



GOGUE
PERFORMING
ARTS
CENTER

AT AUBURN UNIVERSITY

PERFORMANCE STUDY GUIDE
GRADES PreK–3

Billy Goats Gruff and Other Tales

The Jay and Susie Gogue Performing Arts Center at Auburn University engages audiences across the university, the state of Alabama and beyond with curated arts experiences that inspire, enlighten and unite.

Our annual K-12 School Performance Series provides opportunities for students to enjoy exclusive performances by some of the most talented and accomplished artists from around the world. Prior to each K-12 school performance, teachers receive a study guide containing details about the performance, artist and company, supplemental information about the art form and its history, and grade-appropriate activities designed to spark conversation and exploration in the classroom.

To learn more about education and engagement initiatives at the Gogue Center, visit goguecenter.auburn.edu/education.

PRODUCED BY

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THE JAY AND SUSIE GOGUE PERFORMING ARTS CENTER
AT AUBURN UNIVERSITY
presents

Billy Goats Gruff and Other Tales

Produced by Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia

PERFORMANCE STUDY GUIDE
GRADES PreK–3



Billy Goats Gruff and Other Tales
character creation

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The Jay and Susie Gogue Performing Arts Center
at Auburn University



Where will we go?

GOING TO THE THEATRE

You will be attending a live performance at the theater. You may travel there on a bus, in a van, or in a car. Some of you may even walk there. Theaters can be large, with more than 1,000 seats, and theaters can be small, with less than a few hundred seats. Do you know the size of your local theater?

WHO WILL YOU SEE HERE?

Ushers

These are the people who will greet your bus, lead your class into the building and help you find your seat. Be sure to say “hello!”

Stage Crew

These are the people who work backstage, so you won’t see them in the lobby, but you might see them before or after the performance, and sometimes, they even come on stage during the performance to move things.

Lighting & Sound Operators

These are the people who control the lighting and the sound for the performance. You may see them in the middle of the auditorium at the big sound board or in the back of the auditorium in the booth. Sometimes, the spotlight operators are in the back way above your head.

Performers

These are the people on the stage who may be dancers, musicians, singers, actors, puppeteers or acrobats. It is their job to communicate using their bodies, instruments and voices.

Audience Members

This includes you, your classmates, and other students and teachers from your city, state or surrounding area.

What Does the Audience Do?

National Standards

■ MU:Pr6.1.3-8b

The audience is an important part of the performance. Without the audience, who would watch the performers? Who would clap and sing along and appreciate what the artists bring to the stage? When you are a member of an audience at the theatre, there are a few things to know about what to do and what not to do.



Sit in your seat and look around, but please keep your feet toward the ground.



Listen and watch, but do not talk.



Have a camera or phone? Please turn it off.



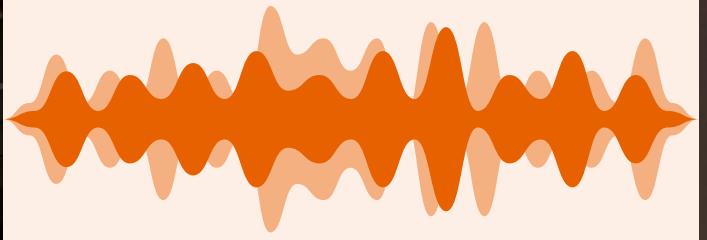
The performers will take to the stage, and we know they will engage. You can laugh, you can sing, you can get up and dance, but just make sure that you give them all a chance!



When the song is done, or the show comes to an end, make sure that you give the performers a hand! Applause is the way that we can say thank you for all that they did today!

The Walter Stanley and Virginia Katharyne Evans
Woltosz Theatre





Acoustics: The Science of Sound

National Standards

■ NS.K-4.1 ■ NS.5-8.2

Acoustics is the study of sound and how that sound reacts in spaces, particularly rooms and buildings. What is sound? Sound is vibration. That vibration travels through the air and into our ears where we hear it. Vibration begins through movement—for example, strumming a guitar string. That vibration creates a sound wave. In a theater or concert hall, acoustics are important so that everyone can hear the performers.

There are two ways that acoustics are controlled. The first, reverberation, is controlling how sound waves bounce off surfaces, like walls and floors. Hard surfaces cause more reverberation and make spaces louder. The second way, absorption, is the opposite of reverberation. Soft surfaces absorb sound waves and make rooms quieter.

Of the materials and surfaces listed below, which do you think cause sound to reverberate? Which absorb sound?

- Tile
- Carpet
- Stone
- Curtains
- Cushions
- Wood

Who to know at the show

MERMAID THEATRE OF NOVA SCOTIA

Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia is North America's leading family audience theatre company, located in the small, rural town of Windsor, Nova Scotia, Canada. Each year, Mermaid Theatre presents more than 400 performances for over 200,000 spectators in venues of all sizes. Since 1972, Mermaid Theatre has been creating realistic stage adaptations of iconic children's storybooks that integrate puppetry, moving objects, original music and memorable visual effects, touring their shows for children throughout the world.

While Mermaid Theatre's main focus is play creation and touring, the company also offers puppetry construction and manipulation workshops to both children and adults at the community and professional level, including programs at the Mermaid Institute of Puppetry Arts; mentoring opportunities for individuals and companies with an interest in developing object- and puppet-based theatre in its Theatre Loft; presentations of international and local touring artists at the Mermaid Imperial Performing Arts Centre in the heart of Windsor, Nova Scotia; and digital entertainment in the newly-created MermaidTV portal.



LEARN MORE

Click here to learn more about Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia.

MEET THE CREATIVE TEAM



Jim Morrow, Director, Set Designer, Puppet Designer and Narrator

Jim Morrow is Mermaid Theatre's artistic director as well as a performer, designer, teacher and mentor. He is the creator of many of Mermaid Theatre's celebrated

productions, including *It's OK To Be Different*; *The Rainbow Fish*; *Goodnight Moon & The Runaway Bunny*; *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?*; *Guess How Much I Love You & I Love My Little Storybook*; and the award-winning productions of *Swimmy*, *Frederick & Inch by Inch* and *The Very Hungry Caterpillar & Other Eric Carle Favorites*. Morrow's contributions to the community, both as an artist and mentor, have earned him the Nova Scotia government's highest award for artistic achievement, the Portia White Award; the Order of Nova Scotia; and the International Performing Arts for Youth's Mickey Minor Award. He earned a doctorate in humanities from his alma mater, Acadia University. Morrow was born in Grand Falls, Newfoundland, and lives in Lower Avonport, Nova Scotia.



Danny Everson, Writer and Creative Producer

Danny Everson holds an M.F.A. in producing from the California Institute of the Arts and a B.A. in music from the University of Tampa. With a career spanning nearly a decade in the Theatre for

Young Audience sector, Everson has served as both an arts executive and a creative producer. Additionally, he has written more than 60 episodes of television and film content for children and young audiences. He is Mermaid Theatre's executive director and creative producer for MermaidTV.



