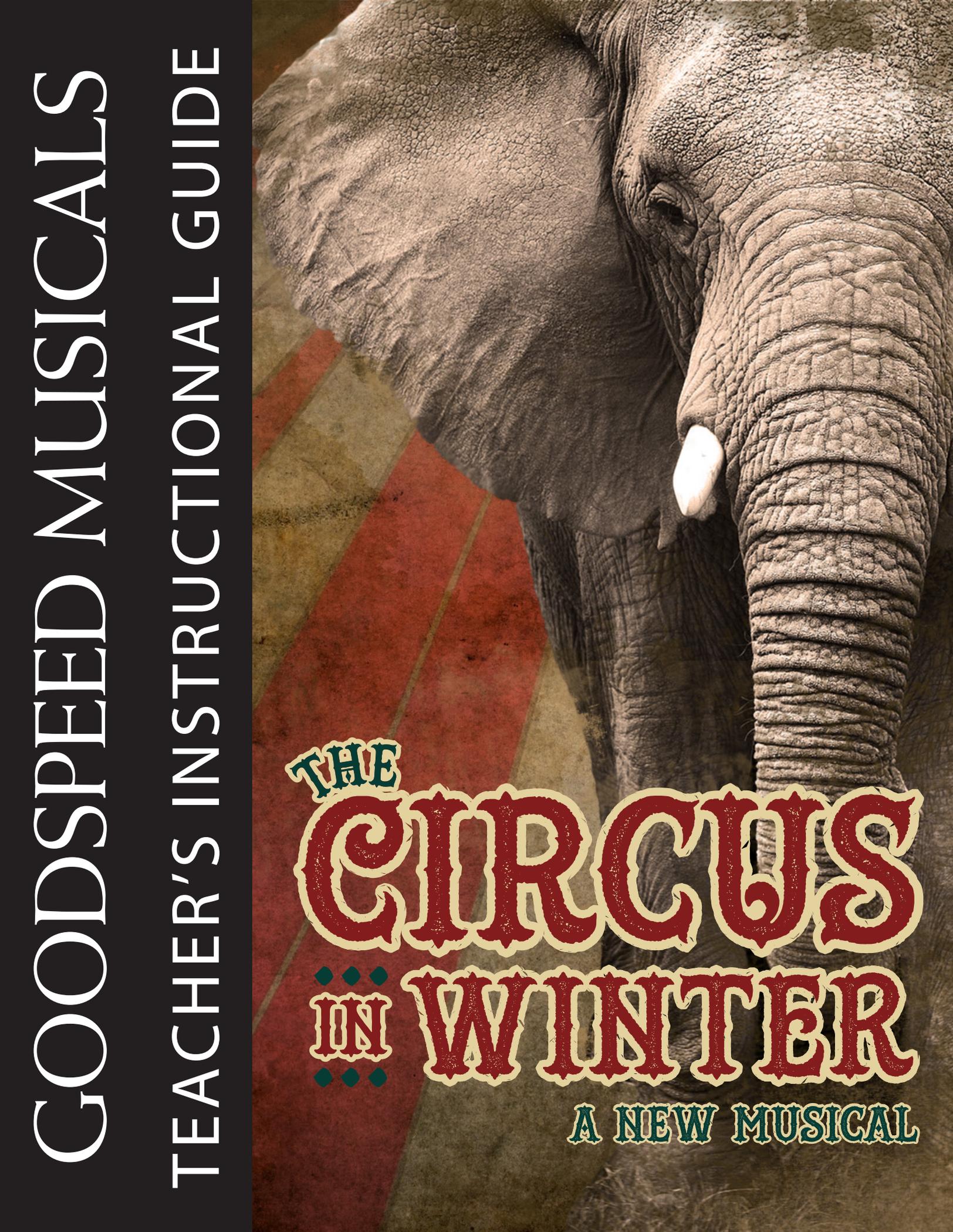


GOODSPEED MUSICALS

TEACHER'S INSTRUCTIONAL GUIDE

A close-up photograph of an elephant's head and trunk, looking towards the left. The elephant is standing on a red and yellow striped circus ring. The background is slightly blurred, showing more of the ring and some greenery.

THE
CIRCUS
IN WINTER
A NEW MUSICAL

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THE CIRCUS IN WINTER
The Norma Terris Theatre
Oct 23 - Nov 16, 2014

Music and Lyrics by
BEN CLARK

Book by
HUNTER FOSTER
&
BETH TURCOTTE

Inspired by the novel by
CATHY DAY

Lighting Design by
DONALD HOLDER

Costume Design by
MARINA DRAGHICI

Scenic Design by
JASON SHERWOOD

Choreographed by
SPENCER LIFF

Directed by
JOE CALARCO

Procuded for
Goodspeed Musicals by
MICHAEL P. PRICE

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The Max Showalter Center for
Education in Musical Theatre

Teacher's Instructional Guide for *The Circus in Winter* was prepared by:
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Goodspeed's *Teacher's Instructional Guide* can be found on our website:
www.goodspeed.org/guides

HOW TO USE THE GUIDES



THE TEACHER’S INSTRUCTIONAL GUIDE (TIG) is intended for use by teachers who are interested in integrating the arts into their classroom. The TIG provides background information, teaching ideas, and prompts to facilitate students’ knowledge and appreciation of the show’s themes and characters. The TIG activities are influenced by state and national standards associated with the arts, language arts, social studies, and science.

