



VIRGINIA  
STAGE  
COMPANY  
AT THE  
Wells Theatre

# THE WIZ

## STUDY GUIDE

study guide by MOLLY MALONE, KAT MARTIN, EMEL ERTUGRUL, CRYSTAL TUXHORN  
with special thanks to Cape Fear Regional Theatre

# WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM VSC EDUCATION PROGRAMS

## Our Teaching Philosophy

We've witnessed firsthand what the creative process nurtures in children, teens and all lifelong learners:

- excitement, enthusiasm, and openness to explore their own creativity
- critical-thinking and problem solving skills
- enthusiasm for teamwork
- empathy and support toward peers
- strength in their ability to listen and express themselves effectively
- healthy self-image and awareness

Because it has such positive and far-reaching outcomes for our students, VSC's education model emphasizes process over product. We believe that students will emerge from their time with VSC's educational programs with skills that will serve them well in all areas of life.

## Benefits for Students

Students enrolled in VSC's education programs will:

- develop leadership qualities
- enhance communication skills
- develop an appreciation for the creative process
- learn to take ownership of their own ideas and concepts
- increase their knowledge of theatre terms
- develop greater confidence through the creative play experience
- develop a spirit of curiosity
- learn to develop and appreciate the value of kindness
- develop or expand spatial awareness
- use dramatic prompts to create imaginative movement
- cooperate with others in group sessions
- learn how to use their voice safely and effectively
- learn how to use their bodies effectively with character development
- work with peers to write scripts
- explore characters and settings
- rehearse in a positive, supportive environment
- practice respectful critique of others' work
- put it all together to create original theatre for others.

Virginia Stage Company's production of **The Wiz** adheres to the following Virginia's English Standards of Learning requirements for grades 5-12:

**Reading and Writing** – 5.4, 5.5., 5.7, 5.8, 6.4, 6.5, 6.7, 6.8, 7.4, 7.5, 7.7, 7.8, 8.5, 8.5, 8.7, 8.8, 9.3, 9.4, 9.5, 9.6, 9.7, 10.3, 10.4, 10.5, 10.6, 10.7, 11.3, 11.4, 11.5, 11.6, 11.7, 12.3, 12.4, 12.5, 12.6, 12.7

**Theatre Arts** – 6.15, 6.16, 6.17, 6.20, 6.21, 6.23, 6.24, 6.25, 7.17, 7.18, 7.19, 7.20, 7.21, 7.22, 7.23, 8.15, 8.16, 7.17, 8.18, 8.19, 8.20, 8.21, 8.22, 8.23, 8.24, 8.25

**Introduction to Theatre** – TI. 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18

**Theatre Arts II Dramatic Literature and Theatre History** – TII. 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21

# WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM THIS STUDY GUIDE

## In This Guide...

You will find activities that are appropriate for grades 5-12.

Vocabulary Building Block terms and definitions will be marked with



Activities that are appropriate for middle school students will be marked with



Activities that are better suited for high school students will be marked with



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## ABOUT THE WIZ

book by WILLIAM F. BROWN, music & lyrics by CHARLIE SMALLS

This “super soul” 1975 Tony Award-winner for Best Musical retells L. Frank Baum’s classic “The Wizard of Oz” in the context of African-American culture.

### The Story:

Dorothy, a restless Kansas farm girl eager to see more of the world, is transported by a tornado to a magical world of Munchkins, witches, and a yellow brick road. On her way to the Emerald City to meet the Wizard of Oz, who she believes can help her get back home to Kansas, she encounters the Scarecrow, Tin Man, and Cowardly Lion - friends who help her battle the Wicked Witch of the West and eventually learn that there really is “no place like home.”

Source: *Broadway Musical Home*



# DETAILED SYNOPSIS

## Act One

On a small farm in Kansas, Dorothy, a bright, energetic young teenager, is being scolded by her Aunt Em, a farmer's wife who is disappointed that Dorothy isn't ready to accept the adult responsibilities necessary to life on a farm. Despite her strict manner, it is obvious that Aunt Em cares very much for the girl ("The Feeling We Once Had"). A tornado, played by a colorful mass of dancers ("Tornado Ballet") sweeps up Dorothy's house, and carries it to the strange, mystical and magical land of Oz, where it kills the Wicked Witch of the East. The witch's death causes quite a stir among the Munchkins and the Good Witch of the North, Addaperle, an extremely zany comic character. When Dorothy asks the Munchkins and Addaperle how she is to get back to Kansas they advise her to visit the great Oz ("He's the Wizard").

A yellow brick road appears, played by four men, but Dorothy is frightened of the journey she must take ("Soon as I Get Home"). Her fears are alleviated by a friendly Scarecrow perched on a pole in a corn- field whom she frees. He tells her about his dream to have brains ("I was Born the Day Before Yesterday"). Dorothy tells the Scarecrow that the Wiz could probably help him and the two decide to join forces with the "road" on their way to the Emerald City ("Ease on Down the Road").

In a small patch of woods along the yellow brick road, they find a rusted Tinman who begs for some oil ("Slide Some Oil to Me") and tells the two he wants a heart to make his life complete. They ask him to join them and the three set out ("Ease on Down the Road - Reprise"). Their journey is interrupted by the Cowardly Lion who tries to convince them of his ferocity ("I'm a Mean Ole Lion"). He turns out to be under the psychiatric care of an owl and decides to go to Oz in hopes of finding courage ("Ease on Down the Road - Reprise"). When the Lion shows his cowardice in a fight with the Kalidahs, a frightening witch like gang ("Kalidah Battle"), Dorothy comforts him ("Be a Lion"). When the four find themselves in a poppy field, Dorothy remembers the warning that Addaperle gave her about the dangerous Poppies. She warns everyone to leave the field but the Lion succumbs to the treacherous Poppies. Luckily a paddy wagon containing four mice from the "Mice Squad" comes in and rescues the four travelers from the sensual Poppies.

After many trials and tribulations, the group arrives in the futuristic Emerald City and meets its exotically and exquisitely dressed inhabitants. All the citizens wear green glasses as part of their apparel ("Emerald City Ballet"). The four eventually meet the Wiz who makes a fantastic entrance. He strikes a magnificent pose, which overwhelms everyone. The Wiz theatrically introduces himself to the travelers, who are thoroughly frightened by what they have just witnessed ("So You Wanted to Meet the Wizard"). The Wiz listens to their problems and though he appears very harsh with everyone's requests, he is deeply moved by the Tinman's song ("What Would I Do If I Could Feel?"). He agrees to grant their wishes if they kill Evillene, the Wicked Witch of the West and the most powerful witch in Oz.