Kate Church, Character Designer

Inviting viewers into a world of storytelling and introspection, Kate Church's figurative work is an artful play of cloth, clay, wire and found objects, with the figures themselves sparking curiosity and provoking contemplation. As viewers immerse themselves in Church's imaginary world, they are encouraged to reflect on universal human experiences of humor, yearning and a search for purpose. During her time as a textile and costume associate with Mermaid Theatre, Church discovered her natural affinity for her distinctive figurative work. She is proud to have created figures for Cirque du Soleil, which they commissioned and sold in their shops and at their shows around the world. Holding a B.F.A. from the Rhode Island School of Design, Church offers intensive workshops a handful of times each year. She describes her work as "sculptural puppetry," figures that combine movement and life with detail and line. Church sees her characters as her muses, presenting her work in the hope that people might discover something for and about themselves.

Chris Luedecke, Composer










“Old Man Luedecke” is the stage name of two-time Juno Award winner and Polaris Prize nominee Chris Luedecke, a celebrated Canadian folk singer-songwriter known for his high-energy banjo-driven stompers, touching guitar ballads and dry humorous stories. A longtime resident of rural Nova Scotia, Luedecke emerged from Halifax’s DIY folk scene in the early 2000s. He has released critically acclaimed albums produced by Steve Dawson and folk legend Tim O’Brien, and recorded everywhere from Nashville’s Butcher Shoppe to his hand-built cabin in Nova Scotia. His songs—like “I Quit My Job” and “The Early Days”—trace the beauty and struggle of everyday life with warmth and charm. Luedecke has toured widely across North America, Europe and Australia. In 2022, he received an honorary doctorate from King’s University in Halifax for his cultural contributions.



Joshua Van Tassel, Sound Engineer and Soundscape Designer

Joshua Van Tassel is a sideman, producer, composer, podcast producer, sample maker and sonic landscaper. He regularly performs the work of some of Canada’s best songwriters, such as Great Lake Swimmers, Amelia Curran, Sarah Slean, Donovan Woods, Rose Cousins and David Myles, among others. Van Tassel and his studio, Dream Date Studio in Toronto, have worked on albums for The Good Lovelies, Nico Paulo, Sarah Slean, David Myles, KIRTY, Justin Rutledge, Christine Bougie, Megan Bonnell and more. He has been nominated for and won numerous East Coast Music Association, Juno and Nova Scotia Music Week awards.

What are their jobs?

DIRECTOR 	<p>The director is responsible for creating the overall vision for the production and overseeing its execution.</p>
PRODUCER 	<p>The producer supervises all aspects of a production—from concept to final product—while also overseeing financial elements like securing funding and managing budgets. The producer hires the director and the rest of the creative team and usually has a hand in casting.</p>
WRITER 	<p>The writer is part of the creative team and is the person that writes the story and creates the script.</p>
DESIGNER    	<p>In a theatrical production, there may be several different designers. Set designers are responsible for taking the director's vision and creating a stage setting on which the action will take place. Costume designers design the costumes that the characters will wear—the costumes help the audience better understand the characters and the story. Lighting designers are responsible for taking the theatrical lighting available to them and using it to enhance the stage setting and costumes by creating moods, environments and more, as well as making sure the audience can see all the action on stage. Sound designers are responsible for all the sounds that you might hear in a production. Sometimes a story requires sound effects or other ambient noise to help tell the story (for example, crickets chirping in a scene set in the South during the summer). Sound designers also make sure the audience can hear the actors' voices and any music that is part of the show.</p>
NARRATOR 	<p>The narrator tells the story. Sometimes the narrator is a character in the story. Other times, the narrator comments on the action on stage but is not involved in the story.</p>
COMPOSER 	<p>The composer writes the music for a production that uses original music. The music is part of the story and helps to emphasize all the design elements by heightening the emotion and creating ambiance. If the production is a musical, then the songs will help to tell the story.</p>

What to know before the show

TELLING THE TALE

What is a story?

Very simply, a story is a narrative, a telling of events, either true or imagined, that is meant to entertain, inform and gain the interest of the listener or reader. A story must contain several different elements. First, it needs characters. Characters are the people, talking animals or mythical creatures in the story. Next, a story needs a setting, the time and place that it happens. The story must also have a plot. The plot is the sequence of events or actions that drives the story. The plot has a beginning, middle and ending. A story also needs conflict. The conflict is the problem or struggle that one or more of the characters must overcome. Last, a story needs a point of view. Stories can be told from the point of view of a character, or, most commonly, by a voice outside the story, a narrator.

What is a fairy tale?

A fairy tale is a short story, often containing magical or mythical creatures, that belongs to the folklore genre. Folklore includes the stories, traditions, beliefs and even objects of a particular culture. In fact, sometimes fairy tales are called folk tales. Though fairy tales typically include characters like fairies, witches, wizards and monsters, they also include talking animals, as is the case in *Peter and the Wolf*. Can you think of some other fairy tales you have heard? Maybe the story of *Cinderella* or *Pinocchio*? What about *Hansel and Gretel* or *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*?

All fairy tales share several elements. They are most often set in the past, but not necessarily during a specific period of history, and they will have a distinct beginning and ending, with the ending usually being happy. Though they may begin with “once upon a time” and end with “happily ever after,” those phrases are not a requirement for a story to be a fairy tale.



PHOTO: Brianna Dykeman

Fairy tales usually include magical elements, too, such as characters with special powers, the casting of spells or animals that can talk. The problem, or conflict, is the core of the fairy tale. The purpose comes down to the problem that needs to be solved. The problem can be a physical challenge that only the hero can accomplish, or it may be a circumstance that must be overcome. The events of a fairy tale most often occur in a forest, castle or faraway land. There are usually three types of characters in a fairy tale: a hero, a villain and a helper.

In “Cinderella,” which character is the hero? Who is the villain? Who is the helper? We could say that Cinderella is the hero, the stepmother is the villain, and the Fairy Godmother is the helper. What is the problem that needs to be solved? Getting Cinderella to the ball after her dress is ruined by her evil stepsisters. What is the element of magic? The Fairy Godmother’s powers, of course. (Bibbidi-Bobbidi-Boo!)

What is a fable?

A fable is another type of short story that typically involves animals who behave like humans and conveys a lesson or a moral. The moral is the most important part of a fable and is often clearly stated at the end of the story. Fables have been passed down for generations and while they usually include animals, they can also involve other objects in nature, like plants or the wind, that have human characteristics. “The Three Little Pigs,” “Goldilocks and the Three Bears,” and “The Three Billy Goats Gruff” are all examples of well-known fables. What lesson do you think each of these stories is trying to teach us?

What is puppetry ?

Puppetry is a theatrical art form. In puppetry, puppets represent characters in the performance. These puppets are controlled by people known as

puppeteers. While some puppet shows have only puppet characters, others mix puppet characters with human actors or characters portrayed by people. A puppet is an inanimate object that is created to look like a person, animal or imaginary creature for use in theatrical storytelling.

