Clara & the Nutcracker

By
Anne McEvoy

Directed by
Alison Garrigan

Teacher Resource Guide
About Talespinner Children’s Theatre

Talespinner Children's Theatre is a Cleveland-based company that develops and produces highly imaginative, original, collaborative and interactive professional works for children that also stimulate creative growth in its artists. At any time, these pieces may involve acting, dance, music, puppetry, tumbling, drumming, and numerous other artistic disciplines as imagined by the artistic teams working with and for TCT, and are open to all creative possibility. TCT's aim is to bring theatre to the community in its fullest form providing excitement, growth and joy for all who are involved in and/or touched by its work.

Talespinner Children's Theatre strives to reach across socio-economic, cultural and traditional boundaries to help awaken and bring better understanding by opening eyes, ears, hearts and imaginations in the young people (and artists) of Cleveland and its surrounds.

TCT creates work that remembers that children are smaller people, not lesser people.

What to expect when seeing a live theatrical production at Talespinner Children’s Theatre

Going to see a live theatrical performance can be very exciting. It is very different from going to a movie or watching a story on TV. In a movie, the story is always exactly the same. In live theater, the story can be just a little bit different each time because there are live performers sharing their work with the audience. Each performance is special and unique and made just for you, the audience, to take home with you and relive in your memory.

In our theater, The Reinberger Auditorium, the actors are very close to the audience. They can see and hear the audience just as well as you can see and hear the actors. This means that we want to make sure that we don’t distract the actors with side conversations with our neighbors, unwrap candy, or play with electronic devices. We want to make sure that the actors can concentrate on stage to give you their best performance. However, this doesn’t mean that we don’t want you to enjoy the production you are seeing and to react to the excitement on stage. If something makes you laugh, go ahead and laugh! If you really like something that you see, it’s okay to clap for the actors. Actors love to hear applause. Sometimes our actors will even need help from the audience to figure out what to do next. You can be a big help to our production by participating when the actors ask you a question or give you a task to do from your seat in the audience.

In this production we will be using many different elements of theater including music, dance, puppetry, costumes, make-up, sound, lighting and scenery. It takes many people to put together a production like this, and we are excited that you are going to be part of our experience today. If you have any questions about anything that you see today, hold onto the questions until the end of the production and we will bring the actors out to talk to you when the play is over. Enjoy your visit to Talespinner Children’s Theatre!
About Talespinner Children’s Theatre
What to expect when seeing a live theatrical production at Talespinner Children’s Theatre

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Alison Garrigan
Executive Artistic Director

Ali is a long-time professional in the theatre who has worked locally, regionally, and nationally as an actress, director, designer, puppet-maker, and teacher. She became dedicated to creative, intelligent and playful children’s theatre in her late teens, and has returned to work with children and students frequently throughout her career. Her professional work in the Cleveland area has been seen and produced at such venues as Cleveland Public Theatre, Cleveland Institute of Music’s Opera Stage, Beck Center for the Arts, Dobama Theatre, and Great Lakes Theatre, to name a few. No stranger to starting up a new company, she was one of the original members/board of the critically acclaimed Bad Epitaph Theater Company. Alison has always felt that children’s theatre needs to be intelligent, creative, playful, and educational, and should engage every aspect of its audience, and its artists — minds, eyes, ears, hearts, imaginations… and energy.
About the Playwright

Anne McEvoy

Clara & the Nutcracker is the second play Anne has penned for Talespinner Children’s Theatre. The first play Magic Flute, an adaptation, was written for the inaugural season. This Fall Anne was honored at Talespinner Children’s Theatre’s Harlequinade 2014 for her contributions and support.

Anne’s most recent appearances as an actress include Nurse Ratched at Blank Canvas Theatre and Cleveland Public Theatre’s world premiere of Ancestra (multiple roles) and in Deena Nyer Mendlowitz’s Funnel Cakes Not Included (Deena). Earlier this season, Anne was seen in Dobama’s The Big Meal (Woman #1) and has also worked at Actors’ Summit, Beck Center, Cleveland Play House, Cleveland Shakespeare Festival, Great Lakes Theatre, Karamu, the NaCl Theatre, NY, and Ohio Shakespeare Festival.

About E.T.A. Hoffmann

Ernst Theodor Amadeus Hoffmann was born January 24, 1776 and died June 25, 1822 at the age of 46. He was a German author, composer, music critic and artist. He is best known for his novella The Nutcracker and the Mouse King for which the ballet The Nutcracker is based. During the 19th century, Hoffman was known as a major writer of fantasy and horror during the Romantic Movement. Not only did his stories influence ballets, Hoffman’s stories were influential in the creation of other artistic genres such as music and theater. As a writer he was known as a pioneer of the fantasy genre that tended toward the gruesome and influenced famous authors like Edgar Allan Poe, Charles Dickens, and even Alfred Hitchcock.
About the Play

The play *Clara & the Nutcracker* is inspired by the novella *The Nutcracker and the Mouse King*, written by E.T.A Hoffmann. Included in this guide is the plot summary for the original story by Hoffmann, which later became the source for the music and ballet titled *The Nutcracker*. The original story is too long to be included in this guide but can be found on-line and free to the public, in several places by using a search engine and entering the title of the novella.