## Act Two

In Evillene's perfectly dreadful castle, with its large ugly throne, covered with bones, the large, grotesque Witch harshly instructs her slaves, the Winkies, not to bother her for she is in a bad mood ("No Bad News"). When an unfortunate messenger has the bad luck to have to report on the presence of Dorothy and her friends the angry Witch kills the messenger and summons the winged monkeys. The scene shifts to another part of the stage where the monkeys do a wild dance, which includes the capture and eventual kidnapping of Dorothy ("Funky Monkeys"). At Evillene's castle, when Evillene starts victimizing the Lion, Dorothy hurls a bucket of water on the unsuspecting Witch, who promptly shrieks in horror, begins to melt and finally is reduced to a pile of smoldering cloth. The Winkies shout with joy at the death of their despicable Witch ("Everybody Rejoice").

The four return to Emerald City where they discover the Wiz is a fake. Dorothy and her friends angrily comment ("Who Do You Think You Are?"). The Wiz reveals to Dorothy and the others that he really isn't a Wizard but a plain old nobody from Omaha, Nebraska who's hot air balloon got swept up in a big storm and landed in the middle of a ladies social in Oz. These women, having never seen a hot air balloon before, expected him to do another miracle so he devised the green glasses that everyone wears. The four friends are puzzled until he explains that the miracle behind the glasses is what you allow yourself to see ("If You Believe"). The Wiz reaches into his magic storage chest and begins to hand out his miracles: a box of all bran sprinkles for the Scarecrow, which he dubs "all brain"; a large, red satin heart for the Tinman; a whiskey bottle marked O & Z, which he throws together in a chalice and has the lion drink for courage; and a promise to take Dorothy back to Kansas in the balloon he arrived in.

At a farewell launching where the citizens are bidding their leader goodbye ("Y'all Got It"), the balloon accidentally ascends without Dorothy. Dorothy, in a fury, throws a temper tantrum which is interrupted by a puff of smoke and a dazed Addaperle who tells the foursome that her sister, Glinda, the Good Witch of the South, is on her way. She arrives and she tells Dorothy to rest her body and her mind ("A Rested Body is a Rested Mind"). Glinda then tells Dorothy she can go home if she believes in herself ("If You Believe - Reprise"). Dorothy begins to sing of her "Home" and is reminded by her friends that she can return to Oz by clicking her silver shoes and thinking of them. All her friends in Oz fantasy slowly disappear, leaving her alone. Toto, her dog, appears and Dorothy realizes that she's home.

**-END-**



# AUTHORS

**William Brown** was born April 16, 1928 in Jersey City, New Jersey. He has led a quiet life while continuing to write and create as often as possible. When he was 46 he won a Tony nomination and a Drama Desk Award for writing the book of *The Wiz*, one of the most successful musicals ever to come to Broadway and was the winner of seven Tony Awards, including Best Musical of the Year.

Off-Broadway and in regional theatre, Bill wrote the books for other critically-acclaimed musicals including *How to Steal an Election* and *The Nutley Papers*. In television, he has over 100 credits to his name. Joan Rivers has been indebted to him for special material, as has Georgie Kaye, Joey Foreman, and Joel Grey, for whom Brown created one of his four produced TV pilots.

He has been a syndicated cartoonist with the comic strip "Boomer," and has written and illustrated five books of his own, as well as illustrating six others.

<http://gurmanagency.com/selected-clients/william-f-brown/>

**Charlie Smalls** studied music at the Henry Street Settlement and was a 1961 graduate of the Juilliard School. In the years that followed, he was a pianist with the New York Jazz Repertory Company and toured with Harry Belafonte and Hugh Masekela, among others. Mr. Smalls came to prominence in January 1975, when *The Wiz* a musical version of L. Frank Baum's *Wonderful Wizard of Oz* with a black cast opened at the Majestic Theater. His music and lyrics for *The Wiz* won two Tony Awards in 1975. The show was a popular success and, in 1978, was made into a film starring Diana Ross and Michael Jackson.

"The music in *The Wiz* probably reaches deeper into black consciousness than has been generally recognized," Bryant Rollins wrote in *The New York Times* in December 1975. "The score by Charlie Smalls intersperses songs of fantasy and humor with songs of protest. Innovation in black music follows a tradition of protest against oppression."

Mr. Smalls was performing and working on a new musical at the time of his death. He died on August 27, 1987 in Bruges, Belgium. He was 43 years old and lived in Manhattan.

<http://www.nytimes.com/1987/09/04/obituaries/charlie-smalls-is-dead-composer-of-the-wiz.html>



# HISTORY OF THE WIZ

*The Wiz* has large “family tree” as it, among other works, has grown out of the book *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* by L. Frank Baum. *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* first introduced the world to Dorothy and the land of Oz on May 17, 1900. Since then, it has been deemed an American Fairy Tale, and has inspired millions of readers with its strong female protagonist and creative imagery. The most recognized adaptations of the book are the 1939 film *The Wizard of Oz*, *The Wiz* in 1975, and most recently in 2003, *Wicked*, a musical take on the Wicked Witch’s side of the story. With such an inspirational foundation, the story has spread across the world and been used as stimulus for hundred of stories over the years, including movies, TV shows, and more.

Films made in color were so new that the 1939 Movie changed Dorothy’s silver slippers to ruby slippers and gave the Wicked Witch of the West green-skin all so the movie would be more colorful.

**L. Frank Baum** was born in New York in 1856. He had his first best-selling children’s book in 1899 with *Father Goose*, his Book. The following year, Baum scored an even bigger hit with *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* and went on to write 13 more Oz books before his death in 1919. His stories have formed the basis for such popular films as *The Wizard of Oz* (1939) and *Oz the Great and Powerful* (2013).

During his life, he never received a high school diploma, yet went on to own and manage a theatre, and work as a journalist and businessman. He worked hard to help contribute to his home-life which included a wife and four sons. His mother-in-law was the suffragist Matilda Joslyn Gage, who may have influenced him to write strong female characters. Writing was always one of his favorite past-times as he loved creating stories for his children and grandchildren.

<http://www.biography.com/people/frank-baum-9202328>

L. Frank Baum did not intend to continue writing stories about Oz, but he received so many letters asking for more, that he continued to write the series so he wouldn’t disappoint the children who wrote him.