There are many types of puppets: finger puppets, worn on a single finger; hand puppets, worn on a puppeteer’s hand; and sock puppets that are made from, well, socks! Then there are rod puppets, manipulated by a single rod through the length of the puppet, and marionettes, which are suspended from strings and controlled from above.

In *Billy Goats Gruff and Other Tales*, puppets are used to bring the stories’ characters to life. The puppets feature soft-sculpture fabric bodies and cheesecloth-mâché heads, loosely inspired by the Japanese Bunraku (boon-rah-koo) tradition. Bunraku puppetry originated in Japan more than 400 years ago. In Bunraku, there are usually several puppeteers who manipulate the puppet directly and are visible throughout the play rather than being hidden. In *Billy Goats Gruff and Other Tales*, there are two puppeteers who control all the puppets that you will see.



CRAFTING A STORY FROM BEGINNING TO ENDING

National Standards

■ VA:Cr.1.1.Ka ■ VA:Cr.1.1.1a ■ VA:Cr.1.1.2a ■ VA:Cr.1.1.3a ■ NL-ENG.K-12.1 ■ NL-ENG.K-12.2 ■ NL-ENG.K-12.3 ■ CCSS.ELA.K-3.1
■ CCSS.ELA.K-3.2 ■ CCSS.ELA.K-3.3 ■ CCSS.ELA.K-1.9

OBJECTIVE

By completing these activities, students will:

- Identify and create stories with basic story elements (i.e., character, setting, beginning-middle-ending and problem/solution)

MATERIALS

For these activities, you will need the following items:

- Chart paper, chalkboard or whiteboard
- Crayons, colored pencils, markers
- Story element picture cards
- Story cards or books (short stories, fairy tales or fables)
- Colored popsicle sticks or cards (yellow, green, red and blue)
- Drawing paper
- Sentence starter strips (for grades 2 and 3)

ACTIVITIES

Introduction

1. Gather students in a circle and share a simple picture book or a selection of story element picture cards that illustrate basic story elements.
2. When you have finished reviewing the book or cards, create a simple anchor chart outlining the different elements of a story. Draw pictures that represent the characters (stick figures), setting (a simple house or group of trees), beginning-middle-ending (three connected boxes), and problem/solution (a frowning face turning into a smiling face).

Exploration

1. Select and read aloud a short story, fairy tale or fable. (For this activity, we are using a simple Winnie-the-Pooh storybook as an example.)
2. Before you begin, ask students to pay close attention, remembering as many story elements as they can. As you read, you may stop to call attention to specific elements.
3. When you have finished reading, discuss with the class the various elements for the story. Ask students to be specific and to recall as many elements as possible.

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- **Characters:** Who do you see in this picture? (Pooh, Tigger, Piglet)
- **Settings:** Where is this taking place? (Hundred Acre Wood, Rabbit's house)
- **Beginning-middle-ending:** What might be happening?
- **Problem/solution:** Is there a problem here? (Pooh's honey pot is empty/Pooh finds more honey in a tree)

Guided Practice

As a class, have students build and perform a story using a variety of story elements written on colored popsicle sticks or cards.

1. Pre-create a simple story by writing its basic elements on colored popsicle sticks/cards. Write a character on a yellow stick/card, setting on a green stick/card, problem on a red stick/card, and solution on a blue stick/card.

IMPORTANT NOTE: This activity can be done with students working individually or in groups. You can also pre-create more than one story. For best results, make sure the story element sticks/cards can be evenly distributed across the class and that no sticks/cards go unused. You want to make sure all story elements and all possible story outcomes are distributed. (For this activity, we are dividing the class into four groups.)

2. Place the sticks/cards in a large bowl or bucket and mix them together.
3. Ask a member of the first group to draw a yellow stick/card. Have a student from the second group draw a green stick/card. Continue with red and blue sticks/cards.
4. Once the sticks/cards have all been selected, explain what the colors represent.
5. Next, ask the first group to repeat the story element their stick/card represents. Have them read aloud the story element. Now ask the second group to identify their story element. Continue with the third and fourth groups.
6. Ask a student from each group to come to the front of the class with their group's stick/card in hand. Move students around so the story elements are mixed up. (Character in the middle, solution at the beginning, etc.)
7. Now have the class help arrange the students and their elements in the correct sequence, placing them in order by character, setting, problem and solution.

8. Have the students take turns acting out the story using simple movements and sounds. Once the first set of students has finished, have a second round of students from each group perform. Repeat until all students have had an opportunity to participate.

Creative Activity

Have students create and write their own stories.

For kindergarten: Students may need to draw a picture of a character in a setting and then dictate a simple sentence to a teacher.

For grade 1: Students may need a template to create a three-part story (beginning, middle and ending) with simple drawings and one to two words or short sentences.

For grades 2 and 3: Students can create a miniature book consisting of four pages: a character and setting page, a beginning page, a middle (conflict) page, and an ending (solution) page. Consider offering sentence prompts to help students get started.

Sharing Time

Ask students to share their stories.

For kindergarten and grade 1: Ask students to pair off into partners and present their stories to each other.

For grades 2 and 3: Ask students to present their stories to a small group or the class.

DIFFERENTIATION

For kindergarten: Focus primarily on character and setting. Use more pictures than words.

For grade 1: Add simple beginning-middle-ending structure with more teacher support.

For grades 2 and 3: Include all four elements with more independent writing.

EXTENSION

- Create a class story box with character, setting, problem and solution cards that students can randomly select to create new stories.
- Use simple puppets to act out student-created stories.



COMPARING AND CONTRASTING FAIRY TALES AND FABLES

National Standards

- DA:Cr1.1.Ka ■ DA:Cr1.1a ■ DA:Cr1.2a ■ DA:Cr1.3 ■ DA:Cn10.1.Ka ■ DA:Cn10.1.1a ■ DA:Cn10.1.2a ■ DA:Cn10.1.3a ■ TH:Cr1.1.K
- TH:Cr1.1.1c ■ TH:Cr1.1.2 ■ TH:Cr1.1.3c ■ NL-ENG.K-12.1 ■ NL-ENG.K-12.2 ■ NL-ENG.K-12.3 ■ CCSS.ELA.K-3.1 ■ CCSS.ELA.K-3.2
- CCSS.ELA.K-3.3 ■ CCSS.ELA.K-1.9

OBJECTIVE

By completing these activities, students will:

- Identify key elements of fairy tales and fables
- Compare fairy tales and fables using evidence from the text
- Create their own fairy tale or fable-inspired artwork and/or performance

MATERIALS

For these activities, you will need the following items:

- Selected fairy tales (e.g., “Cinderella,” “Jack and the Bean Stalk”)
- Selected fables (e.g., “The Tortoise and the Hare,” “The Lion and the Mouse”)
- Chart paper and markers
- Top Hat graphic organizer (used to compare fairy tales and fables)
- Sentence starters
- Art supplies (e.g., paper, crayons, colored pencils, markers, collage materials)
- Props for dramatization (optional)
- Music that evokes the mood of a fairy tale or fable

ACTIVITIES

Introduction

1. Read aloud one fairy tale and one fable to the class.
2. Discuss with students their initial reactions to both the fairy tale and the fable and what they noticed about each story.

