

The Emperor's New Clothes



Teacher's Study Guide

What's big and fat and pink and loves to dress up in fancy clothes? Give up? It's the Emperor in Grey Seal Puppets' clever adaptation of *The Emperor's New Clothes*. The beloved Hans Christian Andersen classic takes on a whole new dimension as it is transformed into a fable. The crafty tailors have become foxes; the prime minister a near-sighted camel; and the councillor, a befuddled old walrus. Even the audience will take part-- as animals, of course! Characters and costume designs were inspired by the illustrations of Janet Stevens in *The Emperor's New Clothes* published by Holiday House.

ABOUT THE EMPEROR'S NEW CLOTHES

Grey Seal Puppets brings to life the beloved Hans Christian Andersen classic tale, *The Emperor's New Clothes*. This familiar story takes an unusual twist in this version; it is told as a fable. A pompous pig, quite taken with his appearance, is the perfect Emperor; a nearsighted camel and a befuddled walrus serve as his courtiers and two conniving foxes from the "shady side" are con men bent on getting rich off the Emperor's vanity. It takes the innocence of a small bear cub, unafraid to say what she truly feels, to awaken the conscience of the entire village.



The timeless moral of this tale is honesty, but it also warns against vanity and self-indulgence. The audience will recognize the Emperor as a vain ruler who easily falls for the foxes' story of a magic cloth. Those who can see the cloth are smart and good at what they do. Those who can't see the cloth are foolish and are unfit for their jobs. In the end, it is the Emperor's vanity that exposes his own foolishness.

Children will enjoy *The Emperor's New Clothes* for its fast-paced action, intriguing characters, and audience participation. They also have the upper hand when it comes to solving the plot! Teachers will appreciate its subtle morals in this retelling of Andersen's tale. This study guide helps you, the teacher, to both prepare the children for the show and follow up afterward, driving the lessons home with fun activities.

Themes to Discuss and Develop

Before the Performance

Before the performance, introduce your students to the theater experience and to theater etiquette.

LIVE THEATRE VERSUS TV AND THE MOVIES

Attending live theatre is very different from attending a movie or watching TV. Many people think nothing of eating or drinking or even talking while a movie or a TV show is playing. After all, the actors aren't really there in front of us. They're on film or tape, and even if they are "live," they are thousands of miles away. But in the theatre, the puppeteer is working very hard and they are only a few feet away. Eating or talking distracts the puppeteer and prevents other members of the audience from hearing and enjoying as well. And of course, such behavior is considered inappropriate and impolite for the theatre. Attending the theatre should be considered a very formal but fun occasion, like going to a wedding or a fancy restaurant. You may even want to wear something special that day.

AUDIENCE GUIDELINES

- Eating and drinking should not be permitted.
- Talking should not be permitted. Even whispering should be limited.
- Restroom trips should be limited to before and after the performance if at all possible.
- Taking photographs during the performance is extremely distracting to the puppeteer and to the rest of the audience. The puppeteer will be glad to pose for photos after the performance.
- Please turn off all cel phones and pagers during the performance.

Explain to your students that in *The Emperor's New Clothes* they will see stories performed by puppets. Describe the play the students will see as "puppet theatre." Explain that the puppeteer will tell stories using hand, or moving mouth, puppets.

A performance by Grey Seal Puppets provides an opportunity to explore first-hand the magic of the stage. For a short time we enter another world, a world of fantasy and exaggeration. We hope you enjoy taking this journey of the imagination with us.

After the Performance

Recall the story of *The Emperor's New Clothes*. Discuss the story with your students. Why did the Emperor have so many clothes? Why did the foxes decide to trick the Emperor? Why were the Prime Minister and the Councillor afraid to say they couldn't see the clothes? Why was the Emperor afraid? Who finally tells the Emperor that he has no clothes?

The Emperor's New Clothes develops concepts that can be useful in classroom activities after the performance. For each concept an activity is suggested to explore its ramifications. Very young children may have difficulty in expressing feelings that may be generated. For them, puppets may provide the voice for newly discovered values and beliefs. For older children, script writing for their own productions may help to reinforce what they have learned.

Activities

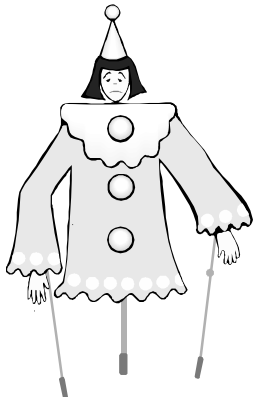
Puppetry

Puppetry is perhaps the most unique of all art forms. It incorporates aspects of both the visual and performing arts—from music and dance, to painting and sculpture, to theatre and mime—yet it remains a distinct art form unto itself. Making and using puppets is an excellent way to acquaint students with the medium and to provide them with tools to use in the post-performance discussions.

There are many different types of puppets. Explain to the classroom that when we say a “type” of puppet, we don’t mean a dog or a cat, or other character that a puppet can be. The type of puppet is determined by how the puppeteer controls, or manipulates, the puppet. Here are just a few of the types of puppets:

HAND PUPPETS

A hand puppet is a puppet that fits over the performer’s hand. The performer’s first finger goes into the head, while the performer’s thumb and little finger go into the arms to control the hands. Two of the most famous puppet characters in history, Punch and Judy, are hand puppets (pictured here).



ROD PUPPETS

A rod puppet is controlled by a stick (or rod) that is attached to the puppet. The rods are usually made of wood or metal. The puppet can be made of any kind of material, including fabric, wood, foam, or papier mache.

