

Hansel and Gretel



STUDY GUIDE and RESOURCE MATERIALS
for Teachers and Students

Hansel and Gretel

Adapted from the Brothers Grimm by the Tanglewood Marionettes



GENERAL INFORMATION for teachers and students

Hansel and Gretel took over a year to build. Here are some of the things we did, in chronological order:

- We decided we wanted to adapt the fairy tale *Hansel and Gretel* into a marionette play.
- We read several versions of the tale, and watched television and movie versions of the Cinderella story to help give us ideas for our own production.
- We developed a plot, or storyline, for our puppet play.
- We sketched each scene in sequence, so that we could envision the play. This is called making a storyboard.
- We wrote the script.
- We designed and built the marionettes, props, scenery and special effects. (This part took six months!)
- We designed the lighting effects for the show.
- We hired a composer to adapt the music from the *Hansel and Gretel* opera to use with our own production
- We hired actors and recorded the dialogue (what would become the puppets' voices) at a sound studio.
- We mixed the music and sound effects into the recorded voices.
- We put it all together and rehearsed the performance for two weeks.

Phew! As you can see, sometimes a lot goes into making a puppet show!

THE SETTING

The scenery for this play is in the form of a giant book. The book is made out of foam core and painted canvas panels. Foam core is a lightweight, rigid material made out of two sheets of poster board that sandwich a foam layer, or "core". The pages of the book are hinged together with strong cloth tape, and painted with acrylic paints. As the play progresses, the pages of the book are turned to reveal each new scene. After you see the show, try to remember how many different scenes were in the play.

BUILDING THE PUPPETS

The heads and hands of the marionettes were first sculpted in clay, then cast in plaster. When the plaster molds were dry, the clay was removed and a liquid called neoprene was poured into the mold. After about twenty-four hours, the neoprene hardened. The molds were opened and the heads and hands were gently pulled out. Each head and hand was then coated with gesso, sanded carefully, and painted with acrylic paints. The torsos for the characters were made from foam blocks glued to a wooden armature. Arms and legs were made from shaped wooden dowels, and were jointed with either rope or trunk fiber.

After the puppets were costumed, strings were attached to their heads, chins, shoulders, backs, elbows, hands, and legs. The strings were then tied to the control. Next, the strings were adjusted in length, or "tuned" until the puppet felt balanced.



Hansel and Gretel

PRE-SHOW ACTIVITIES



PRESENTATION

A school or class could prepare for the puppet show by designing posters or flyers to be distributed throughout the school.

One or two students might observe the puppeteers loading in and setting up the stage, puppets, and equipment. If there is a school publication, an article could be written describing this “behind-the-scenes” process.

One or two students might interview the puppeteers, either for a school publication or a class project. The interview questions should be prepared in advance, with help from the entire class if this is a class project. A class discussion about careers in the arts could follow the interview.

Individual classes might talk about what it means to be an audience.



TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What is the difference between a “live” performance, and a “pre-recorded” performance? What are the positive things and negative things about each type of performance? Which type do you prefer, and why?
2. In the puppet play, we tell a story. Discuss what makes a good story, and what makes a bad story. Try to be as specific as possible in your opinions.
3. In the story of *Hansel and Gretel*, the two children become lost in the forest. Talk about what you might do if you became lost in the woods. After seeing the performance, discuss the choices that Hansel and Gretel made (both before and after they became lost), and compare them to choices *you* might have made.

Hansel and Gretel

POST-SHOW ACTIVITIES



LANGUAGE ARTS



POP QUIZ!



- 1.) How many different scenes were in the play?
- 2.) How many different puppets were in the play?
- 3.) Who liked to plan ahead?
- 4.) Who was the angel?
- 5.) How did Gretel get out of the swamp?
- 6.) What did Hansel do to escape from the troll?
- 7.) How did Hansel and Gretel work together to defeat the witch?
- 8.) Can you remember the spell ingredients?

VOCABULARY LIST

gingerbread	angel	levitate	mushroom	cottage
dwell	impulsive	troll	swamp	imprison
prepare	magical	witch	conjure	gnarled
forest	misty	watchful	lose	reunite

SOME WRITING EXERCISES

1. Write a **REVIEW** of the puppet show. What was your favorite part? What was your least favorite part? If you didn't like the show, what changes would you make? If you *did* like the show, explain why. (Imagine that you are writing your review for a person who has never seen **Hansel and Gretel**.)
2. Use some or all of the of the **VOCABULARY** words in sentences. If you don't know the definition of a word, look it up in the dictionary. Try to use the word so that a person reading the sentence can get an idea of what the word means. Some of the vocabulary words are nouns, some are verbs, and some are adjectives. Can you discover which is which? Use as many of the vocabulary words as you can in a single paragraph. What is a synonym? What is an antonym? Find as many synonyms and antonyms for the vocabulary words as you can. If you get stuck, use a thesaurus if one is available.
3. In our story, Hansel and Gretel discover a magical gingerbread house. If it were *your* story, what kind of magical, edible house would you have created? Write about it, and try to be as **DESCRIPTIVE** as possible.
4. In the puppet show, Hansel and Gretel disobeyed their father. Do you think that was a good or a bad decision? Write an **ESSAY** about whether you think the two children made a good or bad choice. Try to use examples to support your opinions.

