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An Educator's Guide to:

## ***The Prince of Frogs*** ***A Water Conservation Fable***



As the story begins, Kingdom Waste-A-Lot is in big trouble. The lack of rain and the citizens' wasteful habits have caused serious water shortages in the land. Queen Lilly is outraged, and sends forth a proclamation that every man, woman and child must practice conservation. Certain that she is in compliance, the Queen instructs her surly servant, Horace to begin an investigation of the water use at the castle immediately. With the help of a very intelligent frog, Queen Lilly and Horace discover that they have not been good stewards of our most precious natural resource. Using songs, dances and exciting audience participation, our Hopping Hero sheds light on the most common causes of water misuse, and drives home the concept of individual responsibility. By emphasizing the importance of water efficiency, and how changes in behavior do make a difference, *The Prince of Frogs* transforms Kingdom Waste-A-Lot into Conservation Kingdom. Everyone lives happily ever after in a wonderful ending that makes the moral of the story crystal clear -

**Conservation; Making water last, by making it first.**



Throughout the study guide, this symbol means that specific Sunshine State Standards are being addressed that directly correlate activities to FCAT testing.

## THE THEATRE IS A SPECIAL TREAT

Let us concentrate for a moment on a vital part of youth theatre: the young people. Millions of youngsters attend plays every season, and for some the experience is not particularly memorable or entertaining. The fault may lie with the production – but often the fault lies in the fact that these youngsters have not been properly briefed on appropriate theatre manners. Going to the theatre is not a casual event such as flipping on the TV set, attending a movie or a sports event. Going to the theatre is a SPECIAL OCCASION, and should be attended as such. In presenting theatre manners to young people we take the liberty of putting the do's and don'ts in verse, and hope that concerned adults will find this a more palatable way of introducing these concepts to youngsters.

### MATINEE MANNERS

By PEGGY SIMON TRAKTMAN

The theatre is no place for lunch,  
Who can hear when you go "crunch?"  
We may wear our nicest clothes  
When we go to theatre shows.  
Do not talk to one another  
(That means friends or even mother)  
When you go to see a show,  
Otherwise you'll never know  
What the play is all about  
And you'll make the actors shout  
Just to make themselves be heard.  
So, be still - don't say a word  
Unless an actor asks you to...  
A thing they rarely ever do.  
A program has a special use  
So do not treat it with abuse!  
Its purpose is to let us know  
Exactly who is in the show  
It also tells us other facts  
Of coming shows and future acts.  
Programs make great souvenirs  
Of fun we've had in bygone years  
Keep your hands upon your lap

But if you like something you clap  
Actors like to hear applause.  
If there is cause for this applause.  
If a scene is bright and sunny,  
And you think something is funny  
Laugh- performers love this laughter  
But be quiet from thereafter.  
Don't kick chairs or pound your feet  
And do not stand up in your seat,  
Never wander to and fro -  
Just sit back and watch the show.  
And when the final curtain falls  
The actors take their "curtain calls"  
That means they curtsy or they bow  
And you applaud, which tells them how  
You liked their work and liked the show.  
Then, when the lights come on, you go  
Back up the aisle and walk - don't run  
Out to the lobby, everyone.  
The theatre is a special treat  
And not a place to talk or eat.  
If you behave the proper way  
You really will enjoy the play.

## THE FABLE AS A LITERARY FORM

The habit of telling stories is one of the most primitive characteristics of the human race. The most ancient civilizations, the most barbarous savages of whom we have knowledge have shown clear traces of this practice. Artifacts of story telling have been gathered from all ends of the earth, and from the remotest times of which we have written record, they show traces of purpose. However, behind the purpose one can see the obvious human delight in the story for its own sake.

Probably the oldest and most common type of story is the **FABLE**. Contrary to popular belief, the fable is a product not of folk but of the learned; and though at times it has been handed down by word of mouth, it is really a literary form. In fact, it is the oldest literary form known to man, and probably existed when man still lived in caves. So what is the secret formula that has allowed the fable to endure?

To answer that question, we must ask another, **WHAT IS A FABLE? WHAT ARE ITS CHARACTERISTICS?**

It is nearly impossible to define a fable without bringing the **parable** and the **tale** into the picture. These three common modes of conveying instruction are often used interchangeably but actually have different meanings.

The **TALE** consists simply in the narration of a story either founded on facts, or created solely by the imagination, and not necessarily with the teaching of any moral lesson.

