



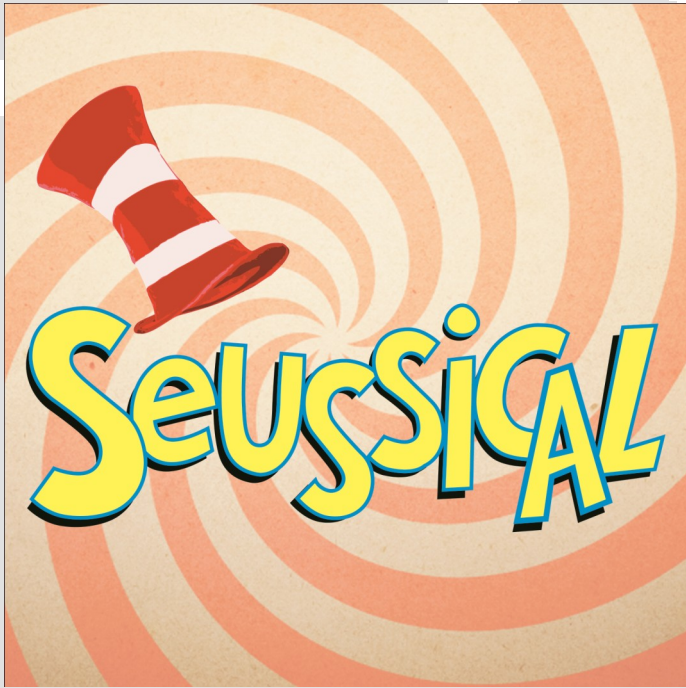
# Teacher Resource Guide and Lesson Plan Activities

Featuring general information about our production along with some creative activities which will help you make connections to your classroom curriculum, before and after the show.



By attending this production, students are meeting the **North Carolina Standard Course of Study Theatre Curriculum Goal 8.04: To experience a live performance.** Look for this symbol for other NCSCS curriculum connections.

## Seussical



### Based on the works of Dr. Seuss

Music by Stephen Flaherty

Lyrics by Lynn Ahrens

Book by Lynn Ahrens and Stephen Flaherty

Co-conceived by Lynn Ahrens, Stephen Flaherty, and Eric Idle

Founded in 1948, Children's Theatre of Charlotte has been opening young minds to the wonders of live theatre for over half a century. Today it continues to be one of the most technically imaginative and resourceful theatres in the country. Annually it reaches over 320,000 young people and their families with multiple program areas: Mainstage productions, Tarradiddle Players Professional Touring Company and a full scope of Education classes for both community and schools. Children's Theatre of Charlotte is housed in **ImaginOn: The Joe & Joan Martin Center**. The facility is shared with the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library.

## About the Play

Oh, the things you can think, when you think about Dr. Seuss! Dr. Seuss's beloved stories collide in a family musical adventure that has delighted audiences across the country since its 2000 Broadway debut. Steadfast Horton the Elephant, insecure but mighty Gertrude McFuzz, and the mischievous Cat in the Hat take center stage in this colorful extravaganza that celebrates the bonds of friendship, the richness of individual differences, the importance of tolerance, and the incredible power of the imagination.

## A Few "Thinks" from the Authors

This is a new musical, based on the works of Dr. Seuss. But it isn't just a string of his stories set to music. And it isn't just one of his stories. In fact, what we've done is to create a totally new, full-length book musical, with a story which weaves together his most famous tales and characters in unexpected ways. The Seuss lexicon includes hundreds upon hundreds of wondrous characters, creatures, places and things. "Seussical" incorporates elements from at least 15 of his books, as well as many of his best-loved and most familiar characters. Many of these characters never met one another before. But they meet in our musical. And in the course of the evening, some will fall in love, some will have desperate adventures, and some will save the world. And they'll all travel everywhere from the Jungle of Nool to McElligott's Pool to Palm Beach.

Dr. Seuss believes in helping a friend, in not giving up, in keeping a promise. He believes in the value and dignity of others, in working to preserve the fragile sweetness of the natural world, and he believes that peace is the ultimate ideal, among nations and in every heart. He also believes in the pure power of the imagination. You will find all of these serious concerns at the heart of "Seussical".

- Lynn Ahrens and Stephen Flaherty

“I like nonsense. It wakes up the brain cells.” - Dr. Seuss

Theodor Geisel, widely known and adored as Dr. Seuss, lived from 1904 to 1991. Born in America to parents of German descent, he studied at Dartmouth College and Lincoln College at Oxford and went on to become an author, illustrator, advertiser and political cartoonist. He is most famous today for writing and illustrating numerous children’s books with imaginary creatures, fantastical words and universal themes.

