



Upper Elementary | Performance Guide



Walton Arts Center



Alice In Wonderland

A tardy rabbit, a grinning cat, along with Alice and the rest, are brought to life by Théâtre Tout à Trac. This new adaptation of Lewis Carroll's 19th century classic story, Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, unites actors and puppets to show Alice's journey down the rabbit hole. A whimsical stage set, conceived as a pop-up book, and beautiful costumes richly evoke the original illustrations by John Tenniel. This production was a winner of Canada's Acadie-RIDEAU Award in 2008.

Common Core Learning Standards:
CC5 RL: Key Ideas and Details 2 and 3; Craft and Structure 6; Integration of Knowledge and Ideas 9. CC5W: Research to Build and Present Knowledge 8. CC5 SL: Comprehension and Collaboration 1. CC5L: Knowledge of Language 3b. Arkansas Learning Standards in Visual Arts.

Ready, Set, Show!



The Book

Published in 1865, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* was written by Lewis Carroll, a pseudonym for Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, and was originally titled, *Alice's Adventures Under Ground*. Carroll grew up in England, the eldest of ten children. He had a natural ability to engage children. From youth, Carroll loved entertainment and the imagination, but was also a serious student. As an adult, he taught mathematics at University of Oxford, where he met Alice Liddell, the young daughter of the Dean of his College. Alice was the inspiration behind many of the details of the character in the book. Carroll invented the tale while on a picnic. When an unexpected rain storm occurred, his storytelling was inspired to take on an even more nonsensical tone than usual. Alice loved the story and begged Carroll to write it down.

The Performance

This production of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* was conceived by Théâtre Tout à Trac, an award winning theater company based in Montreal, Canada. Playwright, Hugo Bélanger's script is inspired by Carroll's story. His adaptation presents a unique reading of the classic, faithful to the spirit of the original tale, with the freedom, comedy and word play of the original. The production uses masks, puppets and a clever stage setting to create an imaginative Wonderland and its cast of memorable characters, the harried White Rabbit, Humpty Dumpty, the pipe-smoking Caterpillar, Tweedledee and Tweedledum, the mysterious Cheshire Cat, the Mad Hatter, the Snark Hunter and the highhanded Queen of Hearts. The play is performed in English in a translation from the French, by Maureen Labonté.

The Artists

Since 1998, Théâtre Tout à Trac has created theatre by adapting classic tales and using their skills in masks, movement and puppetry. Théâtre Tout à Trac strives to create theatre that embraces imaginary lands, vivid characters and dreams. The company tours throughout Canada and the US performing in French and English.

The Humor

Both the original book and the performance use humorous devices including puns and nonsensical humor to engage the audience. Ask students to look for and compare different types of comedy in the performance.

> **A Pun** is a play on words; the humorous use of a word or phrase to suggest its different meanings. Puns can use words that are alike or nearly alike in sound but different in meaning. Alice invents puns with Humpty, but is irritated by the Door's puns.

> **Nonsense humor** is comedy that is based on the humor of foolish or absurd conditions. The audience experience departs from the expected and is engaged by creativity and unpredictability.

> **Comic business** or **sight gags** are traditionally called, *lazzi*. This word has been used since the 16th century and comes from the comic business of commedia dell'arte.

Learning Activities

Entering Wonderland

Write the word “Wonderland” in large letters and ask students if they have ever heard of it. While some students might be familiar with the title of Lewis Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, others may have different associations. Tell students that there is a book called *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, written more than a hundred years ago (1865) by a man who called himself Lewis Carroll. This book was based on a world created from imagination.

Ask students :

- >What is a Wonderland? Is it a place (like, for example, Disneyland)?
- > Why does the name of this place include the word “wonder”?

Ask the children to close their eyes, think about and imagine Wonderland.

- > Talk to your neighbor about what they see, hear, smell.
 - > Plan a description of the parts of your Wonderland.
 - > Ask students to write about their Wonderland.
 - > Create a visual picture of their Wonderland by drawing the world, or an element of it, such as a favorite character.
- Discuss the value of imagination and exploring possibilities.*

Student reflections can include language about:

- > How do the students feel in their Wonderland?
- > Would they like to visit Wonderland? Why or why not?