THE STUDENT GUIDE TO THE THEATRE serves as a companion to the Teacher’s Instructional Guide (TIG). It includes a plot and character summary, accessible historical and thematic background information to support the lessons in the TIG, and a behind-the-scenes look at the production. It also includes fun facts, theatre terms, and activities.

Each lesson in the TIG corresponds to a specific section in the Student Guide. Reading the Student Guide before attending a Goodspeed production will increase the likelihood that students will take active, critical roles as audience members, which will then lead to valuable classroom discussions.

The chart below maps the connection between the TIG’s lessons and supporting material with the corresponding pages in the Student Guide.

LEVEL/SUBJECT	LEARNING PHASE	LESSON TOPIC	TIG	STUDENT GUIDE
High School Arts	Before the Show	Music of the Midwest	Lesson: p. 15 Support Material: p. 5, 12-14, 22	Student Material: p. 4, 9-11
High School English	Before the Show	A Basic Circus Skill	Lesson: p. 6 Support Material: -	Student Material: -
High School English	Understanding	Adaptations	Lesson: p. 10 Support Material: 8-9	Student Material: 6-7
High School English	After the Show	Short Story	Lesson: p. 19 Support Material: p. 4-5	Student Material: p. 3-4
High School History	Understanding	Circus History	Lesson: p. 18 Support Material: p. 4, 5, 12-14	Student Material: p. 3, 4, 9-13
High School History	After the Show	Route Book	Lesson: p. 11 Support Material: p. 4, 5, 12-14, 16-17	Student Material: p. 3, 4, 9-13

CHARACTER SUMMARY



Shannon Antalan as Pearly, Aaron Ramey as Wallace, Dee Roscioli as Jennie, Charles Gray as Jo-Jo, and James Penca as Ollie. ©EMMA

JAMES PORTER: The father of Wallace Porter. He has little tolerance for his son's fanciful nature and spends his days gambling.

WALLACE PORTER: The son of James Porter who helps his father run the family stables. He has been fascinated with the circus from a young age, particularly the elephants. After the death of his beloved wife, Irene, Wallace sells the stables and opens *The Great Porter Circus and Menagerie*.

JENNIE DIXIANNA: An exotic fortune teller and spinning aerialist for the circus. She joined the circus as a teenager to escape an abusive home and eventually falls in love with Wallace Porter.

CLYDE HOLLENBACH: The previous owner of *The Great Porter Circus and Menagerie*.

IRENE PORTER: Wallace Porter's wife who tragically passes away during childbirth.

PEARLY: A young black woman and former slave. Her real name is Dinah Cornelia Washington and she works as a servant in a railway camp before joining the circus. She is forced to leave her home after she falls in love with a white man and becomes pregnant with his child.

GUS: Pearly's father.

GORDON: A young Union soldier who falls in love with Pearly. He tells her about his time working for *The Great Porter Circus and Menagerie* in his home state of Indiana.

DODD: A young Union soldier who takes advantage of the black women he oversees.

ELEPHANT JACK: The trainer for the circus' elephant, Ceasar, and the jealous former lover of Jennie Dixianna.

GORDON, JR.: Pearly and Gordon's son.

OLLIE: A young man who has grown up as a clown in the circus and longs to make his living as an artist. He has also fallen under Jennie Dixianna's spell.

MR. AND MRS. COLONEL: An elderly couple that moves to Lima, Indiana and hires Ollie to paint murals in their home.

ELIZABETH: Gordon's wife.

ETHEL HOBZIZNI, JO-JO, & TONY COLORADO: Circus performers and personnel.

SHOW SYNOPSIS

The show opens on a dark stage. Suddenly, lights come up on a multitude of circus performers. James Porter, the father of Wallace Porter, walks through the crowd to a small door followed by his son. Young Wallace is instructed to wait outside while his father plays cards with members of the circus troupe. While waiting, Young Wallace catches his first glimpse of Caesar the elephant and develops a fascination with the majestic pachyderm. James storms out of the card game while Wallace is admiring Caesar and forcibly drags his son away from the circus.

Soon after their visit to the circus grounds, James falls ill and dies leaving Wallace with a huge amount of debt. Eventually, Wallace is able to pay off his father's creditors and turns their once-shabby family stables into a thriving enterprise. Despite his success, Wallace has never forgotten his love for the circus and quickly sells his profitable stable business to buy a small, run down circus.

On a business trip for his newly acquired enterprise, *The Great Porter Circus and Menagerie*, Wallace meets a young woman named Irene. The pair fall in love on their first date at the circus, get married, and go back to Lima, Indiana. After Wallace learns that Irene is pregnant with their first child, he becomes obsessed with material things and begins spending more time designing their new mansion than supporting his wife. While he is busily overseeing the construction of his palatial home, Wallace hires a manager, Mr. Colonel, to help him with the day to day operations of the circus. Mr. Colonel finds Wallace a new act for his circus, an aerialist and psychic named Jennie Dixieanna. Wallace is intrigued by Jennie's clairvoyant abilities and she demonstrates her talent for him. While looking into the future, Jennie sees that Irene has gone into premature labor and she tells Wallace to return home as soon as he can. Wallace rushes home to find Irene has died while giving birth to their son.