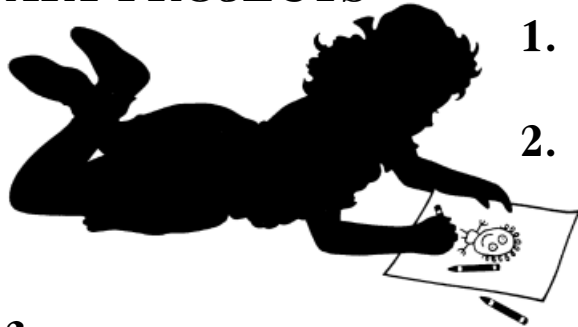


Hansel and Gretel

POST-SHOW ACTIVITIES



ART PROJECTS



1. Draw or paint a picture of your favorite CHARACTER in the puppet show.
2. Draw or paint a picture of your favorite SCENE in the puppet show.

3. Make your own BOOK SCENERY for a story of your choice. (This may be a good group or class project.) The book can be as large or as small as you wish. Cut the pages out of cardboard and use crayons, markers, or paints to create each scene. Hinge the pages together with strong tape. Remember that you are creating SCENERY, or a BACKGROUND, so you probably don't want to paint in any characters. One of the pages in our book "pops out" to become the gingerbread house. Try to use the pages of your book in interesting ways. *Don't be afraid to experiment!*

This project could progress to an actual puppet performance, with the book acting as scenery for your puppet show. Or, if you make the book really big, you could play the characters yourselves!



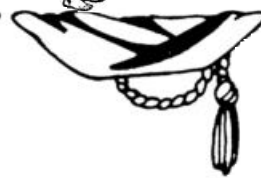
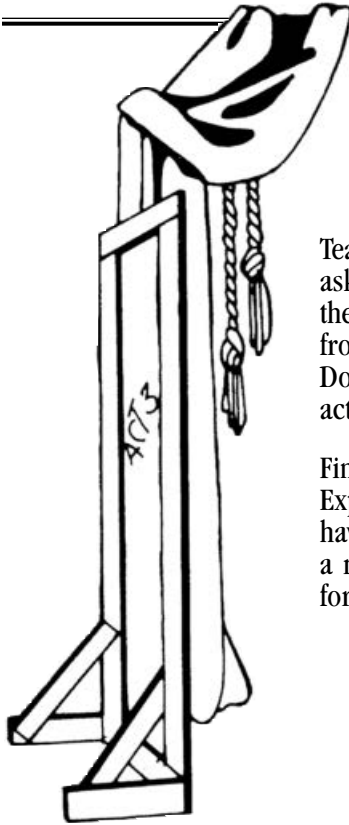
4. We use colors in our puppet shows to help express moods or ideas. We chose darker colors for the Witch's costume to accentuate her badness. Would she have been as menacing or scary if she had been dressed in pink? Light blue? How does the color of her costume help in creating her character? Choose a mood, emotion, or idea, and see if you can "color" it on a piece of paper. Here are some possibilities:

angry · cheerful · calm · sad · jealous · sneaky
brave · ashamed · joyous · sleepy · wicked · itchy
proud · secretive · bored · happy

What color or colors did you choose, and why?

Hansel and Gretel

DRAMATIC ARTS



ACTING BASICS

Teachers: write the following words on cards. As you show each card to students, ask them to dramatize the word using gestures, facial expressions, and voices. After the students have reviewed each word as a group, ask volunteers to choose a word from those displayed and dramatize it while others guess which word it is. Do the same exercise, but this time, don't allow students to use their voices when acting out the words.

Finally, have a generic mask available, or make a simple mask from a paper plate. Explain that many puppets (ours included!) cannot move their faces and can only have one expression. Ask for volunteers to dramatize some of the same words with a mask. Discuss how gestures can be used by actors (or puppets!) in dramatic performances.



MAKE SOME NOISE

Warm up your voice by making nonsense sounds. Practice other vocal sounds by making pops, squeaks, hisses, clicks, etc., with your mouth, lips, and tongue.

Create some Character Voices:

Choose a sentence in a book. Try to read that sentence as though you were a:

brave hero · jealous queen
old woman · little child · ghost
teenager · monster · coward
fairy · evil sorcerer · space alien

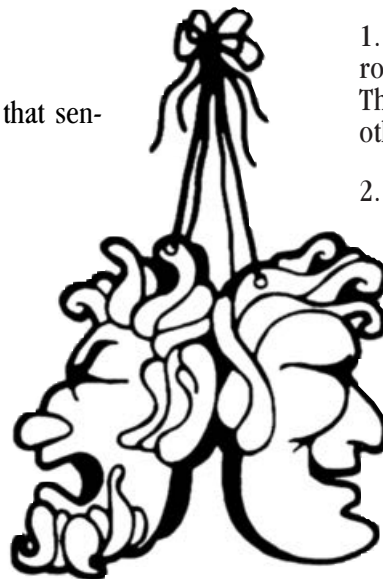
Make some Animal Noises:

Roar · squeak · whinny · cheep
cluck · caw · grunt · squawk
gobble · meow · hoot · bark
howl · trumpet · honk · chitter

Practice Vocal Sound Effects:

Use your voice to sound like:

wind · police siren · ocean waves
crackling fire · footsteps · rain
airplane · creaky door · fireworks



A Game using Vocal Sound Effects:

1. Have two volunteers come to the front of the room. One will stand facing the class/audience. The second volunteer will stand behind the other, with his or her back to the audience.
2. The class will come up with a title to a story.
3. The person facing the audience must create a story from the given title while the other volunteer creates sound effects. The sound effects can either accentuate the story or encourage it.

Students may wish to do the above activities again, this time with a puppet! Have each child make a puppet using the included patterns. If a puppet show is to be performed using the puppets, try to decide on the story and characters before making the puppets.