# ADAPTATIONS OF OZ

*The Patchwork Girl of Oz*, 1914 film

*The Wizard of Oz*, 1939 musical film

The most widely-known & successful adaptation ever produced of the original novel, this film has become a staple of American culture.



The *Wiz* was a breakthrough for Broadway, as the first large-scale big-budget musical featuring an all-black cast, which won 7 Tonys and multiple Drama Desk Awards.

*The Wiz*, 1975 musical

*Oz*, 1976 Australian Rock musical

*Return to Oz*, 1985 film

Dorothy returns to Oz and must defeat the evil Nome King to restore Oz to its former glory. Though the movie keeps the ruby slippers, it's considered to be a more faithful adaptation of Baum's novels in both story and production design and is based on the second and third Oz books.

*The Wiz*, 1987 movie

Loosely adapted from the Broadway musical, the film is a urban reimagining of the story, featuring new songs and an all-star cast. The movie was not a hit during its theatrical release, but has developed a cult following over the years and is now more widely recognized than the stage show.

*The Wonderful Galaxy of Oz*, 1990 anime series

A futuristic take on the story, this anime series is based in the year 2060, where Dorothy must collect crystals to defeat the evil Gloomhilda who seeks to rule the Galaxy of Oz.



Subtitled "The Untold Story of the Witches of

Oz", this Broadway hit is based on the novel *Wicked: The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West* by Gregory Maguire and tells the story of two unlikely friends, Glinda the Good and Elphaba, the Wicked Witch of the West.

*Wicked*, 2003 musical

*The Muppets' Wizard of Oz*, 2005 film

*Tin Man*, 2007 Sci-Fi miniseries



Sci-fi elements combine with a 1930s aesthetic to give this modern-day continuation a unique feel.

*The Witches of Oz*, 2011 miniseries

*Legends of Oz: Dorothy's Return*, 2013 Animated film

*Oz the Great and Powerful*, 2013 movie

Set 20 years before the events of the original novel, this fantasy-adventure film follows magician Oscar Diggs who arrives in Oz and is tasked with restoring order in the land due to a conflict between three powerful witches.

*Emerald City*, 2014 TV series

**Adaptation:** a movie, television drama, written work, or stage play that has been modified to fit a new set of parameters from the original work, typically a novel

# ADAPTATIONS OF OZ (continued)

## ACTIVITY



### "Well They're Just My Size Any Way" Design Your Own Magical Slippers

In *The Wiz* Dorothy is given a pair of silver slippers by Addaperle:

**ADDAPERLE:** But before you go, maybe you ought to take Evmamene's silver slippers. Here. I hope you don't mind second-hand shoes.

*(A MUNCHKIN brings the pair to ADDAPERLE.)*

**DOROTHY:** *(Putting shoes on.)* I never had a pair this beautiful.

**ADDAPERLE:** But, you gotta promise not to take them off till you get home!

**DOROTHY:** Alright, I promise...but why?

**ADDAPERLE:** *(Cautiously)* 'Cause they really got some secret powers.

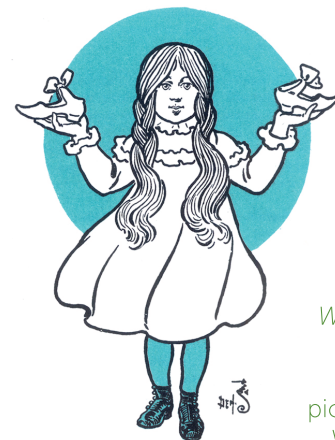
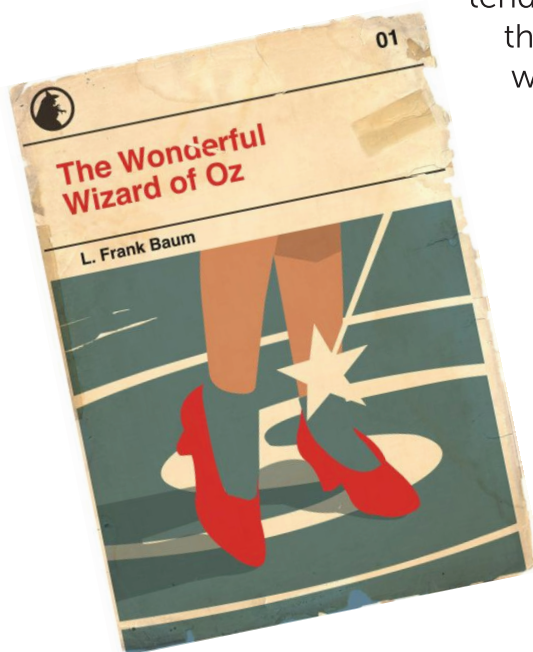
**DOROTHY:** To do what?

**ADDAPERLE:** I don't know. That's the secret.

In L. Frank Baum's novel *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, after Dorothy's house lands on the Wicked Witch of the East, the Good Witch of the North gives Dorothy a pair of magical silver slippers. The Good Witch tells Dorothy, "there is some charm connected with them; but what it is we never knew." In both stories, the slippers have some sort of unknown magic and the power to send Dorothy home.

Think about creating your own pair of magical slippers. Would they all be one color or multiple colors. Do they have a pattern like polka dots? Think about what colors your magical slippers would be. Silver represents hope, unconditional love, meditation,

tenderness, and kindness. Other colors represent other things, for example, the color purple is often associated with royalty, nobility, power, wealth, creativity, wisdom, dignity, and magic. What magical powers would your slippers have. What magical powers do you need to protect you on your way home?



from *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* by L. Frank Baum with pictures by W. W. Denslow



# ADAPTATIONS OF OZ

(continued)

## ACTIVITY

My magical slippers would have the power to....



My magical slippers are \_\_\_\_\_. I picked this color because \_\_\_\_\_.

Draw your own magical slippers:

# ADAPTATIONS OF *Oz* (continued)

## ACTIVITY



### CREATE YOUR OWN ADAPTATION

In pairs or small groups read the chapter of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* below. Then create your own adaptation that you can share with the rest of your class.

**TIP:** As you read through the chapter, highlight or underline things that stand out to you. Maybe you want to include bits of the dialogue, or maybe you are more interested in visual elements.

#### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. Who are the main characters in the piece?
2. Where is the story set?
3. Describe the basic plot in a few sentences.
4. What are some themes of the original piece?
5. Which theme would you like to focus on?
6. What medium do you think tells the story the best and highlights your theme? Theatre? Comic? Poetry? Painting?