While Wallace grieves for his wife, Pearly is coping with the loss of her mother and the changes occurring in her world due to the Civil War. While working in a railway camp with her father, Gus, Pearly meets a young, white Union soldier named Gordon. Despite the dangers of having a mixed race relationship, they fall in love and begin meeting in secret. Gus discovers the clandestine meetings and confronts Pearly. Caught, she confesses that she has fallen in love with Gordon and is pregnant with his child. Gus is horrified by his daughter's confession and demands that Pearly leave the camp immediately. Despite his daughter's pleas for forgiveness, Gus insists that he must report her relationship with Gordon to the proper authorities; however, he gives her time to escape by telling the camp supervisors that, upon learning about the relationship, he killed his daughter and threw her body in the river. Frightened and alone, Pearly flees the railway camp and travels the country, moving from place to place. One day she sees a train with "The Great Porter

Circus and Menagerie" written on the side and recalls Gordon telling her how he used to work for a circus with the same name. Pearly and her young son, Gordon, Jr., immediately stow away on the train. Ollie, a reluctant performer with the circus, who eventually offers them a part in his act, discovers the pair.

Most of the performers welcome Pearly and Gordon into their community, however, Elephant Jack is the exception. He feels that Pearly and Gordon don't belong with the circus. Elephant Jack becomes furious when Pearly shows an aptitude for animal training and he dislikes when Porter allows her to work with his elephant, Caesar. Porter, who has been in mourning for his wife, begins an affair with Jennie that further enrages her former lover, Elephant Jack. At the beginning of Jennie and Wallace's relationship, it is revealed that Irene Porter delivered a healthy baby boy before her death and Wallace asked Jennie to take the baby to a place where he would be content. The situation is further complicated when it is revealed that Ollie is Porter's son and that Jennie has had a physical relationship with both men.

Ollie is in love with Jennie and he begs her to leave the circus with him at the end of the season. Instead of returning his feelings as he hoped, she reveals his parentage. Ollie is shocked and angry to learn that Wallace Porter is his father and quits the circus. In an emotional and alcohol induced haze he stumbles to Caesar's pen and releases the elephant. Freed from his cage, Caesar goes on a rampage through town, injuring several circus workers and killing Elephant Jack before Porter shoots him. A torrential downpour begins after Caesar is killed and it causes the town to flood. The circus loses all of its animals and eight of its employees to the flood. Jennie Dixieanna is not among the dead but has vanished without a trace.

HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH

BEFORE THE SHOW: A Basic Circus Skill

Learning Objective:

Students will demonstrate their ability to work cohesively as a group and will gain a greater understanding of basic circus skills. Students will address the K-12 Arts Content Standards by creating their own circus act and performing a basic juggling act in small groups.

The Arts Content Standards

Standard 1: Create (imagine, experiment, plan, make, evaluate, refine and present/exhibit) artworks that express concepts, ideas and feelings in each art form.

Standard 2: Perform (select, analyze, interpret, rehearse, evaluate, refine and present) diverse art works in each art form.

Standard 3: Respond (select, experience, describe, analyze, interpret and evaluate) with understanding to diverse art works and performances in each art form.

Standard 4: Understand and use the materials, techniques, forms (structures, styles, and genres), language, notation (written symbol system) and literature/repertoire of each art form.

Everyone has thought about running away and joining the circus at some point in their life, but most people lack the skills to make this fantasy a reality. Wallace Porter has no circus skills, however, he does have the money to buy a circus, so he is able to run away from the sadness in his life by traveling around the country with the Great Porter *Circus and Menagerie*. Pearly and her son Gordon, Jr. are also on the run from the reality of their lives and although they are lacking the funds to buy a circus as Porter does, they become part of a clown act. There are several basic skills that someone in the circus should have, but one of the most basic skills required is juggling.

Juggling is a form of entertainment that dates back to Ancient Egypt and requires excellent reflexes and hand/eye coordination. Jugglers use various objects in their tricks like balls, pins, apples, and even swords, but the easiest object to learn to juggle is a set of three scarves. In this activity, students will learn the basics of juggling and what it takes to create their own circus act.

ACTIVITY

Before students begin learning how to juggle, have them view the following online tutorials to become familiar with art of juggling:

- An illustrated tutorial on juggling: <http://learnhowtojuggle.info/getting-started/>
- A video tutorial on juggling: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V11cV2nkr8M>

Begin the activity by passing out the handout titled “How to Juggle” included on page 21 of this guide. When each student has received a copy of the handout, break the class up into three groups and assign each group a number (1-3). Explain that Group 1 will be responsible for teaching steps 1-7 on the “How to Juggle” worksheet to the class, Group 2 will be responsible for teaching steps 8-14, and Group 3 will be responsible for teaching steps 15-20. Allow the groups five to ten minutes to review their worksheets and to find a way to explain and demonstrate the steps to their peers in their own words. Groups present their steps to the class in numerical order.