The **PARABLE** purposely intends to convey a hidden and secret meaning other than that contained in the words themselves. Often biblical in theme, a parable may or may not bear a special reference to the reader.

The **FABLE** partly agrees with and partly differs from both of these. It will contain, like the tale, a short but real narrative; it will seek, like the parable to convey a hidden meaning by the skillful introduction of fictitious characters. Yet unlike either tale or parable, *it will always keep in view as its main theme, the great purpose of INSTRUCTION*. The fable also seeks to impress some moral rule, social duty or political truth.

Perhaps the longevity of the fable then rests on the fact that it was the first method of teaching both young people and adults the wisdom of life in an entertaining manner. The true fable ever aims at one great end and purpose – the representation of human motive, and **the improvement of human conduct**; and yet it so conceals its design of fictitious characters that the reader receives advice without perceiving the presence of the advisor. Therefore, the lesson comes subconsciously, to have his sympathies for what is pure and honorable, and to have his indignation against what is low and unworthy. Because the fabulist invites rather than compels a reader to acquire

more common sense and wisdom, *he is more than simply a narrator but A GREAT TEACHER*. In this consists the superiority of the fable over the tale or the parable.

## THE EXPERT

Dr. Sheldon Cashdan

What accounts for the enduring charm of fairy tales? Why are generations of children drawn to stories such as *Hansel and Gretel*, *Snow White*, and *Cinderella*? In *The Witch Must Die: How Fairy Tales Shape Our Lives*, Dr. Cashdan explores how fairy tales help children deal with psychological conflicts by projecting their own internal struggles between good and evil onto the battles enacted by the characters in the stories. Rumpelstiltskin, Pinocchio and Rapunzel vividly dramatize lust, envy, avarice and sloth on a safe stage, allowing children to confront their own "deadly sins."

"Fairy tales are ultimately a celebration of life. Both enchanting and empowering, they are as timely today as they were hundreds of years ago. The underlying dynamic—the age-old struggle between good and evil—resonates between the lines of *Snow White*, *Jack and the Beanstalk* and *The Emperor's New Clothes*, as it will in the as yet unwritten stories of the twenty-first century. For this reason, the witch will continue to be a major presence in fairy tales, sensitizing us to forces within ourselves that pose a challenge to our sense of who we are. Her destruction is not an act of vengeance, nor even cruelty. It merely reminds us that sinful tendencies are a part of everyday existence, and that we must do battle with them if we wish to have a fairy-tale ending."

## THE MESSAGE

From Sheldon Cashdan's highly-praised best-seller:  
*The Witch Must Die: How Fairy Tales Shape Our Lives*

Lying, fraud and other forms of deceit are frequent visitors in fairy tales. In *The Frog Prince*, the Princess tells the little frog that she will love and care for him in exchange for a simple favor. All she asks is that the frog retrieve her ball from the well into which it has fallen. Once she gets the ball, however, she wants absolutely nothing to do with the frog. This becomes evident the moment he comes to the palace to claim his due. She refuses to let him eat from her plate nor will she let him drink from her cup as promised. It is only when her father admonishes her about the need to keep one's word that she lets the frog sit by her side.

The princess draws the line when the frog follows her to her room and asks to climb into bed with her. The princess flies into a rage, picks up the frog, and smashes him against the wall. To her astonishment, the frog is miraculously transformed into a handsome prince.

What is going on here? The princess is supposed to kiss the frog, not throw him against the wall. But there is no mention of a kiss in the story recorded by the Grimm brothers. Most likely the kiss was added over the years by storytellers who felt obliged


to portray the princess as more loving and honest than she actually is. Altering the story so that the heroine rewards the frog with a kiss compensates for her earlier attempts to deceive him and brings her character more into line for the story's ending


Fairy tales that feature deceit help to combat tendencies in the self that undermine meaningful relationships. Situations involving deceit crop up throughout life, and it sometimes is difficult to know the right course of action when the options are cloudy and the consequences murky. Is it permissible to lie and, if so, under what circumstances? Fairy tales do not pretend to provide all the answers, but they teach readers there are important issues to be considered when the truth is at stake.


## THE ACTIVITIES


### BEFORE THE PLAY:


1. Read to your students the tale of The Frog Prince. Also read to your students several of Aesop's Fables. The Prince of Frogs is actually a combination of a fable and a fairy tale.
  - a. Discuss the characteristics of fables, tales, and parables (see study guide).
  - b. Why do you suppose fables use animals to represent human weaknesses and strengths?
  - c. What virtues and faults do the characters possess?
  - d. What do the morals teach us?
  - e. Now compare and contrast these different literary forms.