**Seussical** is a musical compilation of several books by Dr. Seuss. Narrated by the Cat in the Hat, the stories predominately featured in the play are Horton Hears a Who, Horton Hatches the Egg and the story of Gertrude McFuzz (from Yertle the Turtle and Other Stories). Intertwined throughout the play are characters and references from a variety of other Seuss stories. Listed below are all of the stories included in Seussical:

- **Horton Hears a Who**
- **Horton Hatches the Egg**
- **Yertle the Turtle and Other Stories**
- **The Cat in the Hat**
- **How the Grinch Stole Christmas**
- **Green Eggs and Ham**
- **I Had Trouble in Getting to Solla Sollew**
- **McElligot’s Pool**
- **Hunches in Bunches**
- **The Butter Battle Book**
- **Did I Ever Tell You How Lucky You Are?**
- **Oh, the Places You’ll Go!**

### Some fun facts about Dr. Seuss

Theodor Seuss Geisel was born in Springfield, MA. Many of the references and illustrations in his books paid homage to his childhood home, including the infamous Mulberry Street.

Ted’s high school art teacher did not like his drawings. The teacher wanted him to draw the world as it was, not what Ted imagined it to be, and told Ted he would “never learn to draw”.

*And to Think That I Saw it on Mulberry Street* was rejected 29 times before being published.

“Seuss” was Ted’s mother’s maiden name, and also his middle name. As a cartoonist at Dartmouth College’s magazine and with other professional publications, Ted signed his cartoons with several pen names including the clever “Dr. Theophrastus Seuss” which he eventually shortened to “Dr. Seuss.”

Seuss is a Bavarian name. The native pronunciation is ZOICE, not SOOSE.

Dr. Seuss wrote and illustrated 44 books for young people.

## Theodor Seuss Geisel

Many may wonder why Dr. Seuss decided to write for young people. When asked this very question in an interview, Ted reportedly (or jokingly?) explained that his contract with an advertising agency prohibited him from writing material for adults, but not for children. Some argue that having no children of his own prompted his efforts. Others assume that children’s books



were the natural outlet for his brilliant cartoons and illustrations. Biographies of Seuss suggest that his impetus for writing were many. Undoubtedly, Seuss wanted to inspire children to read more. Agreeing that basic stories like “Dick, Jane and Spot” were not exciting to children, Seuss set out to write a juvenile book using no more than 225 primary words. From this challenge *The Cat in the Hat* emerged, followed by *Green Eggs and Ham* with a word count of 50. These and other Seuss stories set a new standard for Beginner Reader books. Clearly, Seuss’s intentions went far beyond writing books that would be engaging to new readers, as evidenced in the serious social undertones of so many of his stories. *The Lorax*, with its themes of deforestation and over-production, has since become the classic tale of environmentalism. Others closely followed, including *How The Grinch Stole Christmas* with its message of anti-commercialism, *The Sneetches*, address-

ing racial equality, *Yertle the Turtle*, an anti-fascist tale, and *Horton Hatches an Egg* with the unique perspective of an adoptive father. Unquestionably, Seuss wrote books to make people think and imagine, and his legacy has left an indelible imprint in the world of children’s literature.

# Questions for Discussion

“Sometimes the questions are complicated and the answers are simple.” - Dr. Seuss

1. Which stories in the play had you read or heard before you saw the show? How was the play different? How did the play bring different stories together?
2. What does “misunderstood” mean? Several of the characters in the play feel misunderstood. Which ones feel this way? Have you ever felt misunderstood? Has there been something that was important to you that others didn’t care so much about? Is it sometimes difficult to stand up for something you believe in?
3. Horton is a very caring and helpful character. In what ways does Horton show caring? Is it important to be helpful? How do you show compassion and caring?
4. The Hunches play a very important role in the play by representing transformation. What did you notice about the Hunches and how did they impact the story?
5. Which other characters experience a transformation, or change, throughout the play? How did Gertrude change? Kangaroo? Mayzie? Horton?
6. Several puppets are used throughout the production of Seussical. Talk about the different kinds of puppets that were used and how they were effective in portraying each character. Which puppets were your favorites?
7. Many of the actors in Seussical played a multiple characters. Could you tell which characters were played by the same actors? How did the directors, designers and actors make the characters different?
8. Horton says, “*I meant what I said and I said what I meant... an elephant’s faithful one hundred percent.*” Loyalty is a strong theme throughout the play. Talk about some of the examples of loyalty that you saw in the stories. Why is loyalty important? What are ways that we can show loyalty in our daily lives?