#### 6. The Cowardly Lion

All this time Dorothy and her companions had been walking through the thick woods. The road was still paved with yellow brick, but these were much covered by dried branches and dead leaves from the trees, and the walking was not at all good.

There were few birds in this part of the forest, for birds love the open country where there is plenty of sunshine. But now and then there came a deep growl from some wild animal hidden among the trees. These sounds made the little girl's heart beat fast, for she did not know what made them; but Toto knew, and he walked close to Dorothy's side, and did not even bark in return.

"How long will it be," the child asked of the Tin Woodman, "before we are out of the forest?"

"I cannot tell," was the answer, "for I have never been to the Emerald City. But my father went there once, when I was a boy, and he said it was a long journey through a dangerous country, although nearer to the city where Oz dwells the country is beautiful. But I am not afraid so long as I have my oil-can, and nothing can hurt the Scarecrow, while you bear upon your forehead the mark of the Good Witch's kiss, and that will protect you from harm."

"But Toto!" said the girl anxiously. "What will protect him?"

"We must protect him ourselves if he is in danger," replied the Tin Woodman.

Just as he spoke there came from the forest a terrible roar, and the next moment a great Lion bounded into the road. With one blow of his paw he sent the Scarecrow spinning over and over to the edge of the road, and then he struck at the Tin Woodman with his sharp claws. But, to the Lion's surprise, he could make no impression on the tin, although the Woodman fell over in the road and lay still.

Little Toto, now that he had an enemy to face, ran barking toward the Lion, and the great beast had opened his mouth to bite the dog, when Dorothy, fearing Toto would be killed, and heedless of danger, rushed forward and slapped the Lion upon his nose as hard as she could, while she cried out:

"Don't you dare to bite Toto! You ought to be ashamed of yourself, a big beast like you, to bite a poor little dog!"

"I didn't bite him," said the Lion, as he rubbed his nose with his paw where Dorothy had hit it.

"No, but you tried to," she retorted. "You are nothing but a big coward."

"I know it," said the Lion, hanging his head in shame. "I've always known it. But how can I help it?"

"I don't know, I'm sure. To think of your striking a stuffed man, like the poor Scarecrow!"

"Is he stuffed?" asked the Lion in surprise, as he watched her pick up the Scarecrow and set him upon his feet, while she patted him into shape again.

# ADAPTATIONS OF *Oz* (continued)

## ACTIVITY



"Of course he's stuffed," replied Dorothy, who was still angry.

"That's why he went over so easily," remarked the Lion. "It astonished me to see him whirl around so. Is the other one stuffed also?"

"No," said Dorothy, "he's made of tin." And she helped the Woodman up again.

"That's why he nearly blunted my claws," said the Lion. "When they scratched against the tin it made a cold shiver run down my back. What is that little animal you are so tender of?"

"He is my dog, Toto," answered Dorothy.

"Is he made of tin, or stuffed?" asked the Lion.

"Neither. He's a--a--a meat dog," said the girl.

"Oh! He's a curious animal and seems remarkably small, now that I look at him. No one would think of biting such a little thing, except a coward like me," continued the Lion sadly.

"What makes you a coward?" asked Dorothy, looking at the great beast in wonder, for he was as big as a small horse.

"It's a mystery," replied the Lion. "I suppose I was born that way. All the other animals in the forest naturally expect me to be brave, for the Lion is everywhere thought to be the King of Beasts. I learned that if I roared very loudly every living thing was frightened and got out of my way. Whenever I've met a man I've been awfully scared; but I just roared at him, and he has always run away as fast as he could go. If the elephants and the tigers and the bears had ever tried to fight me, I should have run myself--I'm such a coward; but just as soon as they hear me roar they all try to get away from me, and of course I let them go."

"But that isn't right. The King of Beasts shouldn't be a coward," said the Scarecrow.

"I know it," returned the Lion, wiping a tear from his eye with the tip of his tail. "It is my great sorrow, and makes my life very unhappy. But whenever there is danger, my heart begins to beat fast."

"Perhaps you have heart disease," said the Tin Woodman.

"It may be," said the Lion.

"If you have," continued the Tin Woodman, "you ought to be glad, for it proves you have a heart. For my part, I have no heart; so I cannot have heart disease."

"Perhaps," said the Lion thoughtfully, "if I had no heart I should not be a coward."

"Have you brains?" asked the Scarecrow.

"I suppose so. I've never looked to see," replied the Lion.

"I am going to the Great Oz to ask him to give me some," remarked the Scarecrow, "for my head is stuffed with straw."

"And I am going to ask him to give me a heart," said the Woodman.

"And I am going to ask him to send Toto and me back to Kansas," added Dorothy.

"Do you think Oz could give me courage?" asked the Cowardly Lion.

"Just as easily as he could give me brains," said the Scarecrow.

"Or give me a heart," said the Tin Woodman.

"Or send me back to Kansas," said Dorothy.

"Then, if you don't mind, I'll go with you," said the Lion, "for my life is simply unbearable without a bit of courage."

"You will be very welcome," answered Dorothy, "for you will help to keep away the other wild beasts. It seems to me they must be more cowardly than you are if they allow you to scare them so easily."

"They really are," said the Lion, "but that doesn't make me any braver, and as long as I know myself to be a coward I shall be unhappy."

So once more the little company set off upon the journey, the Lion walking with stately strides at Dorothy's side. Toto did not approve of this new comrade at first, for he could not forget how nearly he had been crushed between the Lion's great jaws. But after a time he became more at ease, and presently Toto and the Cowardly Lion had grown to be good friends.

During the rest of that day there was no other adventure to mar the peace of their journey. Once, indeed, the Tin Woodman stepped upon a beetle that was crawling along the road, and killed the poor little thing. This made the Tin Woodman very unhappy, for he was always careful not to hurt any living creature; and as he walked along he wept several tears of sorrow and regret. These tears ran slowly down his face and over the hinges of his jaw, and there they rusted. When Dorothy presently asked him a question the Tin Woodman could not open his mouth, for his jaws were tightly rusted together. He became greatly frightened at this and made many motions to Dorothy to relieve him, but she could not understand. The Lion was also puzzled to know what was wrong. But the Scarecrow seized the oil-can from Dorothy's basket and oiled the Woodman's jaws, so that after a few moments he could talk as well as before.

"This will serve me a lesson," said he, "to look where I step. For if I should kill another bug or beetle I should surely cry again, and crying rusts my jaws so that I cannot speak."

