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.

The production and accompanying activities address North Carolina Essential Standards in Theatre Arts, Goal A.1: Analyze literary texts and performances. Look for this symbol throughout the resource guide for other curriculum connections.

Hare & Tortoise

About the Play

Children’s Theatre of Charlotte’s production of Hare & Tortoise is an adaptation of Aesop's well-known fable, The Tortoise and the Hare. In the story, the confident and always-in-a-hurry hare challenges the tortoise to a race. Hare’s overconfidence causes him to be both impatient and careless. In the end the hare loses the race but learns an important lesson about being intentional and taking time to enjoy the present moment.

About The Playwright

Brendan Murray grew up in Salford, Lancashire in northwest England. Following a degree in Drama from Huddersfield Polytechnic, he trained as an actor at Drama Studio London and worked in regional repertory, commercial touring, fringe and young people’s theatre. Between 1982 and 1985 he was Head of Theatre-in-Education at The Belgrade Theatre Coventry, writing and directing plays for schools, the studio theatre and the main stage. Teaching includes work for The Department of Education, The Central School of Speech and Drama, Sheffield Hallam University, Rose Bruford College, The Actors' Institute and Drama Studio London, where he is a tutor and Associate Director.

About Children’s Theatre of Charlotte

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 nearly 300,000 young people and their families with multiple program areas: Mainstage productions, a Professional Touring Company and a full scope of Education classes for both schools and the community. Children's Theatre of Charlotte is housed in ImaginOn: The Joe & Joan Martin Center. The facility is shared with the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library: www.cmlibrary.org.

Library Storytimes-to-Go Kits

Schools in Mecklenburg County can acquire activity kits from the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library. Each kit is designed to encourage pre-literacy development and includes picture books, a booklet of activities, flannel board activities, a puppet or educational toy, and music recordings. Kits can be reserved through the library catalog at cmlibrary.org and can be delivered and returned to any branch within the CML system. The Frogs & Turtles Kit or the Hop & Jump Kit would align specifically to Hare and Tortoise. Over 100 kits are available in all, with themes that could be used throughout the year!
“Well, if you can wait one minute...” - Tortoise, from Hare & Tortoise

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Compare & Contrast

Like most Aesop’s fables, the original text of The Tortoise and the Hare is a fairly short. Is it surprising that such a short story can be adapted into a full length play?

Read the Aesop version listed here, then compare and contrast the story with the play version, using the questions below as a guide.

Questions for Discussion

1. The text version of the story does not specifically indicate the time of year that the race takes place. Just from reading the story, what time of year do you think the race might occur?
2. The play involves many different times and seasons in the year. In what season does the play begin? Why do you think the playwright chose to have the story begin during this season? What is your favorite season and why?
3. In some versions, the Hare suggests running the race. In other versions, it’s the Tortoise’s idea. Can we tell which character suggests having a race in the play? Does it matter in the story who suggests running the race?
4. List the character traits of each character in the play. Which character do you think you are most similar to?
5. The story suggests that the Hare is “boasting” about his speed. What does it mean to boast? Is it polite to boast? Did the Tortoise ever boast?
6. Why did the Hare stop to take a nap in the middle of the race?
7. What are some examples of situations when it’s important to hurry? What are some examples of situations when it’s important to take your time? What does the Tortoise teach the Hare about time?
8. Even though the Hare was younger, faster and fitter, the Tortoise won the race. Was there ever a time when you expected something to turn out a certain way, but it ended up being different? What did you learn from that?
9. Is winning the most important thing? What is more important than winning?
10. The moral (or “lesson”) of the fable version is “Slow and steady wins the race.” What does that mean? In the play version, the lesson is not just about being consistent, but also about savoring every moment. If you could write a one sentence moral of the play, what would it be? What are some ways you can follow Tortoise’s lesson in your own life?

Common Core Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy: SL2: Ask and answer questions about key details in a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media; RL2: Recount stories, including fables and folk tales, and determine their central message, lesson or moral. North Carolina Essential Standards Theatre Arts A.1.1. Recall the basic parts of a story, such as characters, setting and events.
Phrases to Explore
The following phrases are found in the play version of *Hare and Tortoise*. Read through each phrase and discuss.