Exploration

1. Create an anchor chart with students to identify fairy tale elements (e.g., “Once upon a time” or “Long ago” beginnings, good and evil characters, magic spells or enchantments, problems and solutions, happy endings).
2. Create an anchor chart for fable elements (e.g., animal characters, short stories, moral lesson).

For younger students: Sort story elements picture cards into fairy tale or fable categories.

Movement Activities

1. Begin by defining appropriate movement boundaries for your class based on space limitations and individual student needs.
2. Lead students in a fairy tale character movement activity.

SUGGESTED MOVEMENT PROMPTS

- Move like a graceful princess/prince.
- Stomp like a giant.
- Tiptoe like someone sneaking into a castle.
- Spin like someone under a magic spell.

For younger students: As you are reading a fairy tale to the class, have students act out the various movements of the characters.

For older students: In small groups, have students take turns creating tableaux (frozen pictures) of scenes from a fairy tale. Ask the other students to guess the fairy tale, character, setting or specific moment of the story.

3. Lead students in a fable character movement activity.
 - a. To begin, introduce students to the idea of moving like animals (and posing in place) by listening to “Animal Freeze Dance” by The Kiboomers.

▶ **“Animal Freeze Dance”**
 - b. Discuss the animals featured in the fable you read or allow students to brainstorm different animals. Talk about how these animals might move. (For this activity, we are using goats, mice and bears as examples.) Encourage students to use a variety of descriptive action words in their conversations.
 - c. Next, lead students through each animal movement. Take your time with each animal, making sure to model the movements for your students.

SUGGESTED MOVEMENT PROMPTS

- How can your body move like a goat? Are they tapping on their hooves? Are they jumping up a mountainside? Can you make your body lead with your head like a goat? Where will you go?
- How big is a mouse? Is it large or small? Make your body as small as a mouse. How does a mouse change direction when it moves? Does it dart quickly from side to side? Does it move over, under or through? How does it eat?

- How does a bear eat? Expand your body into a bear form, making it look strong and powerful. How does a bear protect its space? Where do bears go and what do they do when the weather turns cold outside? What does that look like?
- d. Once students are hibernating, ask them to think of their favorite animal movements from the prompts above. Before continuing to the next step, ask students to practice these movements a few times.
- e. Now, put it all together! As you state the name of the animal (goat, mouse, bear, etc.), have students repeat the name aloud and perform that animal's movement.
- f. Repeat this step many times, encouraging students to transition from one movement to the next.
- g. Conclude the activity by splitting students into two groups and have them take turns performing their animal movements for their peers.

Comparison Activity

Using a Top Hat graphic organizer as a visual reference, ask students to compare fairy tales to fables.

1. On the lefthand side of chart, list common characteristics of fairy tales.
2. On the righthand side, list common characteristics of fables.
3. Ask students to discuss the similarities they see in fairy tales and fables.

For younger students: Students can draw pictures on the chart to describe the characteristics unique to fairy tales and fables.

For older students: Students can write words or sentences on the chart to describe the characteristics unique to fairy tales and fables.

Creative Activity

Using fairy tale and fable story element picture cards, have students create their own stories.

1. Provide students with fairy tale story element picture cards.

SUGGESTED FAIRY TALE ELEMENTS

- Character (e.g., prince/princess, witch/wizard)
- Setting (e.g., forest, castle, cottage)
- Magic (e.g., spell, potion, magical object)
- Problem (e.g., lost, trapped, curse)

2. Provide students with fable story element picture cards.

SUGGESTED FABLE ELEMENTS

- Character (e.g., goats, mice, bears, pigs)
- Setting (e.g., forest, castle, cottage)
- Moral or lesson of the story (e.g., honesty, kindness, hard work)

3. Ask students to select cards to plan their own simple fairy tale or fable.

For younger students: Students can dictate their story to an adult or work together as a class to create and write down the story. Once the story is written, ask them to create an illustration.

For older students: Students can write and illustrate a simple fairy tale or fable using a beginning-middle-ending template.

4. Allow students to share their fairy tales and fables as a class or in groups as part of their very own storytelling festival.

DIFFERENTIATION

For emerging readers/writers: Use picture supports, dictation and oral storytelling.

For advanced students: Compare multiple versions of the same story or create more complex original tales.

For diverse learners: Include stories from various cultures that reflect student backgrounds.

EXTENSION

- Create a class fairy tale and fable book with all student stories.
- Hold a character parade where students dress as their favorite fairy tale or fable characters.



ENCOUNTERING FORCES IN FAIRY TALES AND FABLES

National Standards

- NS.K-4.2

OBJECTIVE

By completing these activities, students will:

- Develop an understanding of push and pull forces
- Demonstrate understanding of push and pull through movement
- Explore properties of different materials by testing their strength and appropriateness for building structures

MATERIALS

For these activities, you will need the following items:

- A fan or hairdryer (set to cool/low)
- Craft building materials:
 - Plastic straws or hay (Straw House)
 - Popsicle sticks or twigs (Stick House)
 - Lego bricks or small wooden blocks (Brick House)
- “Forces: Push and Pull” worksheet on page 21
- Chart paper or whiteboard
- Red and blue crayons, colored pencils or markers
- Spray bottles or small fans
- Storybook or video of “The Three Little Pigs”
- “The Three Little Pigs: Exploring Materials” worksheet on pages 22-23

ACTIVITIES

Introduction

1. Begin by retelling “The Three Little Pigs.” As you are narrating the story, be sure to emphasize how the wolf blew down (or attempted to blow down) each pig’s house.
2. When you have finished with the story, ask students what they think made the straw and stick houses fall.
3. During your discussion, guide students to the idea of force—an action that changes an object’s motion or shape. (In “The Three Little Pigs,” force is the wolf’s huff-and-puff or blowing.)

Guided Practice

1. Copy and distribute the “Forces: Push and Pull” worksheet on page 21.

2. Ask students to carefully examine the children on the worksheet and determine whether they are pushing or pulling the objects shown.
3. As directed, ask students to circle in red the children pulling an object; circle in blue the children pushing an object.

Movement Activity

1. Standing in front of the class, act out pushing an object. Have students decide whether your movement represents pushing or pulling.
2. Now act out pulling an object. Again, have students decide whether your movement represents pushing or pulling.
3. Have students work in pairs to act out pushing and pulling objects and allow them to identify which movement their partner is using.

Experimentation

1. Have students revisit the story by completing “The Three Little Pigs: Exploring Materials” worksheet on pages 22-23.
2. Divide students into small groups and ask them to build three mini-houses using a different craft material for each.
 - a. Try to use different craft building materials from those used in the exploration activity. Be sure to offer materials in a range of weights. Some will need to be light and flimsy, while others should be heavier.
 - b. Using spray bottles or small fans to simulate the wolf’s blowing, have students direct air at each mini-house to see which ones stand and which fall.
 - c. Once the mini-house experiments are complete, discuss with the class their observations.

