? What have you seen? Where are you going next? Will you return to visit Stuart?
3. Students then draw a picture on the front of their postcard and can make up Stuart's New York City Address.
4. Have students "pair and share" their postcards with a classmate.

**Follow-up Questions:**

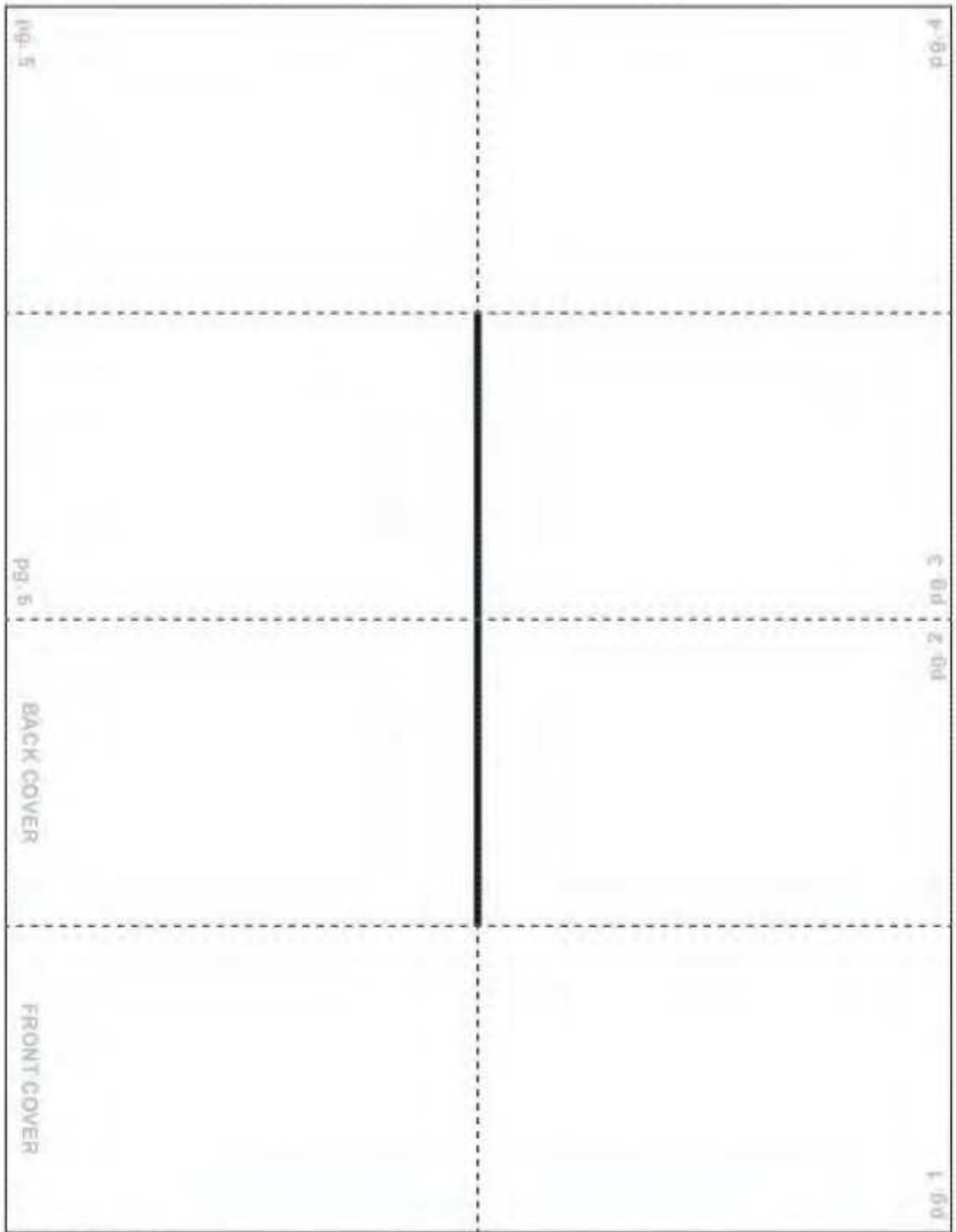
1. When the play ends, Stuart is still searching for Margalo. Do you think he ever finds her?
2. Have you ever written a friend who lives far away? What type of things did you tell them about?
3. What is your favorite place to visit? It is close to home or far away?