 **L.A.E.1.1.3 (PreK–2)** The student knows the basic characteristics of fables, stories, and legends.


 **LA.C.1.1.3 (PreK–2)** The student carries on a conversation with another person seeking answers and further explanations of the other's ideas through questioning and answering.

 **LA.C.3.2.2 (3–5)** The student asks questions and makes comments and observations to clarify understanding of content, processes and experiences.

 **LA.A.2.2.7 (3–5)** The student recognizes the use of comparison and contrast in a text.

 **TH.E.1.2.2 (3–5)** The student understands the artistic characteristics of various media and the advantages and disadvantages of telling stories through those artistic media.

2. Ask your students to discuss the difference between television and live theatre. It is important that they know about "theatre etiquette," or manners. Refer to the poem "Matinee Manners" listed above.

 **TH.E.1.2.3 (PreK–2)** The student understands and uses appropriate behavior in a cultural experience.

**TH.E.1.2.3 (3–5)** The student understands theatre as a social function and theatre etiquette as the responsibility of the audience.

3. Have the students learn the following vocabulary words and listen for them during the play. See how many words they can recall and how the characters used them in the context of the play.

bog	chauffeur	consequence	conservation
courtyard	drought	enchanted	ferocious
finances	formality	gigantic	gnashing
investigation	kingdom	lifestyle	lily-pad
limousine	loyalty	marshlands	ogre
priority	promise	realm	scepter
sustainability			

**LA.A.1.1.3 (PreK–2)** The student uses knowledge of appropriate grade-, age-, and developmental-level vocabulary in reading.

**LA.A.1.2.3 (3–5)** The student uses simple strategies to determine meaning and increase vocabulary for reading including the use of prefixes, suffixes, root words, multiple meanings, antonyms, synonyms, and word relationships.

4. Have the students look and listen for patterns during the play. See how many patterns they can recall and how they were used in the context of the play. Encourage students to be aware of patterns that may occur in music, dance, scenery, costumes and dialogue. Students may also notice architectural patterns in the theatre.

**LA.C.1.1.3 (PreK–2)** The student identifies and uses repetition, rhyme and rhythm in oral and written text.

**MA.D.1.1.1 (preK–2)** The student describes a wide variety of classification schemes and patterns related to physical characteristics and sensory attributes, such as rhythm, sound, shapes, colors, numbers, similar objects and similar events.

**MA.D.1.2.1 (3–5)** The student describes a wide variety of patterns and relationships through models, such as manipulatives, tables, graphs, and rules using algebraic symbols.

## AFTER THE PLAY:

### Part I

1. Discuss the production with your students. What did they like or dislike about the play? Who was their favorite character? Why? Have the students draw a picture or write a letter to the cast of *The Prince of Frogs* telling them what they have learned about water conservation.

✍ **LA.B.1.1.2 (PreK–2)** The student drafts and revises simple sentences and passages, stories, letters and simple explanations that: express ideas clearly; show an awareness of topic and audience; have a beginning, middle and ending; effectively use common words; have supporting detail; and are in legible printing.

✍ **LA.B.1.2.3 (3–5)** The student produces final documents that have been edited for: correct spelling; correct use of punctuation, including commas in series, dates, and addresses, and beginning and ending quotation marks; correct capitalization of proper nouns; correct paragraph indentation; correct usage of subject/verb agreement, verb and noun forms, and sentence structure; and correct formatting according to instructions.

2. Lead your students in a discussion of the various ways that they use water every day. What would happen if they had no water for a day? For a week?

✍ **LA.C.3.1.2 (PreK–2)** The student asks questions to seek answers and further explanation of other people’s ideas.

✍ **LA.C.3.2.5 (3–5)** The student participates as a contributor and occasionally acts as a leader in group discussions.

3. “Little friends may prove to be great friends”, “Slow but steady wins the race”, “Look before you leap”, “Honesty is the best policy”. These pungent expressions, so familiar today have a romantic past that goes back more than two thousand years. They are all morals or proverbs. What is the moral or social duty impressed upon the students by *The Prince of Frogs*? (Conservation; Making water last, by making it first!) Discuss with your class the importance of water conservation. Is it our duty or civic responsibility as good citizens to save water? List as many ways water saving tips from the show as you can remember. Can you think of other ways to save water? What are the benefits of water conservation? Have the students become “**Water Ambassadors**” by looking for leaks in their homes. Ask them to encourage an adult to fix those leaks.