Thereafter he walked very carefully, with his eyes on the road, and when he saw a tiny ant toiling by he would step over it, so as not to harm it. The Tin Woodman knew very well he had no heart, and therefore he took great care never to be cruel or unkind to anything.

"You people with hearts," he said, "have something to guide you, and need never do wrong; but I have no heart, and so I must be very careful. When Oz gives me a heart of course I needn't mind so much."



# AN AMERICAN FAIRY TALE



**Fairy Tale:** a children's story about magical and imaginary beings and lands.

## Fairy Tales Around the World

Some people have called *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* "the first American Fairy Tale". *The Wiz* is said to be closer to the original book than the 1939 film *The Wizard of Oz*. As you watch *The Wiz* make a mental note of the elements that reinforce the idea that this is a fairy tale.

Marvelous things happen to characters in fairy tales. You can meet witches, giants, kings, dragons, animals who talk and sometimes even scarecrows who want a brain. Princesses sleep for a hundred years, selfish boys become beasts, and objects can be enchanted, whether a magic mirror, a pumpkin that becomes a carriage or shoes that can take you to another world.

The oldest fairy tales were told and retold for generations before they were written down. French fairy tales were the first to be collected and written down, but now we can read fairy tales from almost any culture. When these stories were studied together, something amazing was discovered. From countries as distant and different as Egypt and Iceland similar fairy tales are told. Both Egypt and Iceland have "Cinderella" stories, as do China, England, Korea, Siberia, France, and Vietnam; and the list doesn't stop there. There may be a thousand versions of the Cinderella story, each with a unique telling which carries cultural information about the time and place the story was told. One thing is for sure; people everywhere like stories in which truth prevails over deception, generosity is ultimately rewarded, hard work overcomes obstacles, and love, mercy and kindness are the greatest powers of all.

[http://teacher.scholastic.com/writewit/mff/fairytales\\_discovering.htm](http://teacher.scholastic.com/writewit/mff/fairytales_discovering.htm)

Cinderella – France  
Anansi – Ghana

Peter Pan – Scotland  
Aponibolinayen – Philipines

The Ugly Duckling – Denmark  
Hansel and Gretel – Germany

*Fairy Tales of the World* <http://fairytalesoftheworld.com/>

## GROUP DISCUSSION & ACTIVITY

What stories are you familiar with? What are some common elements and themes?

Research other fairy tales from different countries. How is *The Wiz* similar and different from from those stories?

Identify and analyze what makes this story an American fairy tale?



# WHAT MAKES A HOME

In *The Wiz*, Dorothy is searching for a way back home to Auntie Em, Uncle Henry and Kansas. What makes a home? It takes more than four walls and roof to make a home. A home is where you feel safe and you feel like you can be who you really are. Home is a place made of memories and family. Think about the things that make your house a home for you. What are the memories, feelings, and people that make your house a home. Below you will find a space to brainstorm the things that make your house a home.

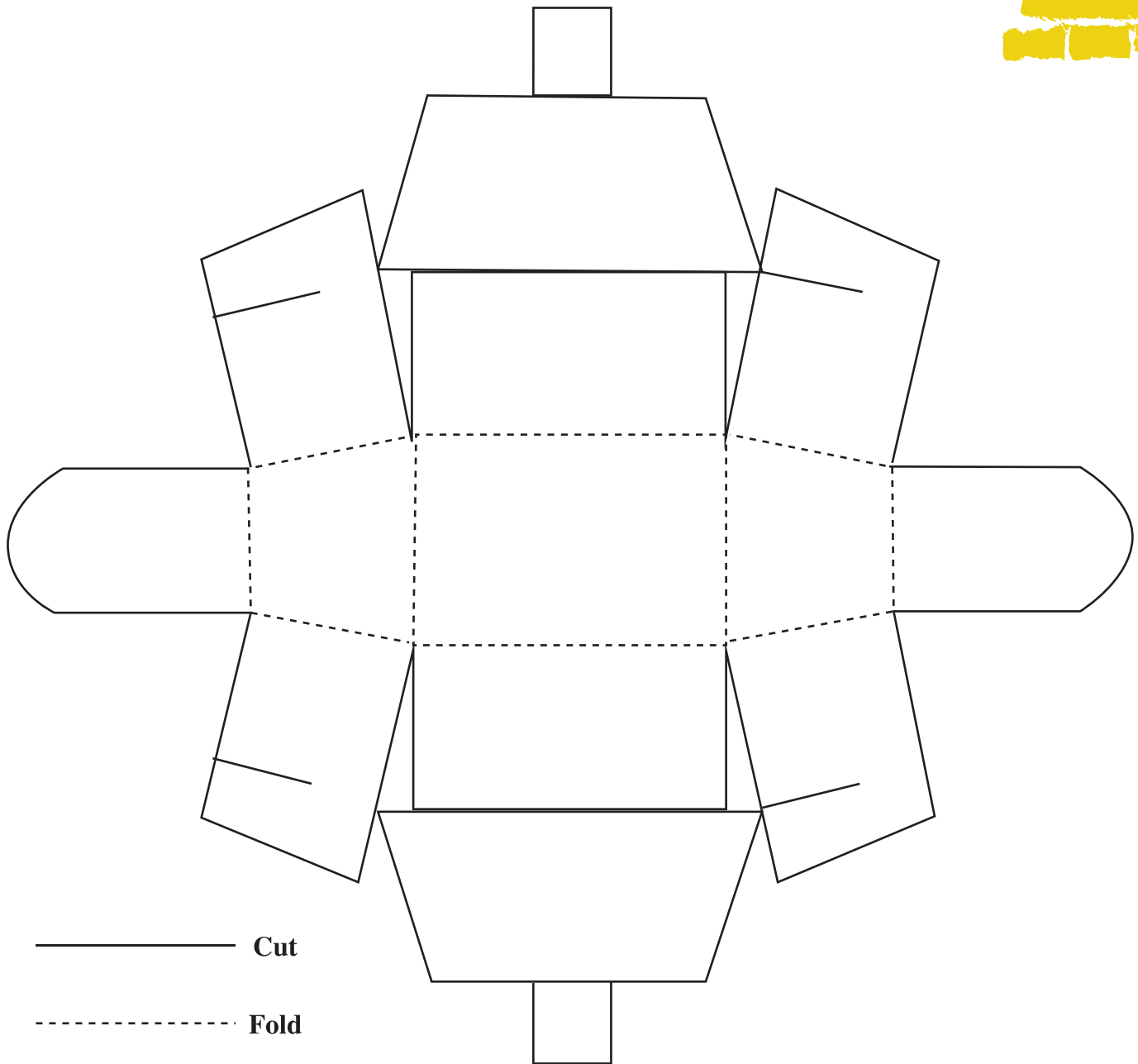
Consider the above definition of "home." Reflect on your own experience or perception of "home." How would you define the idea of "home" to someone who is searching for one?