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Which materials moved or changed shape?
- What material was the strongest? Why?
- How do the properties of hardness, shape and weight affect strength?

EXTENSION

- Have students write or discuss a hypothesis for which house will be the strongest.
- Have students write or discuss a mini lab report of their experiment and the results.

Name _____

Date _____

Forces: Push and Pull

Use the color **red** to circle **pushing**. Use the color **blue** to circle **pulling**.



The Three Little Pigs: Exploring Materials

1. Story Recall: Match the Pig to Its House

Draw a line from each pig to the house it built.



Pig 2



Pig 3



Pig 1

Straw House (yellow)



Stick House (brown)



Brick House (red)



2. Which House Is Strongest?

Circle the house that you think is the strongest.

Straw House

Stick House

Brick House

Why do you think the house you chose is the strongest? _____

3. Material Properties: True or False

Write True or False next to each sentence.

_____ Sticks are heavy and very hard.

_____ The brick house is hard and strong.

_____ Bricks can hold a lot of weight.

_____ Straw is soft and light.

_____ Straw and sticks break easily.

4. What Happens When You Blow?

Draw a picture of what happens to each house when the wolf blows.

Straw House:

Stick House:

Brick House:

5. Materials Around Us: Scavenger Hunt

Find one object made from each material. Write or draw it below.

Something made of straw:

Something made of sticks or wood:

Something made of brick or stone:

6. Build Your Own Strong House (Hands-on)

Using craft materials, build a small house.
Then answer these questions:

What materials did you use? _____

Is your house strong or weak? _____

What makes your house strong or weak? _____

7. Materials Sorting

Consider each of these objects: cotton ball, metal spoon, paper, plastic cup and wooden block. In the chart below, write the name of each object by the word that you think best describes it.

Hard	
Soft	
Heavy	
Light	
Flexible	
Rigid	

8. Pattern Coding Game

Put the materials in order as the pigs built their houses: straw, sticks, bricks. Then draw your own material pattern using these colors:

Yellow = Straw Brown = Sticks Red = Bricks

Your pattern:

MAMMALS

The stories in *Billy Goats Gruff and Other Tales* have many things in common. For one, they all involve animals—and not just any animals, but specifically **mammals**. Mammals are warm-blooded animals that breathe air, have backbones, grow hair (at least at some point in their lives) and have highly developed brains. All female mammals can produce milk to feed their young.

While most mammals live on land (whether aboveground, in trees, or even underground), some live on both land and in water, and a few even live exclusively in water. Mammals can walk, run, crawl, swim and even fly as they move through their lives. For example, a bat is a mammal with wings. It lives on land and can fly.

Mammals come in many shapes and sizes, from tiny rodents to enormous whales. In fact, the blue whale is the largest animal on Earth!

Mammals can be carnivores (meat eaters), herbivores (plant eaters) or omnivores (meat and plant eaters). What type of eater are you?

There are more than 5,000 kinds of mammals on Earth, including humans. Let's talk about a few that you might see in the show.

Goats

There are three types of goats. Each type is determined by its primary use: dairy, meat or fiber. Within these three types, there are more than 200 different goat breeds. Some goats have horns while others do not, but today, most goat horns are removed when the goat is still young for their protection. Goats can



have long, short, straight or curly hair. They can be black, white, brown, or red, be spotted, or have a combination of two or three colors.

Goats are herbivores, which means they eat plants. To digest these plants, they have a stomach with four compartments. This classifies them as ruminants. Goats eat shrubs, woody plants, weeds, briars, trees, herbs and grasses. Goats can climb, crawl and jump as well as walk and run. They are clever and will even stand on their hind legs to reach plants they want to eat.

Goats live in herds and are social creatures. They come from the same family as sheep and cows, as well as antelope and bison.

Bears

There are three types of bears found in North America: the black bear, the brown or grizzly bear, and the polar bear. The black bear is the most common and is found throughout Canada, most of the United States and even into Mexico. Despite its name, the black bear actually can be brown or white in color. The brown or grizzly bear is found in western parts of Canada as well as northern parts of the Rocky Mountain region of the United States and in Alaska. In North America, the polar bear can be found in the northern regions of Canada and Alaska.



Bears are omnivores and eat plants, insects, fish and other mammals. Most bears hibernate in the winter and spend the rest of the year either recovering from hibernation or storing up fat to prepare for the

scarcity of winter. Bears begin hibernating in their dens in late fall and do not typically emerge until early spring. Bears that live further south, however, do not need to hibernate because food is available all year long.

Bears are curious and not particularly territorial. They mostly avoid humans and are not bothered by other bears in their territory. Contrary to popular belief, bears are not aggressive by nature.

Pigs

In North America, there are domestic pigs, feral pigs and wild boar. Domestic pigs are typically farm-raised while feral pigs are domestic breeds that have either escaped or been released into the wild. Wild boar are pigs native to a particular area. Pigs can also be called hogs or swine.

Farm-raised pigs typically eat commercial feed that is made mostly of corn. In the wild, though, pigs eat plants and animals and are omnivores. Pigs are born with tusks, but farmers often remove them to protect other pigs as well as people.

Pigs are among the most intelligent domesticated animals and are considered smarter than dogs. They have poor eyesight but a keen sense of smell they use to find food. Full-grown pigs can weigh between 300 and 700 pounds.

Raccoons

There are seven different species of raccoon, but the most common is the *Procyon lotor*, otherwise known as the North American raccoon. The North American raccoon is found throughout Canada, the United States and even into South America.

Raccoons are omnivores known for opportunistic eating habits. Their typical diet consists of fruit, plants, rodents, frogs, crayfish and even crabs, but they also will dig through a garbage can and eat whatever they find!

Procyon lotor is the largest type of raccoon found in North America—measuring around 33 inches long and weighing slightly more than 20 pounds. It is known for its ringed tail and the black “mask” across its eyes. Raccoon fur can range from gray to dark brown. In the wild, raccoons live for around three years, but in captivity they have lived up to 20.

Mice

Of the 38 different species of mice, the house mouse is one of the most commonly found species of mice found in North America. Native to India, it spread across the globe as human populations increased, arriving in North America with the colonists. The house mouse can be found in fields or houses, close to people.

Mice are omnivores that eat mostly seeds and insects, though indoor mice have been known to eat most anything that they can digest. (Contrary to fairy tales, mice do not typically eat cheese!)

The house mouse is a primarily nocturnal animal, meaning it is mostly active at night. It has whiskers, short claws and a long tail. It has prominent, mostly hairless ears, with the rest of its body covered in soft fur that is brown on top and white on the underside. The typical house mouse is 2-4 inches long, and its tail is often as long as its body.