Designknock.com



# REPRODUCIBLES, pg. 1 (to use with Post-Show Assessment #3)



# REPRODUCIBLES, pg. 2 (to use with Post-Show Assessment #3)

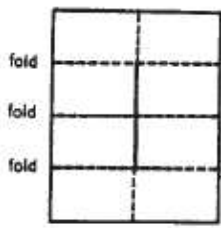


FIGURE 1

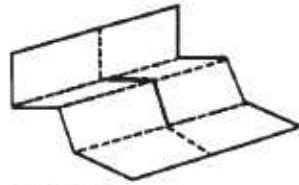


FIGURE 2

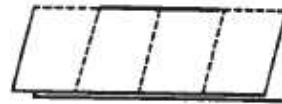


FIGURE 3

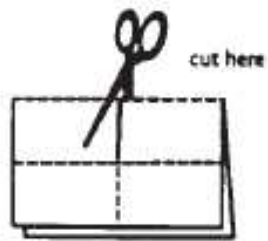
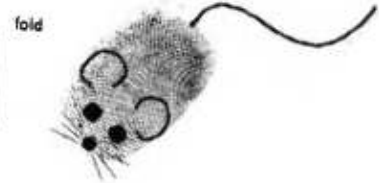


FIGURE 4

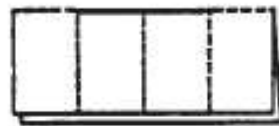
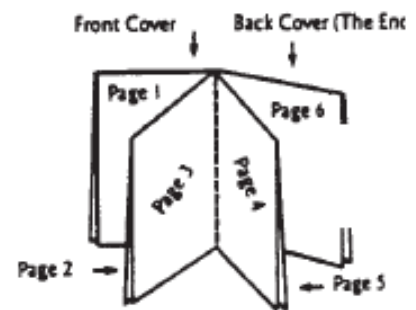
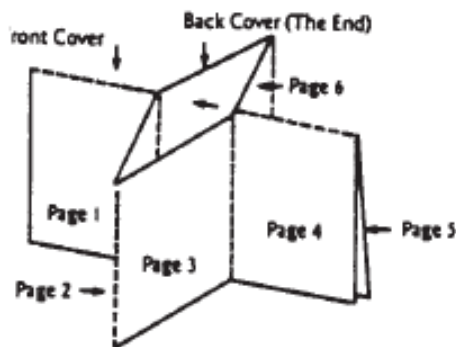


FIGURE 5

fold



**REPRODUCIBLES, pg. 1** (to use with Post-Show Assessment #4)

---

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

| FRIEND | HOW LIKE ME | HOW DIFFERENT | WHAT I CAN LEARN |
|--------|-------------|---------------|------------------|
|        |             |               |                  |
|        |             |               |                  |
|        |             |               |                  |

-----  
NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

| FRIEND | HOW LIKE ME | HOW DIFFERENT | WHAT I CAN LEARN |
|--------|-------------|---------------|------------------|
|        |             |               |                  |
|        |             |               |                  |
|        |             |               |                  |



# REPRODUCIBLES, pg. 3 (to use with Post-Show Assessment #5)

A template for the back of a postcard. On the right side, there is a circular logo with a wavy cancellation mark to its left. The logo contains the text "DCT" in large letters, with "DES MOINES CHILDREN'S THEATER" around the top and "PROFESSIONAL THEATER FOR ALL AGES" around the bottom. Below the logo, the word "ADDRESS" is printed, followed by four horizontal lines for writing an address. A vertical line separates the address area from the rest of the postcard back.

# RESOURCES AND SOURCES



## OTHER BOOKS ABOUT MICE:

The Mouse and the Motorcycle  
By Beverly Cleary

The Tale of Despereaux  
By Kate DiCamillo

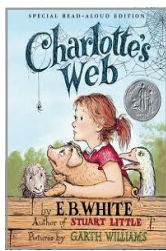
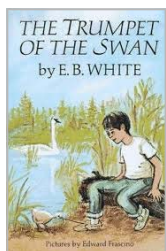
Angelina Ballerina  
By Katharine Holabird

Frederick  
By Leo Lionni

If You Give a Mouse a Cookie  
By Laura Joffe Numeroff

Seven Blind Mice  
By Ed Young

## OTHER BOOKS BY E.B. WHITE:



Images: (left) judefensor.wordpress.com; (right)

## CLASSROOM RESOURCES:

“Bill Oddie Goes Wild: Viking Mouse.”

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/nature/life/Wood\\_mouse#p0087t6](http://www.bbc.co.uk/nature/life/Wood_mouse#p0087t6)

*St. Kilda has its own species of field mouse, larger than its mainland relative.*

“E.B. White, The Art of the Essay No. 1.”

<http://www.theparisreview.org/interviews/4155/the-art-of-the-essay-no-1-e-b-white>

*Read an interview with E.B. White.*

“Spotlight on Broadway.”

<http://www.spotlightonbroadway.com/professions>

*Learn about the different professions on Broadway in New York City.*

“Welcoming Your New Mouse.”

[http://www.humanesociety.org/animals/mice/tips/welcoming\\_new\\_mouse.html](http://www.humanesociety.org/animals/mice/tips/welcoming_new_mouse.html)

*If you are interesting in having a mouse as a pet, here's how to make your mouse's transition to its new home as stress free as possible.*

## STUDY GUIDE SOURCES:

“Central Park.” <http://www.centralparknyc.org/about/>

“Fascinating Mouse Facts.” [www.pestworld.org](http://www.pestworld.org)

“Fun Facts About the Mouse.” <http://www.livescience.com/28028-mice.html>

“Garth Williams.” [www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org)

“Mice.” [www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org)

“New York City,” [www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org)