Vocabulary

- >Vindictive: inclined to revenge; vengeful.
- >Waxwork figures: an effigy or statue (usually of a famous person) made of wax.
- >Mad: Mentally disturbed; deranged; insane.
- >Exaggerate: to magnify beyond the limits of truth; overstate.
- >Point of view: an opinion, attitude, or judgment.
- >Prevention program: a program designed to keep something from occurring;
- >Complications: something that introduces some difficulty, problem or change in a story.
- >Maelstrom: a large, powerful whirlpool.
- >Audacity: boldness or daring, especially disregard for personal safety, conventional thought, or other restrictions.
- >Contrite: showing sincere remorse.



Let the Pun Begin!

Ask students to create their own puns, just as Alice does with Humpty Dumpty in the play. Show examples of homonyms and discuss where the “play on words” is. Which words have two meanings? What are the meanings? Which pun do you find funniest? Why?

Examples:

- >Sir Lancelot once had a very bad dream about his horse. It was a knight mare.
- >I used to be twins. My mother has a picture of me when I was two.
- >I work as a baker because I knead dough.

Research examples in literature that contains puns and share with the class. Ask students to work in pairs and brainstorm words or phrases that they know that have more than one meaning. Find a word or words that sound similar to others. Have the students write a funny pun using homonyms or imaginative phrases. Here are some word suggestions to help get them started:

- >Taiwan (tie one)
- >Appeal (a peel)
- >Lettuce (let us)
- >Seasons (salt and pepper or Holiday)
- >Well (water source or feeling)
- >Sew/so

Ask students present their puns to the class. And let the laughter and learning begin!
schools@waltonartscenter.org / www.waltonartscenter.org

Compare and Contrast

Visit the websites below to gather images from various interpretations of the book. Ask students to look carefully at depictions of Alice, the Queen, the Cheshire Cat and the White Rabbit. Ask the students to compare and contrast the different interpretations of these characters to those in the play.

What are the similarities? What are the differences? Which interpretation of the characters is your favorite? Why? How do the costumes express the characters' personalities? Who is your favorite character? Why? Which character(s) would you most like to meet? Why?

Predict

Now that students are familiar with the characters and the world of possibilities in Wonderland, offer them this writing prompt: Predict what happens the next time Alice follows the White Rabbit into his world. How does she get there? Who does she meet? Are there new characters? What happens on her journey? How will she make friends in the new world? Could she live in Wonderland forever?

Learn more online

>Electronic version online

<http://www.cs.indiana.edu/metastuff/wonder/wonderdir.html>

>Site dedicated to the story: historical origins, author information, original illustrations, etc

<http://www.alice-in-wonderland.net/>

>Official website of Lewis Carroll Society of North America

<http://www.lewiscarroll.org/>

>Large illustrations by Arthur Rackham, 1907

<http://www.bugtown.com/alice/>

>Images from the 1951 Disney movie

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0043274/>

>Images from the Tim Burton film

<http://movies.yahoo.com/photos/movie-stills/gallery/1864/alice-in-wonderland-stills#photo0>

Volume 9 Number 4

Colgate Classroom Series performances help students meet Arkansas Learning Standards.

Learn more at:
www.waltonartscenter.org

Walton Arts Center

Learning & Engagement

Laura Goodwin, *Vice President*

Dr. Patricia Relph, *Arts Learning Specialist*

Katie Williams, *Coordinator*

Walton Arts Center 2011-2012 Learning programming is generously supported by these funders, sponsors and benefactors:

Colgate-Palmolive

Crayola®

Edy's Grand Ice Cream

J.B. Hunt Transport, Inc.

Kimberly-Clark

Prairie Grove Telephone Co.

Procter & Gamble

Pruitt Tool Company

Shibley Motor Co.

Tyson Foods, Inc.

Education Grantors:

Arkansas Arts Council

The John F. Kennedy Center
for the Performing Arts

Walmart Foundation

Education Partners:

Crystal Bridges Museum of
American Art
NWAESC

Education Benefactors:

Ted & Leslie Belden

Dr. J.B. & Rachel Blankenship

David & Tina Bogle

Ann & Gene Bordelon

Joel & Lynn Carver

Carolyn & Nick Cole

Joanie & Jon Dyer

Michael & Susan Duke

Joanie & Jon Dyer

Malcolm & Ellen Hayward

Johnelle Hunt

Pat Parsons

Mark & Lynn Richards

Mary Lynn Reese

The Rose Family

Jeff & Eileen Schomburger

Kenneth & Debra Senser

Jack & Mechelle Sinclair

David & Candace Starling

Jerry & Brenda Walton

Jim & Lynne Walton

John & Kitten Weiss

**Season support provided by
Walmart / SAM'S CLUB**