Some people feel more at home away from home—they love to travel or feel more secure at a friend's house; what makes the place you call home the perfect place for you?

People	Memories	Feelings	Things you smell/see/hear

# WHAT MAKES A HOME (continued)

## ACTIVITY



After you have finished brainstorming think about how you can show your; people, memories, feelings, and senses in drawings. Maybe you want to draw a picture of your mom and a heart, because your mom and feeling loved make your house a home for you. Pictured above is a template for making a model house. Color the walls and roof of your home with drawings that show your; people, memories, feelings, and senses. Next cut out the pattern and assemble your home following the key.



# A CULTURAL PHENOMENON



**Culture:** the beliefs, customs, arts, etc., of a particular society, group, place, or time

When the first production opened at the Majestic Theater on January 5, 1975, it marked a Broadway first. There had been all-black and interracial productions of white musicals—*Hello Dolly* and *The Pajama Game*, respectively—and there had been major black musicals before—*Purlie* and *Raisin*. But none had, as Jack Viertel, artistic director of the City Center Encores! observed in *Playbill*, “dared to be entirely post Jim Crow.” In none had all the creators been black. From the producer—Ken Harper—to the costume designer and eventual director—Geoffrey

Holder, and from lyricist and composer to choreographer, *The Wiz* represented a landmark moment. And the inspiration for that landmark moment—that effervescent celebration of black culture, humor and music—was none other than Baum’s beloved children’s book, whose 1939 film adaptation with Judy Garland had been virtually sanctified by the American public’s adoration. The production was true black representation in an expressly American story, costumed with themes of black heritage, and was musically inspired by the black experience. Instead of “Follow the Yellow Brick Road” and “We’re off to See the Wizard,” *The Wiz* offered up a rhythm and blues alternative: “Ease on Down the Road.” It challenged audiences to broaden their vision of Baum’s classic American fairy tale. “With *The Wiz*, African Americans were staking a claim to a fairy tale that was central to American culture,” says historian Megan Williams. The theme of self-discovery, bonds of friendship, and epic journey home filled with unyielding determination are all given completely different meanings when a Black girl is the one to don the proverbial ruby red slippers. The racebending of this classic story doesn’t end just there; willpower and belief in oneself carry more complexity as they translate to Black liberation in the adventures of Dorothy and her friends. The movie—and franchise as a whole—shifts the perspective of a timeless tale to one that speaks so loudly to people who have historically been shut out of media geared to that sort of positivity. “Creatively embedded with satire and social commentary, *The Wiz* was rich with details that would have resonated with black audiences,” says Dwandalyn Reece, curator of music and performing arts at the Smithsonian’s African American History Museum.

*sources: Smithsonian, Moviepilot, Playbill*

## QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Have you ever seen a movie or read a book that you felt reflected your culture? Identify those elements and explain what makes you connect to them.
2. What are some of your family traditions? How similar are they to others shared in your classroom?
3. Do you feel media in America portrays more diversity now? Cite specific examples to support your claim.
4. How does the story of Oz reflect American culture and societal norms? As *The Wiz* brought the story into the 1970s from the 1900s, what would it take to bring the story into the 2010s?



# EASE ON DOWN THE ROAD

Friendship and loyalty are two hallmarks of the relationships in *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* and in *The Wiz*. Dorothy finds herself in a strange new world where she knows no one, but as she travels, she meets three companions who join her on her quest. She is able to help them and in return they help her as well. They look out for each other, protect each other, and in the end, try to do their best for each other, even when they are separated.

Often, Dorothy, the Tin Man, Scarecrow, and the Lion are referred to as “The Four Friends”.

**After watching *The Wiz***, do you feel that Dorothy, Tin Man, Scarecrow, and Lion are friends? What helped create that bond?



*The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* by L. Frank Baum with pictures by W. W. Denslow



# EASE ON DOWN THE ROAD (continued)

## ACTIVITY



### "Follow the Yellow Brick Road"

#### Reading Comprehension from *The Magical Wizard of Oz*

As a class read the selection from *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* by: L. Frank Baum out-loud. We recommend the teacher reads the narrator part with students taking turns reading Dorothy and the Scarecrow. After reading the selection outloud as a class answer the reading comprehension questions either as individuals or as a class.

#### 4. The Road Through the Forest

After a few hours the road began to be rough, and the walking grew so difficult that the Scarecrow often stumbled over the yellow bricks, which were here very uneven. Sometimes, indeed, they were broken or missing altogether, leaving holes that Toto jumped across and Dorothy walked around. As for the Scarecrow, having no brains, he walked straight ahead, and so stepped into the holes and fell at full length on the hard bricks. It never hurt him, however, and Dorothy would pick him up and set him upon his feet again, while he joined her in laughing merrily at his own mishap.

The farms were not nearly so well cared for here as they were farther back. There were fewer houses and fewer fruit trees, and the farther they went the more dismal and lonesome the country became.

At noon they sat down by the roadside, near a little brook, and Dorothy opened her basket and got out some bread. She offered a piece to the Scarecrow, but he refused.

"I am never hungry," he said, "and it is a lucky thing I am not, for my mouth is only painted, and if I should cut a hole in it so I could eat, the straw I am stuffed with would come out, and that would spoil the shape of my head." Dorothy saw at once that this was true, so she only nodded and went on eating her bread.

"Tell me something about yourself and the country you came from," said the Scarecrow, when she had finished her dinner. So she told him all about Kansas, and how gray everything was there, and how the cyclone had carried her to this queer Land of Oz.

The Scarecrow listened carefully, and said, "I cannot understand why you should wish to leave this beautiful country and go back to the dry, gray place you call Kansas."

"That is because you have no brains" answered the girl. "No matter how dreary and gray our homes are, we people of flesh and blood would rather live there than in any other country, be it ever so beautiful. There is no place like home."

The Scarecrow sighed.

"Of course I cannot understand it," he said. "If your heads were stuffed with straw, like mine, you would probably all live in the beautiful places, and then Kansas would have no people at all. It is fortunate for Kansas that you have brains."

(SWITCH READERS)

"Won't you tell me a story, while we are resting?" asked the child.

