



Lower Elementary | Performance Guide



Walton Arts Center

Harold and the Purple Crayon: *A Dance Adventure*



Harold creates his world by simply drawing it. This adaptation of Crockett Johnson's beloved Harold and the Purple Crayon picture book, puts Harold's curiosity in motion and reveals the relationship between wonder and wander. Dancers from Hubbard Street 2 perform to music by indie-musician Andrew Bird, to remind us how much of life is experienced in the imagination.

Common Core Learning Standards:
CC2 RL: Key Ideas and Details 1, 2 and 3;
Craft and Structure 5 and 6; Integration of
Knowledge and Ideas 9. CC2W: Research
to Build and Present Knowledge 8. CC2
SL: Comprehension and Collaboration 1,
2 and 3. CC2L: Knowledge of Language
3a; Vocabulary Acquisition and Use 6.
Arkansas Learning Standards in Theatre,
Music, Visual Arts and Dance.

Ready, Set, Show!



Photo credit: Todd Rosenberg. Dancer Jamal Rashann Callender in

The Book

Generations of readers have read the classic 1955 picture book by Crockett Johnson. The adventures of the four year old boy, named Harold, and his inventive, whimsical purple crayon have led students and families to laugh, wonder and re-read the book. The character of Harold appeals because the little boy creates his own world through his imagination. Harold inspires audiences to reflect on their own creative and problem solving abilities. The story's popularity has inspired many adaptations.

The Dance

Crockett Johnson's original story has been adapted into a short film, an animated film, a television series, a theatrical performance, a computer game and an interactive program for iPad. Adapting a picture book into modern dance was a creative opportunity. Artists with Hubbard Street 2 choreographed Harold's adventures to share in live performances for children and families. Hubbard Street 2 choreographers and dancers saw the parallel between Harold creating his own world by drawing it, and dancers creating their own world through dance movement in space.

The Company

Hubbard Street 2 is the educational troupe from Hubbard Street Dance Chicago. Choreographers, Terence Marling and Robyn Mineko Williams explored Harold's adventure with music, movement and innovative design. They collaborated with composer, Andrew Bird, who worked to match the squiggles of Harold's purple crayon with squiggles in the sound of violin strings. The choreographers created familiar and fanciful images and movement for six young dancers, who perform Harold's adventures in solos, duets, trios and ensemble. Each dancer shows a special quality of Harold's character through their movement choices.

The Performance

The hour long, interactive performance, invites children to help create Harold's next adventure inspired by dance and movement. The performance uses instrumental music by Chicago composer, Andrew Bird. Ryan Wineinger's scenic design of the dance uses light and projections based on Johnson's familiar solid purple line drawings. The dancers invite audiences to air-sketch or clap a rhythm with the dance. The world premier of *Harold and the Purple Crayon: A Dance Adventure*, was at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in 2010.

Learning Activities

Tableau

Invite your class to become part of a performance art troupe to tell the story of *Harold and the Purple Crayon* through the art form of tableau.

Tableau (tab-BLO) is short for the French, *tableau vivant* (tab-BLO vi-VAHNT) which means “living picture.” A tableau is a representation of a dramatic scene by a person or group, posing silently without moving. In art, tableaus can be seen in the theater when a stage picture shows silent, still, costumed actors in poses. In dance concerts, dancers remain motionless for a moment to create a still picture in contrast to movement. In films or community performances, a group of actors might imitate a famous painting, biblical or historical scene. Use tableau to tell stories that students have read, and imagine what *could have happened* in the story.

Working in four student groups create ten tableaus of the story.

Perform

Tableau I : The entire group shows the beginning of the story. The title of the book will be recited and someone narrates the tableau so the audience understands how the story begins.

Tableau 2: Group I shows the part of the story with the forest (apple tree) and monster. Someone narrates the tableau so the audience understands this event.

Tableau 3: Group I then shows another setting and character Harold *could have* imagined. Someone narrates the tableau so the audience understands the event.

Tableau 4: Group 2 shows the part with the picnic, the moose and the porcupine. Someone narrates the tableau so the audience understands this event.

Tableau 5: Group 2 then shows another picnic with other foods and characters Harold *could have* imagined. Someone narrates the tableau so the audience understands the event.

Tableau 6: Group 3 shows the part with the mountain and hot air balloon. Someone narrates the tableau so the audience understands this event.

Tableau 7: Group 3 then shows another location Harold *could have* created his window. Include a way for Harold to “get away” from that location. Someone narrates the tableau so the audience understands the event.

Tableau 8: Group 4 shows the city of windows. Someone narrates the tableau so the audience understands this event.

Tableau 9: Group 4 then shows another environment Harold *could have* drawn that is filled with windows. Someone narrates the tableau so the audience understands the event

Tableau 10: The entire group shows the ending of the story. Someone narrates the tableau so the audience understands this event.

The Performance must meet these criteria:

- > Include every person.
- > Be audible and expressive.
- > Maintain concentration and determine focal points.
- > Be no longer than 5 minutes in length.

Visual Essay

Visual Essay uses a visual medium like collage to show student understand of text or a concept. Visual essay allows students to tell a story with a picture.

The Visual Essay contains:

- > Story idea or topic / theory.
- > Characters or main elements.
- > Setting or location.

Create

Create a visual essay that depicts elements from each major event in the story Harold and the Purple Crayon. Events can be embellished with extensions of other things Harold could have imagined as well. Some events were:

- > Harold draws the moon.
- > Harold draws a forest (apple tree) with monster.
- > Harold draws a picnic with a moose and a porcupine.
- > Harold draws a mountain to climb and falls off. He catches himself with a hot air balloon.





Photo credit: Todd Rosenberg. Dancers Yarinest Restrepo, Nicholas Korkos and Katie Scherman in *Harold and the Purple Crayon: A Dance Adventure* by Terence Marling and Robyn Mineko Williams.

Reflect and Assess After the Performance

Ask students to consider each question, record their answers then share their responses as a class.

- > What did you think about? What part(s) of the production do you remember? What questions do you have?
- > Describe the characters. Who were they? What were they doing? Why?
- > What did you already know about Harold and his crayon before the performance? What do you know now?
- > If you were in the performance, how would you play each of the characters? Why would you perform them that way?
- > How did the scenery help tell the story? What sounds did you hear?
- > How did the performance make you feel?
- > What moment in the performance do you remember most?

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Colgate Classroom Series performances help students meet Common Core Standards.

Learn more at:
www.waltonartscenter.org

Walton Arts Center Learning & Engagement

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