✍ **SS.C.2.1.3 (PreK–2)** The student knows the sources of responsibility, examples of situations involving responsibility and some of the benefits of fulfilling responsibility.

✍ **SS.C.2.2.2 (3–5)** The student understands why personal responsibility (e.g., taking advantage of the opportunity to be educated) and civic responsibility (e.g., obeying the law and respecting the rights of others) are important.

4. In the play, the frog is driven from his home by the Queens pollution. We all want to live in a pristine world with fresh air and clean water, but what can we do to protect our world from pollution, not only for ourselves but also for the wildlife we share the earth with? Have a question and answer session about the differing types of pollution (litter, improperly disposed of chemicals, graffiti, etc.) and what the students can do to make their neighborhoods cleaner.

✍ **LA.C.1.1.3 (PreK–2)** The student carries on a conversation with another person seeking answers and further explanations of the other’s ideas through questioning and answering.

✍ **LA.C.3.2.2 (3–5)** The student asks questions and makes comments and observations to clarify understanding of content, processes and experiences.

5. Act out a fable of your own. Assign a director, actors, prompter, etc.

✍ **TH.A.1.2.1 (3–5)** The student creates imagined characters, relationships, and environments, using basic acting skills (e.g., breath control, diction, concentration, and control of isolated body parts).

## **AFTER THE PLAY:**

### **Part II**

## **The Art of FCAT**

Contributed by Patricia Linder

✍ **Visual and Performing Arts Field Trips provide an excellent source of support for the development of skills necessary for success on the FCAT. We invite you to use these instructional strategies to enhance FCAT preparation through your theatre field trip.**

### **Theatre Activities**

#### **FCAT Cognitive Level 1**

Read the story (or play) your field trip performance is based on.  
Name the main character.

List all the characters.  
Identify the setting.  
List the story events in the order they happened.

Describe a character (or setting).  
Explain the problem (or conflict) in the story.  
Explain how the actors used stage props to tell the story (or develop characterization).  
Discuss how the blocking, or positioning of the actors on stage affected the performance.  
Discuss how unusual technical elements (light, shadow, sound, etc.) were used in the performance.

Draw a picture of a character.  
Illustrate or make a diorama of a scene from the performance.  
Draw a poster to advertise the performance.  
Work with other students to act out a scene.  
Demonstrate how an actor used facial expression to show emotion.  
Write a narrative story to summarize the plot of the performance story.  
Use a map and/or timeline to locate the setting of the story.

## **FCAT Cognitive Level II**

Would the main character make a good friend? Write an expository essay explaining why or why not.  
Create a graph that records performance data such as: female characters, male characters, animal characters or number of characters in each scene, etc.  
Compare/Contrast a character to someone you know or compare/contrast the setting to a different location or time.  
Solve a special effects mystery. Use words or pictures to explain how “special effects” (Lighting, smoke, sound effects) were created.

Imagine the story in a different time or place. Design sets or costumes for the new setting.

You’re the director. Plan the performance of a scene in your classroom. Include the cast of characters, staging area, and ideas for costumes, scenery, and props in your plan.

Create a new ending to the story.

Did you enjoy the performance? Write a persuasive essay convincing a friend to go see this production.

Write a letter to the production company nominating a performer for a “Best Actor Award.” Explain why your nominee should win the award. Create a rubric to rate the performance. Decide on criteria for judging: Sets, Costumes, Acting, Lighting, Special Effects, Overall Performance, etc.

## THE PRODUCER

**STAGES PRODUCTIONS** is a professional theatre ensemble that specializes in bringing classic fairy tales to over 150,000 young people each year throughout the Southeast.

STAGES' show credits include critically acclaimed performances of: Cinderella, Hansel and Gretel, Rumpelstiltskin and Snow White. Be sure to join us for our 21st Season featuring Mother Goose, Sleeping Beauty, The Gift of The Magi, Santa's Holiday Revue, Let Freedom Sing, The Velveteen Rabbit and The Three Little Pigs.

STAGES PRODUCTIONS is dedicated to making drama an integral part of education, and lesson plans help incorporate these plays into the student's curriculum. Thank you for supporting this mission by choosing a STAGES PRODUCTIONS play!

## THE REFERENCES

Sunshine State Standards available online: <http://www.fldoe.org/bii/curriculum/sss/>  
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## THE SPONSORS

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