The Scarecrow looked at her reproachfully, and answered:

"My life has been so short that I really know nothing whatever. I was only made day before yesterday. What happened in the world before that time is all unknown to me. Luckily, when the farmer made my head, one of the first things he did was to paint my ears, so that I heard what was going on. There was another Munchkin with him, and the first thing I heard was the farmer saying, 'How do you like those ears?'"

"They aren't straight," answered the other.

"Never mind," said the farmer. "They are ears just the same," which was true enough.

"Now I'll make the eyes," said the farmer. So he painted my right eye, and as soon as it was finished I found myself looking at him and at everything around me with a great deal of curiosity, for this was my first glimpse of the world.

# EASE ON DOWN THE ROAD *(continued)*

## ACTIVITY

"That's a rather pretty eye," remarked the Munchkin who was watching the farmer. "Blue paint is just the color for eyes."

"I think I'll make the other a little bigger," said the farmer. And when the second eye was done I could see much better than before. Then he made my nose and my mouth. But I did not speak, because at that time I didn't know what a mouth was for. I had the fun of watching them make my body and my arms and legs; and when they fastened on my head, at last, I felt very proud, for I thought I was just as good a man as anyone.

"This fellow will scare the crows fast enough," said the farmer. "He looks just like a man."

"Why, he is a man," said the other, and I quite agreed with him. The farmer carried me under his arm to the cornfield, and set me up on a tall stick, where you found me. He and his friend soon after walked away and left me alone.

"I did not like to be deserted this way. So I tried to walk after them. But my feet would not touch the ground, and I was forced to stay on that pole. It was a lonely life to lead, for I had nothing to think of, having been made such a little while before. Many crows and other birds flew into the cornfield, but as soon as they saw me they flew away again, thinking I was a Munchkin; and this pleased me and made me feel that I was quite an important person. By and by an old crow flew near me, and after looking at me carefully he perched upon my shoulder and said:

"I wonder if that farmer thought to fool me in this clumsy manner. Any crow of sense could see that you are only stuffed with straw. Then he hopped down at my feet and ate all the corn he wanted. The other birds, seeing he was not harmed by me, came to eat the corn too, so in a short time there was a great flock of them about me.

"I felt sad at this, for it showed I was not such a good Scarecrow after all; but the old crow comforted me, saying, 'If you only had brains in your head you would be as good a man as any of them, and a better man than some of them. Brains are the only things worth having in this world, no matter whether one is a crow or a man.'

"After the crows had gone I thought this over, and decided I would try hard to get some brains. By good luck you came along and pulled me off the stake, and from what you say I am sure the Great Oz will give me brains as soon as we get to the Emerald City."

(SWITCH READERS)

"I hope so," said Dorothy earnestly, "since you seem anxious to have them."

"Oh, yes; I am anxious," returned the Scarecrow. "It is such an uncomfortable feeling to know one is a fool."

"Well," said the girl, "let us go." And she handed the basket to the Scarecrow.

There were no fences at all by the roadside now, and the land was rough and untilled. Toward evening they came to a great forest, where the trees grew so big and close together that their branches met over the road of yellow brick. It was almost dark under the trees, for the branches shut out the daylight; but the travelers did not stop, and went on into the forest.

"If this road goes in, it must come out," said the Scarecrow, "and as the Emerald City is at the other end of the road, we must go wherever it leads us."

"Anyone would know that," said Dorothy.

"Certainly; that is why I know it," returned the Scarecrow. "If it required brains to figure it out, I never should have said it."

After an hour or so the light faded away, and they found themselves stumbling along in the darkness. Dorothy could not see at all, but Toto could, for some dogs see very well in the dark; and the Scarecrow declared he could see as well as by day. So she took hold of his arm and managed to get along fairly well.

"If you see any house, or any place where we can pass the night," she said, "you must tell me; for it is very uncomfortable walking in the dark."

Soon after the Scarecrow stopped.

"I see a little cottage at the right of us," he said, "built of logs and branches. Shall we go there?"

"Yes, indeed," answered the child. "I am all tired out."

So the Scarecrow led her through the trees until they reached the cottage, and Dorothy entered and found a bed of dried leaves in one corner. She lay down at once, and with Toto beside her soon fell into a sound sleep. The Scarecrow, who was never tired, stood up in another corner and waited patiently until morning came.

# EASE ON DOWN THE ROAD *(continued)*

## ACTIVITY



Describe the yellow brick road Dorothy and the Scarecrow are walking down in the beginning of the chapter. Be sure to be specific.

Why doesn't the Scarecrow share bread with Dorothy?

In this exchange, what are some things that Dorothy shares with the Scarecrow? What does he share with her?

What was the first thing the farmer painted on the Scarecrow? What was the second and third thing?

How does the Scarecrow feel when the munchkin tells the farmer, "Why he is a man?" Why does the Scarecrow feel that way?

Where do Dorothy and the Scarecrow rest at the end of the chapter?

What moments or interactions helped to solidify the friendship forming between Dorothy and the Scarecrow?

What is the fastest time you have ever made a friend? What helped bring you two together?

What makes a strong friendship? What does it take to break a friendship?

How would you react to the idea of meeting a stranger and inviting them on a journey with you? How do you build trust and communication?