After each group shares their instructions with the class, have the students perform their new skill in their groups.

Ask students to consider the following questions:

- Describe the difficulty level of learning to juggle three scarves.
- Do they think it would be more or less difficult to juggle heavier objects like rubber balls or pins? Explain their reasoning.
- How did it feel to teach their classmates a new skill?
- Describe the degree of difficulty in translating the instructions into their own words.
- How did it feel to perform a new skill immediately after learning it?
- What are some ways they could make their juggling more entertaining?

Individually, have students create a juggling name and a signature juggling trick that they would perform in *The Great Porter Circus and Menagerie*. Once the students have created their name and trick, have them share their ideas with the class.

MEET THE WRITERS



Ben Clark

BEN CLARK (*Music & Lyrics*) is a singer, songwriter, composer, and an Indiana native. Ben has been writing music since age 14 and *The Circus in Winter* marks his full-length musical debut. For this piece he has received overwhelming response from both educational and professional worlds including the Kennedy Center Award for Outstanding Musical Composition. In 2012, he received a fellowship at the O'Neill Center and was an invited artist at the Johnny Mercer Writer's Colony at Goodspeed Musicals. Ben works in New York as a recording artist with his band, Ben Clark and the Long Shadows. He is releasing a full-length solo album in 2014 called *Time and the Miles Apart*. He is a graduate of Ball State University and currently lives in Brooklyn.



Hunter Foster

HUNTER FOSTER (*Book*) wrote the books for the Off-Broadway musicals *Summer of '42*, *Bonnie and Clyde: a Folktale*, and *The Hollow*. Additionally, Hunter has starred on Broadway: Leo Bloom in *The Producers*, Seymour in *Little Shop of Horrors* (Tony® nomination), Bobby Strong in *Urinetown* (Outer Critic nomination), *Les Misérables*, *Grease*, *Footloose* and Alan Menken's *King David*. Off-Broadway: *Ordinary Days* at Roundabout Underground, Lincoln Center Theater's *Happiness* (Drama Desk nomination), *Frankenstein* (Victor Frankenstein), *Dust, Modern Orthodox*, *Urinetown* (Lortel nomination). Regional: *Kiss of the Spider Woman* (Signature Theatre – Helen Hayes nomination), *The Government Inspector* (Guthrie), *Mister Roberts* (Kennedy Center), *Party Come Here* (Williamstown), and *Children of Eden* (Papermill). He is a graduate of the University of Michigan Musical Theatre Program.



Beth Turcotte

BETH TURCOTTE (*Book*) has been an inspirational theatre artist and educator devoted to the development of new work and emerging talent for the past 30 years. She has earned accolades in both professional and educational arenas for her visionary projects and passion for arts education. Beth is the recipient of the 2012 Creative Endeavor Award for her dedication to arts education and the creative process. In her community work, she created the Cornerstone Center for the Arts, an inner-city arts institution discovering young unheard voices and exposing over 15,000 children to theatre, dance and music. She is a Professor of Theatre and Dance Performance at Ball State University and received her MFA from Southern Methodist University.

THE CIRCUS IN WINTER ROUTE BOOK CONTINUED



The cast at the first read-through at Goodspeed. ©Diane Sobolewski

Theater. Then, *The Circus in Winter* traveled to Peru, Indiana and was performed at the Ole Olsen Memorial Theater, the International Circus Hall of Fame, and finally, at the Muncie Civic Theatre.

The Circus in Winter became a fully-realized production in 2011 and was performed at Ball State as part of the University Theatre's 2011-2012 season. The musical was then selected to be performed at the KC-ACFT's Region III Festival at the University of Illinois in 2012. During the KC-ACFT performances, *The Circus in Winter* was identified as one of the top five shows in the nation and won seven awards at the KC-ACFT national awards ceremony in April 2012.

Subsequent to the astonishing success of *The Circus in Winter* at KC-ACFT, the National Alliance for Music Theatre (NAMT) chose the musical as one of the finalists in their yearly new work

competition. Hundreds of scripts are considered annually for NAMT's Festival of New Musicals, however, only eight are selected to give condensed performances in what has become a leading industry event and a major stepping stone towards a full Broadway production. *The Circus in Winter* was given the honor of both opening and closing the event and was the first new work to do so in the history of NAMT.

Goodspeed Musicals' production of *The Circus in Winter* at the Norma Terris Theatre in Chester, Connecticut will be the first full-length performance of the musical since 2012 and the first performance using a revised libretto written by Hunter Foster and Beth Turcotte.



Choreographer Spencer Liff at the first read-through. ©Diane Sobolewski

LESSON

HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH UNDERSTANDING: Adaptations

Learning Objective:

Students will use narrative techniques and precise phrasing to create a well thought out story building towards a particular outcome. Student will also gain insight into the process of creating an adaptation and have a greater understanding of how the writers created *The Circus in Winter*.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.9-10.4

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.9-10.5

Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.3.b

Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, reflection, and multiple plot lines, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.3.c

Use a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole and build toward a particular tone and outcome (e.g., a sense of mystery, suspense, growth, or resolution).

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.3.d

Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.