WEAVING WILD TALES

National Standards

- VA:Cr1.1.Ka ■ VA:Cr1.1.1a ■ VA:Cr1.1.2a ■ VA:Cr1.1.3a ■ TH:Cr3.1.K ■ TH:Cr3.1.1a ■ TH:Cr3.1.2a ■ TH:Cr3.1.3a ■ VA:Pr5.1.Ka
- VA:Pr5.1.1a ■ VA:Pr5.1.2a ■ VA:Pr5.1.3a ■ VA:Cn10.1.Ka ■ VA:Cn10.1.1a ■ VA:Cn10.1.2a ■ VA:Cn10.1.3a ■ NL-ENG.K-12.1
- NL-ENG.K-12.2 ■ NL-ENG.K-12.3 ■ NS.K-4.3

OBJECTIVE

By completing these activities, students will:

- Identify and describe habitats and adaptations of goats, pigs, bears, mice and raccoons
- Analyze how these animals interact in food webs and ecosystems
- Compare and contrast fables featuring these animals
- Identify the morals and messages in animal fables
- Create their own fable featuring one or more of these animals
- Create an original character with traits in the form of a puppet
- Explore a variety of art media

MATERIALS

For these activities, you will need the following items:

- Books featuring these animals (fiction and non-fiction)
- Copies of animal fables (e.g., “The Three Little Pigs,” “The Wolf and the Seven Young Goats,” “Goldilocks and the Three Bears,” etc.)
- Chart paper
- Animal habitat pictures or videos
- Animal fact cards
- Technology with internet access
- Graphic organizer for research
- “Design Your Puppet” worksheets on pages 28-29
- Arts and craft materials for both dioramas and puppets:
 - Popsicle sticks
 - Cardstock and construction paper
 - Glue or glue sticks
 - Scissors
 - Crayons, colored pencils and markers
 - Buttons, cotton balls, ribbon, sequins, etc.
 - Brown or white paper bags
 - Shoe box or other enclosure for diorama
 - Rocks, greenery and other items collected from outside

ACTIVITIES

Introduction

1. Begin by showing students pictures of goats, pigs, bears, mice and raccoons. As you introduce each animal, be sure to spend time discussing its habitat, diet and adaptations.

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Where do these animals live?
 - What do they eat?
 - What special traits or behaviors help them survive?
 - What do these animals have in common?
 - How are they alike? How are they different?
2. As a class or in small groups, ask students to sort habitat element pictures into predetermined habitat categories. For example, a picture of a pinecone or a group of trees could be assigned to a forest category. A picture of a barn or silo could be assigned to a farm category. Once the habitat element pictures are sorted, ask students to place the animals you have discussed in the most appropriate habitat. Be sure students identify what each animal needs to survive in its assigned habitat.
 3. Review the information on fables and their elements in the “Telling the Tale” lesson on page 15.
 4. As a class, select and read a fable. As you are reading, encourage students to think about how the characteristics of the animals in the fable compare to the characteristics of their real-life counterparts.
 5. When you are finished reading, lead students in a discussion about the similarities and differences. Have students identify the moral of the fable.

Exploration

In groups, have students research additional facts about goats, pigs, bears, mice and raccoons using grade- and age-appropriate resources.

1. Ask students to look for interesting facts about the animals. Guide them to find the same type of fact, information or detail about each animal. For example, if a group thinks the shape of a pig’s tail or feet are interesting characteristics, have them research the shape of the other animals’ tails or feet as well.



2. Ask students to report their research findings to the class.

For younger students: Have students display and present their group's research findings in a graphic organizer using words, drawings or pictures on chart paper.

For older students: Have students create a presentation (using either presentation software or a posterboard display) that explains what they learned.

3. Next, have students create dioramas that illustrate the animals' habitats.

Guided Practice

Have students create their own fables featuring one or more of the animals they have researched. Students may work individually, in groups or as a class. Fables must incorporate accurate animal habitat information, realistic traits and characteristics. They should also have a clear moral lesson. Older students can write their fables, while younger students may need to tell their stories orally and/or create a picture.

Creative Activity

To further integrate the arts, have students perform their fables for the class using puppets they create based on an animal from their fable.

1. As a class, brainstorm a variety of character traits to describe the mammal characters from the stories that the class has created. Older students may choose to use alliteration or other figurative language in their descriptions.
2. Copy and distribute the "Design Your Puppet" worksheets on pages 28-29.

3. Have students use the worksheets to create a plan for their character puppet. Students should choose an animal and up to three character traits. For example, a student might create a "Grumpy Goat" or a "Pretty Portly Pig." Students should then sketch out a design for their puppet. Remind them to make their selected character traits stand out as much as possible so they are easily recognizable.
4. Once students have a plan for their puppet, provide a range of craft materials and allow them to physically create their designs.

DIFFERENTIATION

For younger students: Focus on simpler fables and basic animal needs.

For older students: Include more complex ecological relationships and analyze more sophisticated fables.

EXTENSION

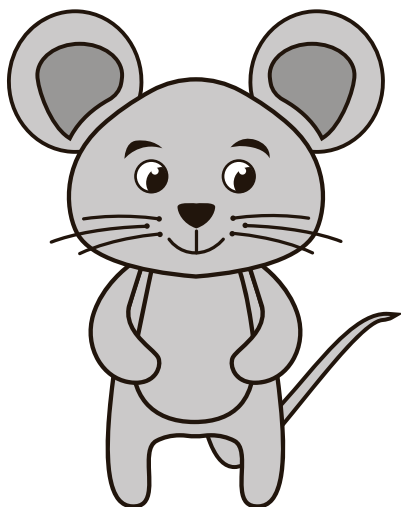
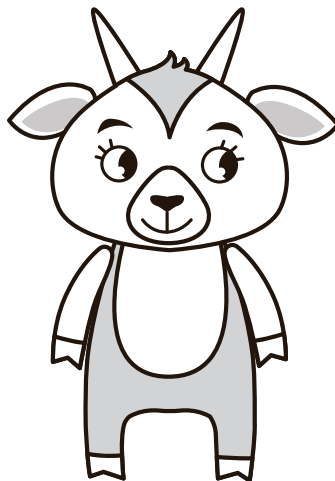
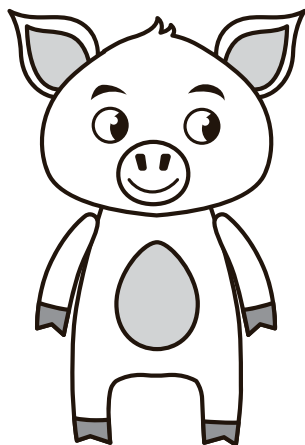
- Create a class book of animal fables.
- Compare how animals are portrayed in different cultures' stories.
- Research and present on the endangered status of certain bears or other animals found in fables, such as wolves.
- Allow younger students time for creative play with their puppets. Older students might recreate scenes from their stories or improvise skits to perform for their classmates.

Name _____

Date _____

Design Your Puppet

Which animal puppet will you make?



Character trait 1: _____

Character trait 2: _____

Character trait 3: _____

Character trait 4: _____

Name _____

Date _____

Design Your Puppet

Draw your animal puppet below and color it.



THE NUMBER THREE

Another element the stories in *Billy Goats Gruff and Other Tales* have in common is the number three. The performance features three stories, and each of those stories has the number three in its title. That means there are three different groups of three animals with three different stories in the show. That's a lot of threes!