# EASE ON DOWN THE ROAD *(continued)*

## ACTIVITY



### Personifying a Friend



#### **Personification:**

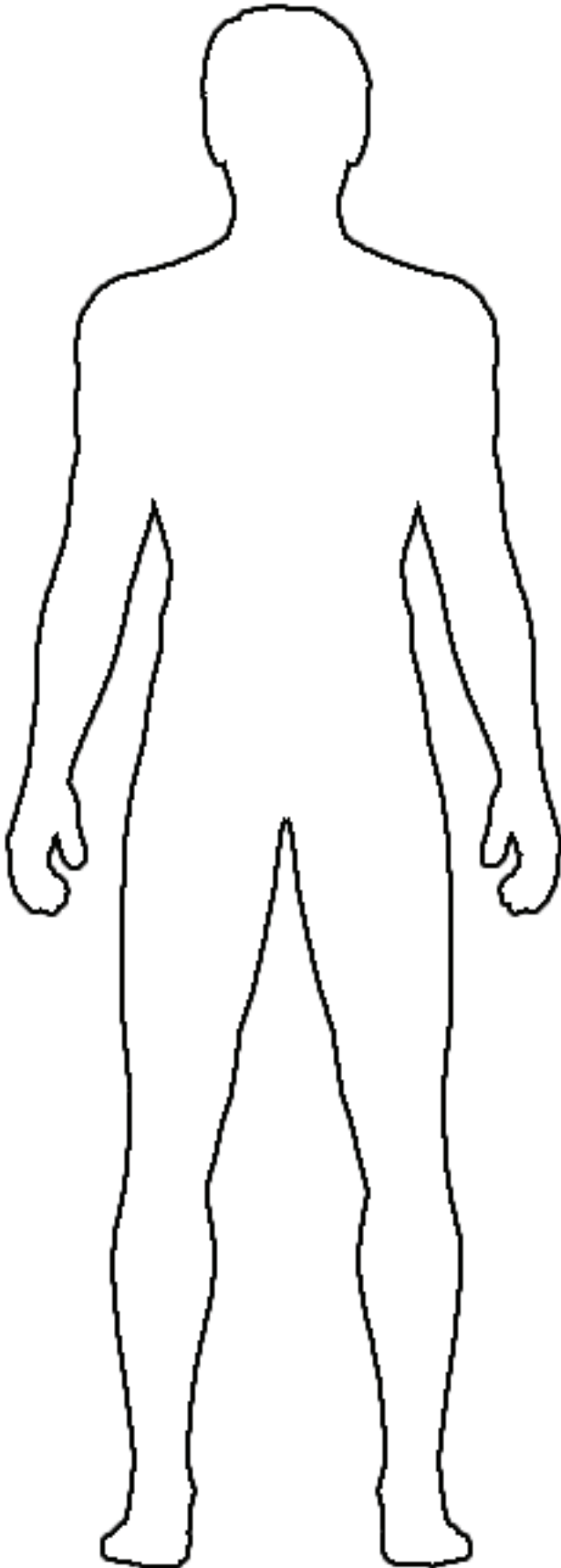
the attribution of a personal nature or human characteristics to something nonhuman, or the representation of an abstract quality in human form. A person, animal, or object regarded as representing or embodying a quality, concept, or thing.

Both the Magical Wizard of Oz and The Wiz tell the same basic story of a young girl from Kansas, Dorothy and her magical journey home. Along the way Dorothy learns what home is and the gifts that she carried all along. The friends that she meets along the way teach Dorothy where her power lies by their lacking. Dorothy has brains, a heart, and courage while her new friends the Scarecrow, Tin Woodsman, and the Cowardly Lion do not. These traits are essential for Dorothy to complete her journey and find her way home.

If you were Dorothy, what qualities or traits would you need to help you travel home? What type of person would you need to meet along the way that might personify one of those characteristics?

Create three lists. First create a list of traits and qualities like intelligence, love, and courage. After you finish that list create another list next to it of animals and other non humans (scarecrow, tin man, lion) that personify those traits. Finally next to that list create a list of things these characters could lack (brains, a heart, courage). Pick your favorite combination and create a costume for your character on the following page.

Trait/Quality	Animal/Non Human	Thing the animal needs



### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

Why did you choose the trait you have chosen?

How does the animal/non human you have chosen represent that trait?

How does your character relate to Dorothy and the other characters traveling down the yellow brick road?

SEASON  
2017 **39** 2018

## STUDENT MATINEES

### RING OF FIRE THE MUSIC OF JOHNNY CASH

SEPTEMBER 27 at 10AM

created by **Richard Maltby, Jr.**, conceived by **William Meade**, orchestrations by **Steven Bishop and Jeff Lisenby**

Explore love, family, and heartache through the tumultuous biography of Johnny Cash. This energetic and exhilarating musical rocks more than two dozen of Cash's iconic hits. This production is most enjoyed by ages 10 and up. **[Early Booking Ends August 15!]**

### THE PARCHMAN HOUR SONGS AND STORIES OF THE '61 FREEDOM RIDERS

NOVEMBER 1 & 8 at 10AM

by **Mike Wiley**

Journey through the Deep South with the pioneers who fought discrimination and paved the way for the future. Adapted from real life accounts of the 1961 Freedom Rides, this play shares these struggles through music that ranges from Bob Dylan to spirituals. This stirring play contains racially charged language and scenes of violence and is recommended for patrons 13 and older.

**[Early Booking Ends September 29!]**

### A CHRISTMAS CAROL

DECEMBER 6, 7, 8, 12, 13, 15, & 19 at 10AM, DECEMBER 14 at 10:30AM

by **Charles Dickens**, adapted by **Patrick Mullins**

It wouldn't be the holidays without Dickens' A Christmas Carol at the Wells Theatre. Experience the childlike wonder of this heartwarming story that follows the Ghosts of Christmas Past, Present, and Future as they take Ebenezer Scrooge on a journey of redemption where he learns the power of kindness and compassion. This play is recommended for all ages and, in our opinion, is better the more kids you bring.

**[Early Booking Ends October 31!]**

### PRIDE AND PREJUDICE

JANUARY 24, 25, & 31 at 10AM

by **Jane Austen**, adapted for the stage by **Joseph Hanreddy and J.R. Sullivan**

This stage adaptation of Jane Austen's most beloved novel will sweep you away with its witty, fast-paced exploration of expectations that has become the template for modern romance. Sparks fly when the charming, vibrant Elizabeth clashes with the aloof, enigmatic Mr. Darcy. Romantic repartee will be best appreciated by ages 10 and older. **[Early Booking Ends December 15!]**

### THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES

FEBRUARY 28, MARCH 7 at 10AM

adapted from **Arthur Conan Doyle's** novel by **Steven Canny and John Nicholson**

3 actors play more than 20 characters in this hilarious spoof of beastly proportions. A fast-paced comedic ride, filled with verbal and visual ingenuity, follows the dynamic pair of Watson & Holmes as they debunk a family 'curse'. "A sublimely funny adaptation of Arthur Conan Doyle's classic", this production is appropriate for ages 8 and up. **[Early Booking Ends January 15!]**

### DISGRACED

APRIL 11 at 10AM

by **Ayad Akhtar**

Akhtar's Pulitzer Prize-winning play sits you at the table for delectable drama where secrets are exposed and prejudices unearthed. At a dinner party hosted by a Pakistani-American lapsed Muslim and his Caucasian wife and attended by his African-American law partner and her Jewish husband, tensions rise when the conversation turns to religion, the economy, and Islamophobia; what could go wrong? This production contains strong language, moments of violence, and powerful subject matter. It is recommended for audiences 16 and older.



VIRGINIA STAGE COMPANY

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