The inspiration for a musical can be found in many different art forms; sometimes a writer is inspired by a painting, movie, book, or other art form. *The Circus in Winter* is a musical that was adapted from novel *The Circus in Winter* by Cathy Day.

ACTIVITY

Share with the class that the Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines an adaptation as “something that is adapted; especially a movie, book, play, etc., that is changed so that it can be presented in another form.” After explaining what an adaptation is, break students into groups of three and have them read a version of the following fairy tales:

1. Rumpelstiltskin
2. Cinderella
3. Jack and the Beanstalk
4. Aladdin

After reading the stories, have each group select one favorite fairy tale and create a short adaptation of that story. Each adaptation must:

- Be set in a circus.
- Be written in a format that allows one group member to be the narrator and the two remaining group members to be actors.
- Use the characters from the fairy tale and follow the same basic plot.

Once each group has completed their story, have them present their adaptation to the class.

Lead a group discussion on the following topics:

- Was it difficult for students to put a pre-written story into a new context?
- What changes did the groups have to make in order for their story to take place in a circus?
- What are the main differences between the original fairy tale and their adaptation?

LESSON

Learning Objective:

Students will gain a deeper understanding of *The Circus in Winter's* plot and characters by writing routinely over an extended period of time. Students will gather relevant information from various print and digital sources to create and finish their project.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.9-10.8

Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the usefulness of each source in answering the research question; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.9-10.9

Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.11-12.4

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.9-10.10 & 11-12.10

Write routinely over extended time frames (time for reflection and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Students may create front and rear covers for their books, dye the pages with tea to make them appear older, or bind their books. They may also add drawings, illustrations, or maps to their route book entries. Once their books are completed students should share their creations with the class and read one of their entries aloud. As a class, have students consider the following questions:

- Why were route books created by the circus industry?
- Why are route books useful to circus historians? Could they be useful to historians with other specialties?
- What insights into American history can be found in a circus route book?
- Do the students have a better understanding of *The Circus in Winter* after creating their route books? Why?

Helpful links: <http://www.circushistory.org/History/Ringling1898.htm> <http://www.circushistory.org/History/RBBBroutes.htm> <http://www.ringling.org/>

HIGH SCHOOL HISTORY

AFTER THE SHOW: Route Book

Circuses are, by their very nature, full of hyperbolic stories and claims, however, one area where there was very little embellishment was the route book. A circus' route book was a bound notebook or ledger that contained descriptions and accounts of the show's activities for the year. The route book would also have a list of the personnel traveling with the show (usually broken down by department) and show statistics like miles traveled, number of train cars used, length of the season, the number of cities visited, etc. The book would be published at the end of the season and sold to employees or circus fans. *The Circus in Winter* was partially inspired by one of Cathy Day's prized possessions, her great-great uncle's 1899 route book for *The Great Wallace Show*.

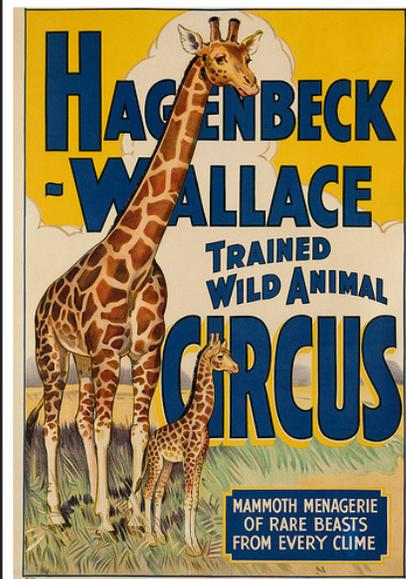
ACTIVITY

Have students read "Character Summary," "Show Synopsis," "Traveling Circuses in America at the Turn of the Century," and "Circus Lore, Culture, and Perception" in the Student Guide.

Once students have read the information in the Student Guide and have a basic understanding of *The Circus in Winter's* plot and the history of circuses in America, explain that they will be creating route book entries for *The Great Porter Circus and Menagerie*. This project will require multiple class periods and homework assignments to be completed. Students will write daily entries in their route book from the perspective of Wallace Porter and they should include a list of performers, observations about performers, new acts added to the circus, details about the animals, towns the circus has visited, and any unusual behavior on the part of circus personnel.

Here are entries made in the Ringling Bros. 1897 route book that may be used for reference:

- "Attica, Ind. Monday, August 9th – Very hot. Business good. This was a great day for the lemonade boys. The afternoon house packed the big top. A Japanese woman performer fell from a perch at the dome of the tent to the ground, and sustained a broken arm, lacerated face and internal injuries. She was subsequently sent to Chicago to a hospital and eventually rejoined the show."
- "York, Neb. Thursday, August 26th – Wind and changeable weather. Business phenomenal. Another town that was "show hungry." Pinkerton Detective Moore had an encounter with a burglar in the morning, and fired a shot at him. The revolver failed to work after that, or there would probably be one thief less in the world."
- "Enid, Okla. Territory. Saturday, September 25th. Clear and pleasant. Business tremendous. This is the first big show Enid has ever had. The town is four years and nine days old and is wild about the circus. The afternoon audience was another surprise like that of Beloit, Kan. A good-natured multitude of noisy, yelling, Westerners yelled themselves hoarse with enjoyment at the rare treat the big show afforded them."