Did you notice that the number three appears in many other stories? How many wishes does Aladdin get from the genie? Three! How many good fairies help Sleeping Beauty? Three! How many days does Ariel have to get Prince Eric to fall in love with her in *The Little Mermaid*? Three! The list goes on and on. Can you think of any other examples of fairy tales or fables with the number three?

We can divide a story into three with a beginning, middle and ending. We can describe time in three with the past, present and future. A life cycle can be divided into three with birth, life and death. There are many plants with leaves of three. Triangles have three sides. The number three is everywhere and represents the simplest of patterns. What other examples of patterns or groups of three can you find?



SHAPES

Triangles, circles, squares and rectangles—what do all these things have in common? They are shapes! Triangles are shapes with three sides. All three sides of a triangle can be the same length, or one side can be longer than the others. Can you think of some things that are triangle-shaped? What about a slice of pizza?

Circles are perfectly round like a cookie. Squares and rectangles both have four sides. In squares, all four sides are the same length, while rectangles have two longer sides and two shorter sides. Can you look around the room and find some things that are shaped like a square? What about a rectangle? What shape is the door? If there is a window, what shapes can you find there?

Triangles, circles, squares and rectangles are considered two-dimensional, or 2D, meaning they are flat. But some shapes are not flat at all—they have depth! These shapes are three-dimensional, or 3D. Some 3D shapes you might know are cones, cylinders, prisms, pyramids and spheres. Can you think of anything shaped like a sphere? What about a cube? A cone? What other 3D shapes can you find around you?

When you see *Billy Goats Gruff and Other Tales*, pay close attention and see what shapes you can find on the stage!

IDENTIFYING SHAPES FROM FAIRY TALES AND FABLES

National Standards

■ NCTM.G.PreK-2 ■ NS.K-4.2

OBJECTIVE

By completing these activities, students will:

- Use images from the setting of each fairy tale or fable to identify, sort and graph various shapes
- Compare numbers
- Use pattern blocks to make models of the images used in sorting

MATERIALS

For these activities, you will need the following items:

- “The Three Billy Goats Gruff,” “The Three Little Pigs” and “Goldilocks and the Three Bears” story books or videos
- “Identifying Shapes” worksheet on page 33
- Crayons, colored pencils or markers
- Pattern blocks

ACTIVITIES

Introduction

1. Read aloud to the class (or watch) “The Three Billy Goats Gruff,” “The Three Little Pigs” and “Goldilocks and the Three Bears.” Before you begin, ask students to pay close attention to the settings in the story. Remind them that stories can have more than one setting.
2. When you are finished reading, ask students to recall the various settings in the stories. Ask if they can remember any specific structures or objects (e.g., castle, house, bridge, table, bed).
3. Review basic geometric shapes (e.g., rectangle, triangle, cylinder, square, sphere). Be sure to incorporate a mix of two- and three-dimensional shapes in your review. Ask students to identify these shapes in the classroom.

Exploration

1. Copy and distribute the “Identifying Shapes” worksheet on page 33.
2. On the lefthand side of the worksheet are three groupings of basic shapes that represent settings or structures from the stories. Have students color all the rectangles they see within the structures blue. Next, ask them to color all triangles yellow. Finally, have them color all cylinders red. (Be sure students understand that a cylinder is a three-dimensional shape. In a drawing, a cylinder has depth. It often looks like a rectangle with a flattened circle or oval at the top. It may look like two shapes, but it is really one.)
3. After coloring the shapes, have students complete the activities on the righthand side. Ask them to tally and record the total number of each shape in the groupings. Then ask them to mark which shape has the greater representation (rectangle or triangle; triangle or cylinder).

Guided Practice

Have students recreate geometric images using pattern blocks. Several printable pattern block templates are available online, and most are compatible with standard pattern block sets. Though not necessary, look for templates that relate to characters, settings or objects from the stories you have read. As students work, ask them to identify the different block shapes.

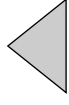


Identifying Shapes

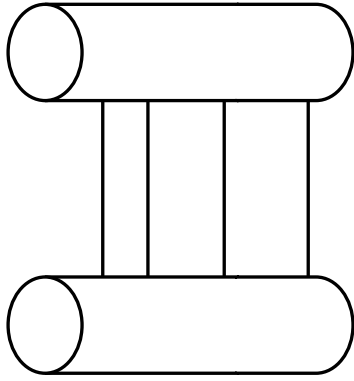
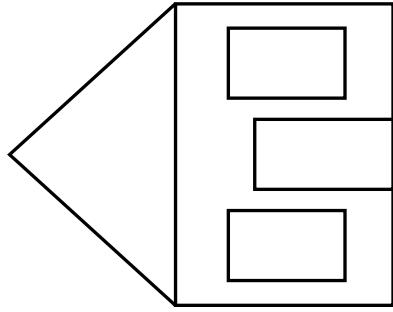
Color all of the rectangles **blue**.


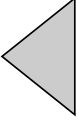



Color all of the triangles **yellow**.



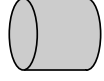
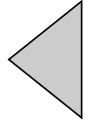
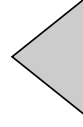
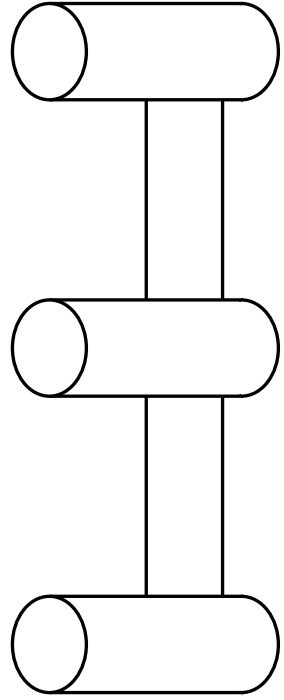
Color all of the cylinders **red**.



Tally how many you see.

Are there more?



MAKING THREE IN A ROW

National Standards

- NCTM.NO.PreK-2

OBJECTIVE

By completing this activity, students will:

- Create equations using three addends to reach the desired sum
- Count and add numbers
- Recognize cardinal numbers

MATERIALS

For this activity, you will need the following items:

- “Three in a Row” game board on page 35
- Crayons, colored pencils or markers
- 10-sided dice numbered 0–9

PROCEDURE

Math Activity

Playing in pairs, students will practice their addition and subtraction skills by matching sums created from dice rolls to those created using numbers on the game board.