MARIONETTES

Marionettes are puppets that are controlled by strings from above. The strings are attached to the puppet’s head, hands, and feet, and are controlled by the puppeteer using a wooden control at the top called an “airplane control.”



Create A Puppet

Language and dramatic arts objectives:

- To describe the good character traits depicted in the play
- To recognize puppetry as a way to illustrate good character traits to children
- To create a puppet that represents a good character trait, strength, or virtue
- To analyze the action of the character through a puppet

Grade level:

Two sets of instructions are included for making puppets. Finger puppets will have more appeal for kindergartners and children in lower grades. Bag puppets are fun for all levels. Both require little preparation and few materials. Time required: 3 class sessions of 45 minutes each.

Materials:

Parents are a valuable resource for puppet-making supplies. Felt scraps, buttons, sequins, yarn, cotton balls and sewing trim are transformed into features with the help of scissors and paste. You will notice that all of the characters in *The Emperor's New Clothes* have distinct appearances and personalities. Stress to your students to be imaginative in creating unique and individual characters as they construct their puppets.

Procedure:

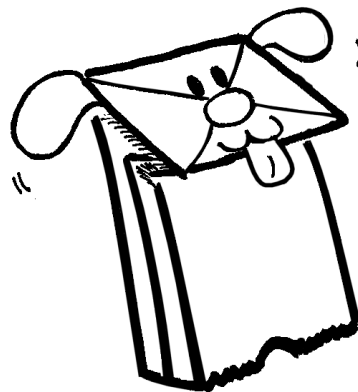
1. Discuss the puppets in the performance. What types of puppets were used? (Hand puppets, also called moving mouth puppets.) How did each work? How did they display emotions? Was each puppet effective?
2. Read aloud or have the students read Andersen's tale, *The Ugly Duckling*. Talk about motivations of the characters. Compare the message of *The Emperor's New Clothes* to that of *The Ugly Duckling*.
3. Have the students make finger puppets or bag puppets and use them act out scenes from *The Emperor's New Clothes* and/or *The Ugly Duckling*. These could be scenes that illustrate the benefits of practicing a good character trait, or the consequences of bad actions. Make these shows an ongoing class event to reinforce the importance of knowing and practicing good character traits.

Finger Puppet



To make little animal finger puppets, use pinking shears to cut off the top three inches from the fingers of old brown, black or tan gloves. Attach eyes and felt noses and mouths, and appropriate ears to make different types of animal finger puppets.

Paper Bag Puppet



For hand puppets, choose bags just large enough that the bottom fold can be easily moved up and down with fingers inserted. Indicate the tiny button placement of facial features on the bottom of the bag.

Additional Activities

I. Content Area: Language Arts, Creative Writing

Create a motivation wheel. Use common character motivations such as jealousy, greed, fear, etc. Use a spinner or have students choose a motivation about which to write a short story. Exchange stories and have students guess one another's characters' motivations.

II. Content Area: Affective

Have each student tell what animal he/ she would most like to be and why. List characteristics and traits of that animal. Have students tell which animal they think best represents themselves and why.

III. Content Area: Critical Thinking, Art

Have students choose and draw an animal that they think best represents one of the following characteristics:

honesty	curiosity	leadership
loyalty	deceit	ingenuity
creativity	conceit	jealousy

IV. Other stories to enjoy by Hans Christian Anderson:

The Wild Swans

The Steadfast Tin Soldier

The Nightingale

The Swineherd

Thumbelina

Five Peas In A Pod

The Flying Trunk

The Snow Queen

The Little Mermaid

The Little Match Girl

REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

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Hopper, Grizella H. *Puppet Making through the Grades*. Worcester, Mass.: Davis Publications, 1966.

Meet Grey Seal Puppets

Founded in 1976, Grey Seal Puppets is well known nationwide. The company performs over 250 shows a year from New York to Hawaii, from Canada to Mexico. Their repertoire consists of familiar fairy tales (*The Emperor's New Clothes*), classic folk tales (*Tangle of Tales*) and original stories (*Bathtub Pirates*). Grey Seal travels to theatres such as The Center for Puppetry Arts in Atlanta, The Detroit Museum of Art and The Philadelphia Museum of Art.

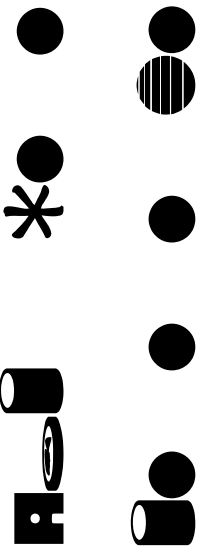
In addition to live performing, Grey Seal also performs regularly on television, with clients such as The Reimler Agency (Bojangles), WTVI-Channel 42 (local PBS affiliate), the Muppets, Silver Burdett Ginn, and the International Mission Board. Grey Seal Puppets also custom designs and creates mascot characters for sports teams and corporations such as Blimpie Subs and Salads, New Orleans Hornets, Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines, and Lowe's Motor Speedway.


The company has garnered a number of awards including a "Citation of Excellence" for their adaptation of George Orwell's *Animal Farm* and their original story called *Bathtub Pirates*. They were also awarded the North Carolina Theatre Conference's Award for leadership in theatre arts and The Puppeteers of America President's Award for outstanding accomplishment in the art of puppetry. Their television work also has been honored with several awards in the industrial and broadcast categories including a prestigious Beacon Award and the ITVA Silver Reel of Excellence.

Grey Seal puppeteer Drew Allison has co-authored two books on polyfoam puppet construction, *The Wit and Wisdom of Polyfoam Puppet Construction* and *The Foam Book*.

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