This eventually led to a parade filled with gilt covered wagons, calliopes, floats, and performers that would march down the main street of each town the circus visited. The parade became a staple of the late 19th century circus by giving crowds a taste of the performances that awaited them under the big top. This tradition continued until the advancement of the automobile made it impossible for performers and animals to move freely through town streets.

THE HAGENBECK-WALLACE CIRCUS

At the height of its popularity there were dozens of traveling circuses making the trip around the country, one of which was the *Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus* that served as the inspiration for *The Circus in Winter*. The *Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus* was originally two separate entities; *The Carl Hagenbeck Circus*, which was founded by noted animal trainer Carl Hagenbeck, and *The Great Wallace Show*, founded by Benjamin

other when Wallace claimed full control of the circus in 1890 and changed the name to the *B.E. Wallace Circus*. The *Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus* came into being in 1907 when Benjamin Wallace purchased *The Carl Hagenbeck Circus* and merged it with his own company. Carl Hagenbeck protested at the use of his name in the title since he no longer had any connection to the circus and tried to sue Wallace but lost the battle in court.

The *Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus* wintered in Wallace's hometown of Peru, Indiana and went through the flood of 1913 losing 8 elephants, 21 lions and tigers, and 8 horses when the Wabash River overflowed its banks. That same year, Wallace sold his share of the circus. The flood was not the only tragedy to strike the *Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus*; in 1918, a train engineer fell asleep and ran his locomotive into the rear of the Hagenbeck-Wallace train near Hammond, Indiana. At least 86 people died in the train wreck and 127 more were injured. Demonstrating the meaning of the words, "the show must go on," several competing circuses loaned Hagenbeck-Wallace their equipment and performers so that only two performances were canceled due to the tragedy.



Hagenbeck-Wallace clowns

Wallace. Hagenbeck pioneered the use of reward-based animal training as opposed to fear-based training that was utilized by most trainers in the 19th century, and eventually his methods were adopted by zoos and circuses across the world.

Shortly after the train accident, Hagenbeck-Wallace was bought by the American Circus Company, which boasted shows like the *Sells-Floto Circus* and *John Robinson Shows* on its roster. John Nicholas Ringling bought the American Circus Company and all subsidiary companies in the late 1920s for over \$1 million. The circus split from the Ringling enterprise in 1935 and began operating independently as *The Hagenbeck-Wallace and Forepaugh-Sells Bros. Circus* until it ceased operations in 1938. The compound in Peru, Indiana that was formerly the winter home of the *Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus* now functions as the Circus Hall of Fame.

Benjamin Wallace was a livery and stable owner in Peru, Indiana who bought a circus with his business partner James Anderson in 1884. Like most circus partnerships, this one ended with one partner buying out the

 **CLICK HERE**
to learn more about
circus history

LINK: <http://www.circusinamerica.org>

LESSON

Learning Objective:

Students will gain a better understanding of bluegrass music and its connection to the Midwestern United States. Students will be able to explain the difference between bluegrass music and traditional show tunes.

English Language Arts Grades Pre-K-12

Exploring and Responding to Literature Standard 2.3:

Students listen to, read and respond to texts about and from many cultures and times.

The Arts: Music Grades 9-12

Content Standard 9:

History and Culture; Students will understand music in relation to history and culture.

HIGH SCHOOL VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS BEFORE THE SHOW: Music of the Midwest

The pop/rock musical has become popular over the last several decades with the success of shows like *Hair*, *Spring Awakening*, *Wicked*, *Legally Blonde*, and *Kinky Boots*. *The Circus in Winter* follows in the footsteps of these shows and is classified as a Folk/Rock Musical. What differentiates *The Circus in Winter* from other rock musicals is the amount of inspiration its score borrows from bluegrass music.

Bluegrass originated in the southern United States in the late 1600s and is defined by the Merriam-Webster Dictionary as “a type of traditional American music that is played on stringed instruments (such as banjos and fiddles).” Bluegrass was inspired by Irish, Scottish, Welsh, and English traditional music that was brought over to America by European immigrants; it usually features a rapid tempo and jazz-like improvisations. The acoustic guitar and the stand-up bass are heavily featured in bluegrass music and often provide the basic rhythm of a song, accenting the “one” and “three” beats (also known as downbeats) to move the music along while instruments like the mandolin and banjo play on the “two” and “four” beats (or upbeats).

ACTIVITY

Have students read the “Show Synopsis,” and “Traveling Circuses in America at the Turn of the Century” in the Student Guide. As a class, ask students to discuss why they think this genre of music was chosen to be featured in *The Circus in Winter*. Have a discussion with your students to assess their concepts of bluegrass and show tunes. Contextualize the genre by exploring examples from books, theatre, television, and film. Information about bluegrass music and examples of bluegrass music in pop culture can be found at <https://ibma.org/>.

Discuss the following questions with your class:

- Based on songs that you’ve listened to, what are some characteristics of bluegrass?
- Based on songs that you’ve listened to, what are some characteristics of traditional show tunes?
- What other books, plays, television, or film pieces have you seen that might feature show tunes and/or bluegrass music?
- What aspects of the songs made you conclude that it belongs to either the show tune or bluegrass genre?