**North Carolina Standard Course of Study** English Language Arts Goal 3.01: Respond to fiction, non-fiction, poetry and drama using interpretive, critical and evaluative processes by examining the reasons for characters’ actions, making inferences and drawing conclusions about characters, events and themes.

## Anapestic Tetrameter

Unlike iambic pentameter which has 5 iambs per line, most of Dr. Seuss’s poetry has 4 anapests per line, classifying it as **anapestic tetrameter**. Anapests have two un-accented syllables, followed by one accented syllable:

da da **DUM** da da **DUM** da da **DUM** da da **DUM**

The most common rhyme scheme for anapestic tetrameter is a rhyme for every two lines.

Oh the PLAcEs you’ll GO! There is FUN to be DONE  
There are POINTS to be SCORED. There are GAMES to be WON.

The first syllable is sometimes silent, similar to a “rest” in music:

— The SUN did not SHINE it was TOO wet to play  
So we SAT in the HOUSE all that COLD cold wet DAY.

Another commonly known poem written in anapestic tetrameter is **A Visit From St. Nicholas** (“Twas the Night Before Christmas) by Clement Clarke Moore.

In some books, Dr. Seuss derives from anapestic tetrameter such as **One Fish Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish** which instead follows trochaic tetrameter, an arrangement of four units each with a strong beat followed by a weak beat.

Encourage students to create a poem in anapestic tetrameter—a poem as short as two lines qualifies!

**North Carolina Standard Course of Study** English Language Arts goal 4: Compose fiction, nonfiction, poetry and drama using self-selected and assigned topics and forms.

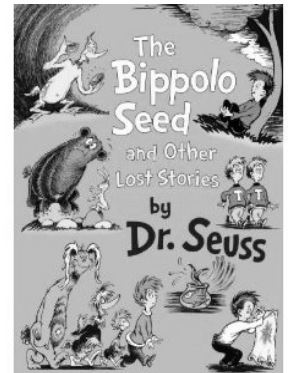


## The Bippolo Seed

Seuss scholar and collector Charles D. Cohen has hunted down seven rarely seen stories by Dr. Seuss. Originally published in magazines between 1948 and 1959, they include *The Bear, the Rabbit, and the Zinniga-Zanniga* (about a rabbit who is saved

from a bear with a single eyelash); *Gustav the Goldfish* (an early, rhymed version of *A Fish Out of Water*; *Tadd and Todd* (a tale passed down via photocopy to generations of twins); *Steak for*

*Supper* (about fantastic creatures who follow a boy home in anticipation of a steak dinner); *The Bippolo Seed* (in which a scheming feline leads an innocent duck to make a bad decision); *The Strange Shirt Spot* (the inspiration for the bathtub-ring scene in *The Cat in the Hat Comes Back*); and *The Great Henry McBride*. This collection of stories will be released Sept. 27, 2011.



Every play produced by Children's Theatre of Charlotte is created in the city of Charlotte by a talented team of designers, carpenters, stitchers, props masters and lighting technicians, not to mention the director and the actors. Because it is presented live, a play is very different from a television show or a movie. As a class, discuss what you experienced when you went to the theatre.

1. What was the first thing you noticed on the stage?
2. Name three things you noticed about the set. Did the set help tell the story? What sort of set would you have designed?
3. What did you like about the costumes? Did they fit the story? What sort of costumes would you have designed?
4. What role did lighting play in telling the story? How did the lights enhance what you were seeing?
5. Talk about the actors. Were there moments you were so caught up in the story that you forgot you were watching a play? Talk about those moments.
6. Is there a TV or movie version of the play you saw today? What makes a stage play unique?



**North Carolina Standard Course of Study Theatre Goal 8.05:** Discuss the similarities and differences between live and recorded theatre events.

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Children's Theatre of Charlotte is supported, in part, with funding from the Arts & Science Council and the North Carolina Arts Council, a division of the Department of Cultural Resources.

## Behind the scenes of Seussical



With the numerous settings and characters in Seussical, fabric plays a major role in this production! There are literally thousands of costume pieces in the show. Seen here are two costume renderings for the production.

In addition to the many costume pieces, over twelve thousand square feet of fabric was used in the set to create the multiple locations and moods of the play.

Seussical is one of the largest productions ever mounted at Children's Theatre of Charlotte!