Hare: “I can’t wait for now to be over. I can’t wait for next to be now.” Why is Hare so eager for now to be over? What might he be missing by looking forward to the next moment rather than enjoying the current moment? Are there ever times that you’re so busy wishing for the next thing that you miss a moment in the meantime?

**The world is winter: shivering, shaking.**
What are some other words that describe winter?

**The world is springtime: breathing, branching.**
What are some other words that describe spring?

**The world is summer: sweltering, swooning.**
What are some other words that describe summer?

**The world is autumn: gleaming, glowing.**
What are some other words that describe autumn?

*Tortoise is sleeping: sound and silent*

*Tortoise is waiting: wishing, wondering*

What do you notice about the descriptive words used in the examples above?

Tortoise: “You can’t be sure of anything.”
Hare: “Ever?”
Tortoise: “No.”
Hare: “That’s scary.”
Hare: “Exciting?”
Tortoise: “Just think: a world where anything can happen.”
Hare: “Anything?”
Tortoise: “Anything!”
Hare: “Exciting!”
Tortoise: “Yes.”
Hare: “How do you know all this?”
Tortoise: “I used to be a hare.”

What did Tortoise mean when she said “I used to be a hare”?

Tortoise: “Will you be here when I wake up?”
Hare: “Oh yes. And I’ll tell you everything that happened: how the stars shine and your breath freezes and the snow falls like so many moments of time…”

How is the Hare different at the end of the play than he was at the beginning?

Characteristics of a Fable
To be considered a fable, a story must have animal characters with human characteristics and there must be a moral or lesson. Fables are typically short, and the setting is usually outside.

The final page of this guide includes a list of some of Aesop’s fables, along with some modern retellings of fables. Use a chart to graph elements of different fables in your classroom.

Create an Original Fable
The following formula might be useful in creating an original fable:

- Decide on a lesson or moral that will be taught in the story.
- Determine a problem and solution that will take place in the story to teach the moral.
- Identify animal characters with human characteristics for the story.
- Determine the setting.
- Outline the story’s beginning, middle and end, including the problem and the solution.
- Add detail and dialogue. Complete with a title and illustrations.

Common Core Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy: RL3: Identify characters, settings and major events in a story.
L2: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases. W3a: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences; establish a situation and introduce a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally.
Recommended Reading

Below is a list of some of Aesop’s Fables as well as books that retell or are adapted from fables.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Lion and the Mouse</th>
<th>Mouse &amp; Lion: Aesop Retold by Rand Burket</th>
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<tr>
<td>The Ant and the Grasshopper</td>
<td>The Grasshopper’s Song: an Aesop’s Fable Revisited by Nikki Giovanni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Boy Who Cried Wolf</td>
<td>The Boy Who Cried Wolf by Mairi Mackinnon</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Fox and the Grapes</td>
<td>Lousy Rotten Stinkin’ Grapes by Margie Palatini</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Fox and the Crow</td>
<td>The Fox and the Crow by Manasi Subramaniam, Culpeo S. Fox</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Town Mouse &amp; the Country Mouse</td>
<td>Town Mouse Country Mouse by Jan Brett</td>
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About Aesop

There are many mentions of Aesop in Greek history, but very few actual facts exist about his life. Based on the information that has been recorded, Aesop is thought to have lived between 620 and 560 B.C. Scholars believe that he may have been a slave who was granted freedom because of his keen ability to tell a good story. The stories that he told were not initially written down, but rather passed along orally from person to person. Over 600 stories are credited to his name, although many historians agree that some of the fables attributed to Aesop could not possibly have been written by him. Some scholars even doubt whether Aesop even existed at all since there is so little evidence to confirm that he was a real person.

Aesop’s fables have reached countless generations and the lessons taught in his stories remain relevant today.

Children’s Theatre of Charlotte is sincerely grateful to our generous sponsors and supporters:

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