Distribute a copy of the “H Chart” worksheet to each of student in the class (found on page 22 of the Teacher’s Instructional Guide). Once all students have a copy of the worksheet, explain that they will be listening to two songs from *The Circus in Winter* and attempting to identify the similarities and differences in the two songs. Students should use the “H Chart” worksheet to list their observations. Play the songs “Amazing” and “Elephant’s Eye” from *The Circus in Winter*; songs can be found here under the tab labeled “Extras”: <http://www.goodspeed.org/productions/2014/the-circus-in-winter>

Play each song twice and allow students to write down their observations. Once they have heard each song, ask each student to share one of their observations with the group. As a class, have the students answer the following questions:

- What are some characteristics of bluegrass music that the composer for *The Circus in Winter* used?
- Which instruments can the students identify?
- How does this style of music make them feel?
- Did the songs played from *The Circus in Winter* remind them of the other bluegrass songs they heard? Which ones and why?



Photo by Frederick W. Glasier

Circuses tried withholding portions of the roustabouts' pay to be given to them in one lump sum at the end of the season to encourage men to stay on, however, some unscrupulous circus organizations began practicing "red lighting" to avoid giving payment. "Red lighting" was the practice of throwing a laborer from a moving train. If the man survived the fall, all he would see were the disappearing red lights of the train in the distance. There was also a distinct mistrust felt by people in the circus towards the outside world, the nomadic shows would become societies unto themselves and anything "not circus" was viewed with

deep suspicion.

CIRCUS CULTURE

Like most societies, the circus had its own hierarchy and could be broken into several categories: management, employees, and performers. Management was at the top of the chain of command and consisted of owners, publicity managers, general managers, and labor managers. Employees and performers were usually considered to be of equal status but had their own rankings within their groups.

Employees of the circus would include ticket sellers, candy butchers, and front door men at the top of the caste system, since they usually worked their way up to management positions, followed by other workers, and roustabouts at the bottom of the system.

Performers were divided according to their specialty with equestrians and aerialists being awarded the most prestigious positions followed by animal trainers, acrobats, clowns, and sideshow freaks.

Circus personnel would have their place in the circus hierarchy and this could be identified by their sleeping assignments and place in the cook tent line. Featured performers and key personnel would be assigned a stateroom or a section of a railcar (depending on available space) while roustabouts could be assigned two to a bunk, if they received a bunk at all.



Photo by Frederick W. Glasier

LESSON

Learning Objective:

By researching and analyzing primary and secondary sources of information pertaining to the history of the circus students will gain a rudimentary knowledge of how the circus connects to other forms of entertainment.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.1

Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.2

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.3

Analyze in detail a series of events described in a text; determine whether earlier events caused later ones or simply preceded them.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.2

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.9

Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.

HIGH SCHOOL HISTORY

UNDERSTANDING: Circus History

The story of *The Circus in Winter* is based on a traveling circus called *The Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus*. Circus life has its own culture, history, and even language. In order to better understand the sights, sounds, characters, and actions in *The Circus in Winter* it is important to grasp the world of the circus-folk. Have students read the “Character Summary,” “Show Synopsis,” and “Traveling Circuses in America at the Turn of the Century” in the Student Guide. In class, discuss the historical, cultural and societal impact of the circus in America, from its roots in equestrian shows through its developmental years and into modern day.

ACTIVITY

As we look at the development of circuses through history, it is clear that they have been influenced by many countries throughout the world. Additionally, the impact of the circus on many contemporary forms of entertainment is apparent. Have your students choose one of the topics below and explore its relationship to the modern circus. Students should describe the historical and/or current significance of their topic. They should also compare and contrast the two forms of entertainment and highlight any direct connections between the two. Your students should present their findings to the class using a visual aid such as a Venn diagram.

- John Bill Ricketts’ Equestrian Shows
- Buffalo Bill’s Wild West Show
- P.T. Barnum’s American Museum
- Menageries
- Sideshows/Freakshows

LESSON

HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH AFTER THE SHOW: Short Story

Learning Objective:

Students will demonstrate their attention to detail and reading comprehension by exploring what might have happened to Jennie Dixianna after *The Circus in Winter* ends.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.6

Compare the point of view of two or more authors for how they treat the same or similar topics, including which details they include and emphasize in their respective accounts.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.8

Assess the extent to which the reasoning and evidence in a text support the author's claims.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.11-12.2

Write informative/explanatory texts, including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/experiments, or technical processes.

ACTIVITY

Have students read the "Character Summary" and "Show Synopsis" in the Student Guide. At the end of *The Circus in Winter* the audience finds out that Jennie Dixianna has vanished. Students will be creating two separate newspaper articles about Jennie's disappearance. The first newspaper article will be written in the style of the late 1800s and report on the flood of the circus grounds as well as Jennie's disappearance. The second newspaper article will be written as an interview with Jennie Dixianna and will take place in the late 1920s. In their second news paper article student must answer the following questions:

- How did Jennie escape the flood?
- Why did she leave the circus so suddenly?
- Where did she go after leaving *The Great Porter Circus and Menagerie*?
- What has happened in her life since the flood?
- Why has she decided to give an interview?