1. Begin by dividing students into groups of two.
2. Copy and distribute the “Three in a Row” game board on page 35. Provide each pair of students with a pair of 10-sided dice. Ask each student to select a single crayon, colored pencil or marker to serve as their game color.
3. Provide students with an overview of the following game rules:
 - a. Student 1 rolls the dice and adds the two top-facing numbers together. (If a student rolls two zeroes, have them roll again.)
 - b. Student 1 then finds any three numbers on the “Three in a Row” game board that equal the sum of the dice.
 - c. Student 1 should then fill in three corresponding numbered boxes with their game color.
 - d. Game board sums can be created by using addition or subtraction—just make sure the game board sum equals the sum from the dice roll.
 - e. For example, if a dice roll produces a five and a six, the sum of the dice roll is 11 ($5+6=11$). On the game board, the student would then color any three numbered boxes to find a sum equal to 11. Combinations might include $1+2+8$, $3+4+4$ or $3+1+7$. (**For older students:** Incorporate addition and subtraction to match the dice roll and game board sums. Students can use combinations like $10+2-1$, $9+5-3$ or $4+8-2$.)



- f. Student 2 then repeats these steps.
- g. Play continues until one of the students can fill in three numbered boxes in a row.

DIFFERENTIATION

For younger students: This activity can be easily adapted for lower grades.

- Use a pair of six-sided math dice numbered 0–5.
- Use a pair of six-sided game dice numbered 1–6. With these dice, students can also practice their addition skills by counting the dots.
- Use a single six-sided game die numbered 1–6.
- Make sure the numbers represented on the game board align with any possible sums from the dice rolls. For example, if using a pair of six-sided math dice numbered 0–5, include 0 on the game board.
- For simpler summations, have students use a single die and allow them to add and color just two numbered boxes that match their dice roll sums.

Name _____

Date _____

Three in a Row

1	8	5	3	4	2
2	6	9	4	7	0
5	3	2	1	8	5
10	3	0	2	6	1
0	4	1	9	10	7

What to do after the show

POST-SHOW DISCUSSION

Included in this section are some post-performance activities you can share with your students.

Class Discussion

Following the performance, gather students for a post-performance conversation about their experience.

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Which part of the performance did you enjoy the most? Why?
- What surprised you about the performance?
- Did you find the stories easy to follow and understand?
- What questions do you have about the performance?
- Did the performance make you curious to learn something new? What?
- Did the performance make you want to see more performances in the future.

For an additional post-performance discussion activity, copy and distribute the “My Trip to the Theater” worksheet on page 37.



Name _____

Date _____

My Trip to the Theater

Answer these questions about the performance and your visit to the theater.

List three things you remember hearing or seeing during the performance of *Billy Goats Gruff* and *Other Tales*.

1. _____

2. _____

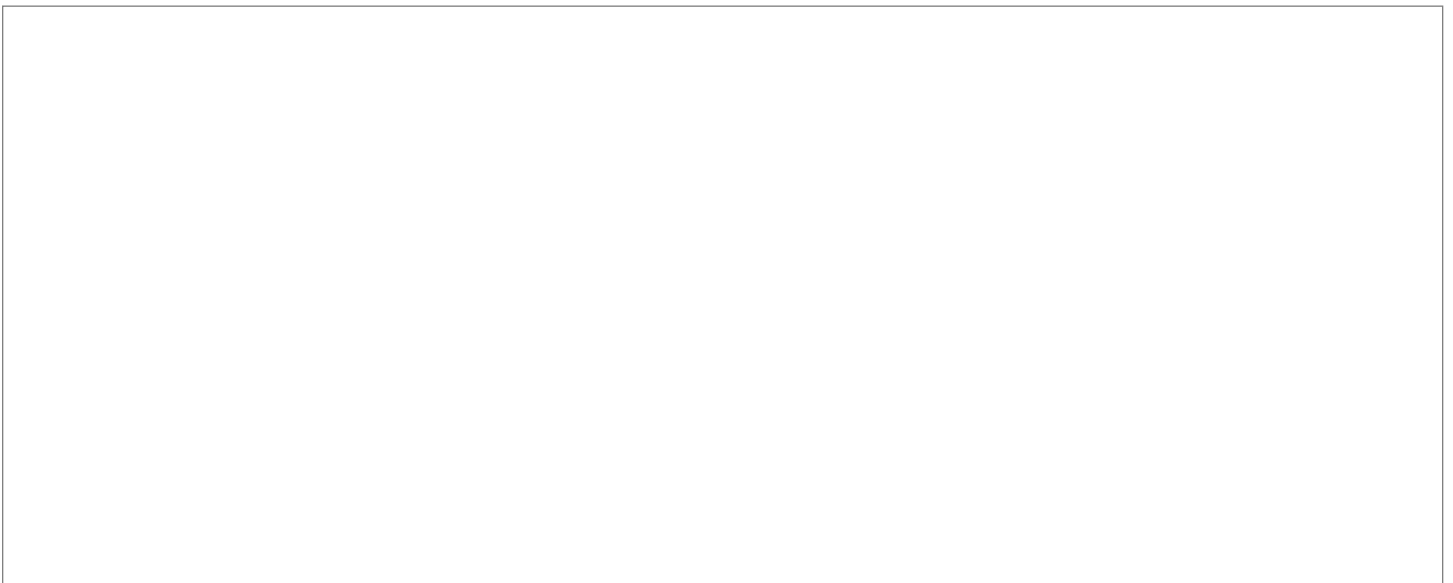
3. _____

Name something you learned during the performance.

Name something from the performance you would like to know more about.

If you could ask a member of the cast a question, what would you ask?

In the space below, draw something special you remember hearing or seeing during the performance.



Online resources

Below are supplementary online resources, including links to additional lesson content and activity materials, to help support and enrich your teaching.

ADDITIONAL LESSON CONTENT

AnimalScience.org

- ▶ aub.ie/gpac-animal-science

Auburn University College of Agriculture
Department of Animal Sciences

- ▶ aub.ie/gpac-au-animal-sciences

Alabama Department of Conservation & Natural Resources

- ▶ aub.ie/gpac-al-conservation

Alabama Cooperative Extension System
Alabama 4-H

- ▶ aub.ie/gpac-extension-4h

Alabama Wildlife Federation
Alabama Nature Center

- ▶ aub.ie/gpac-al-nature-center

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge

- ▶ aub.ie/gpac-wheeler-refuge

ACTIVITY MATERIALS

- ▶ [Story element sticks](#)
- ▶ [Story prompt sticks](#)
- ▶ [Story element dice](#)
- ▶ [Colored popsicle sticks](#)
- ▶ [Fairy tale story cards](#)
- ▶ [Story element cards](#)
- ▶ [Story element cards with animal characters](#)
- ▶ [10-sided dice \(0-9\)](#)
- ▶ [Six-sided dice \(0-5\)](#)

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The Jay and Susie Gogue Performing Arts Center at Auburn University serves students and educators across the state of Alabama and beyond with its annual K-12 School Performance Series.

These high-quality and transformative arts experiences are further enriched with performance study guides that provide meaningful cross-curricular connections.

Developed by our Department of Education and Engagement, in collaboration with the Gogue Center Curriculum Council, each performance study guide contains information about the featured performing artist(s) or company, the art form, and relevant, grade-appropriate lessons and activities designed to help incorporate academic and arts standards into the classroom.

Our sincerest thanks to the members of the 2025–26 Gogue Center Curriculum Council.

2025–26 Gogue Center Curriculum Council

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