Students may use the following websites to research the vernacular used in newspaper articles during the two specified time periods.

- <http://covina.newspaperarchive.com/>
- <http://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org/>
- <http://athnewspapers.galileo.usg.edu/athnewspapers-j2k/search>
- <https://newspapers.library.in.gov/>
- <https://web5.schs.switzerland.k12.in.us/>
- <http://www.ulib.iupui.edu/digitalscholarship/collections/lrecorder>

Once students have written their newspaper articles, divide the class into small groups and allow them to share their creations.

INTERESTING FACTS



Clyde Beatty



- P.T. Barnum was born in Bethel Connecticut.
- For 50 years, Bridgeport Connecticut was the winter home of *Barnum and Bailey's Greatest Show on Earth*. The Ringling Brothers moved the headquarters of the show to Sarasota, Florida in 1927. The Barnum Museum is located in Bridgeport, Connecticut.
- Hunter Foster is one of the authors of the revised book for *The Circus in Winter* and his sister, Tony winner Sutton Foster, starred in the 2012 presentation of *The Circus in Winter* at the National Alliance for Musical Theatre's Festival of New Musicals.
- Cathy Day has two novels that have been published, *Comeback Season: How I Learned to Play the Game of Love* and *The Circus in Winter*. She is in the process of writing her third novel which will also begin with a C.
- Joe Skelton, the father of famous performer Red Skelton, worked as a clown in the *Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus*.
- Famed animal trainer, Clyde Beatty, toured with the *Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus*.
- The trunk of an elephant is so sensitive that it can pick up a pin.
- There are two main species of elephants: the African elephant and the Indian elephant.
- Most circus elephants are Indian elephants.
- An elephant's hair is so coarse that trainers sometimes use a blowtorch to trim it.
- Since the Animal Welfare Act came into law in 1966, every major circus that uses animal performers has been cited for violating the minimal standards of care.

WORKSHEET: HOW TO JUGGLE



1. "Begin with one scarf."
2. "Standing, hold the scarf lightly in your dominant hand at shoulder level."
3. "The palm of your hand should be facing downward, and your non-dominant hand should also be at shoulder height."
4. "In a rainbow-shaped arc, throw the scarf across your body, toward your non-dominant hand."
5. "Reach up and catch the scarf with your non-dominant hand."
6. "Throw the scarf from your non-dominant hand back to your dominant hand in a rainbow-shaped arc."
7. "Continue to practice movement with a single scarf."
8. "Once you have mastered the arced movement, pick up a second scarf."
9. "Lightly, hold one scarf in each hand at shoulder level."
10. "Throw the scarf from your dominant hand over to your non-dominant hand in an arc."
11. "After you have let go of the first scarf, reach up with your non-dominant hand to throw the second scarf."
12. "Catch the first scarf with your non-dominant hand."
13. "Catch the second scarf in your dominant hand."
14. "Repeat this sequence until you can smoothly move both scarves in a circular arc. Once mastery of this movement is achieved, add a third scarf."
15. "Hold all three scarves. Two should be in your dominant hand and one in your non-dominant hand."
16. "To throw all three scarves, you will use the same pattern in step 2, but the movements will be faster."
17. "Begin by throwing the first scarf from your dominant hand to your non-dominant hand."
18. "When it reaches its highest point, reach up and throw the second scarf from your non-dominant hand. Catch the first scarf you threw."
19. "Throw the third scarf and catch the second one you threw."
20. "You should only have two scarves in the air at once, never three. The pattern is to throw -- catch -- throw -- catch -- throw."

Congratulations, you just learned how to juggle!

WORKSHEET: H-CHART



DIRECTIONS: Use this chart to graphically compare and contrast two audio examples from *The Circus in Winter*. Use the larger columns to provide information about the unique qualities of each audio example. Use the space in the middle to list those qualities that the two audio examples have in common.

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THEATRE ETIQUETTE

Seeing a musical at The Norma Terris Theatre is a unique and exciting experience. All the members of the production, both cast and crew, work hard to give you a great show. As an audience member, you also have an important job. You must help the performers give their best performance possible. You can do this by practicing these rules of theater etiquette:

- Do laugh when the performance is funny.
- Do applaud when the performance is over. Applause is how you say “thank you” to the performer. The actors will bow as you applaud. That is how they say “Thank you for coming.”
- Do stand and applaud if you thought the show was outstanding.
- Don’t forget to turn off your cell phone. A ringing or buzzing phone can be very distracting. It can also be embarrassing for you if it is your phone that is disrupting the show!
- Don’t text during the performance.
- Make sure to visit the restroom before the production begins.
- Don’t speak or whisper during the performance...whispering is still speaking, so only in an emergency should whispering occur.
- Remember that the overture (introductory music) in musical theatre is part of the performance, so remain silent when the show begins.
- Don’t take pictures during the performance. It can be very distracting to the actors and it can result in an accident.
- Don’t put your feet up on the seats or kick the seat in front of you.
- Do sit ONLY when your seat is in the folded down position.
- Do remain in your seat for the entire performance. If you must leave, exit during intermission. In an emergency, calmly walk toward the nearest exit.



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