**An excerpt from the novella *The Nutcracker and the Mouse King* by E.T.A. Hoffmann which expresses Hoffmann’s innate understanding of a child’s imagination and ability to comprehend complex stories.**

"Tell me, dear Lothair," said Theodore, "how you can call your 'Nutcracker and the King of the Mice' a children's story? It is impossible that children should follow the delicate threads which run through the structure of it, and hold together its apparently heterogeneous parts. The most they could do would be to keep hold of detached fragments, and enjoy those, here and there."
"And is that not enough?" answered Lothair. "I think it is a great mistake to suppose that clever, imaginative children--and it is only they who are in question here--should content themselves with the empty nonsense which is so often set before them under the name of Children's Tales. They want something much better; and it is surprising how much they see and appreciate which escapes a good, honest, well-informed papa. Before I read this story to you, I read it to the only sort of audience whom I look upon as competent critics of it, to wit, my sister's children.
Hoffmann's story begins on Christmas Eve at the Stahlbaum house. Marie, seven, and her brother Fritz, eight, sit outside the parlor speculating about what kind of present their godfather Drosselmeyer, who is a clockmaker and inventor, has made for them. They are at last allowed into the parlor, where they receive many splendid gifts, including Drosselmeyer's, which turns out to be a clockwork castle with mechanical people moving about inside it. However, as they can only do the same thing over and over without variation, the children quickly tire of it. At this point, Marie notices a nutcracker, and asks whom he belongs to. Her father tells her that he belongs to all of them, but that since she is so fond of him she will be his special caretaker. Marie, Fritz, and their sister Louise pass him among them, cracking nuts, until Fritz tries to do one that is too big and hard, and the nutcracker's jaw breaks. Marie, upset, takes him away and bandages him with a ribbon from her dress.

When it is time for bed, the children put their Christmas gifts away in the special cabinet where they keep their toys. Fritz and Louise go up to bed, but Marie begs to be allowed to stay with the nutcracker a while longer, and she is allowed to do so. She puts him to bed and tells him that Drosselmeyer will fix his jaw as good as new. At this, his face seems momentarily to come alive, and Marie is frightened, but she then decides it was only her imagination.

The grandfather clock begins to chime, and Marie believes she sees Drosselmeyer sitting on top of it, preventing it from striking. Mice begin to come out from beneath the floor boards, including the seven-headed Mouse King. The dolls in the toy cabinet come alive and begin to move, the nutcracker taking command and leading them into battle after putting Marie's ribbon on as a token. The battle at first goes to the dolls, but they are eventually overwhelmed by the mice. Marie, seeing the nutcracker about to be taken prisoner, takes off her shoe and throws it at the Mouse King, then faints into the toy cabinet's glass door, cutting her arm badly.

Marie wakes up in her bed the next morning with her arm bandaged and tries to tell her parents about the battle between the mice and the dolls, but they do not believe her, thinking that she has had a fever dream caused by the wound she sustained from the broken glass. Drosselmeyer soon arrives with the nutcracker, whose jaw has been fixed, and tells Marie the story of Princess Pirlipat and Madam Mouserinks, who is also known as the Queen of the Mice, which explains how nutcrackers came to be and why they look the way they do.
The Mouse Queen tricked Pirlipat's mother into allowing her and her children to gobble up the lard that was supposed to go into the sausage that the King was to eat at dinner that evening. The King, enraged at the Mouse Queen for spoiling his supper and upsetting his wife, had his court inventor, whose name happens to be Drosselmeyer, create traps for the Mouse Queen and her children.

The Mouse Queen, angered at the death of her children, swore that she would take revenge on Pirlipat. Pirlipat's mother surrounded her with cats which were supposed to be kept awake by being constantly stroked, however inevitably the nurses who stroked them fell asleep and the Mouse Queen magically turned Pirlipat ugly, giving her a huge head, a wide grinning mouth, and a cottony beard like a nutcracker. The King blamed Drosselmeyer and gave him four weeks to find a cure. At the end of four weeks, he had no cure but went to his friend, the court astrologer.

They read Pirlipat's horoscope and told the King that the only way to cure her was to have her eat the nut Crackatook (Krakatuk), which must be cracked and handed to her by a man who had never been shaved nor worn boots since birth, and who must, without opening his eyes hand her the kernel and take seven steps backwards without stumbling. The King sent Drosselmeyer and the astrologer out to look for the nut and the young man, charging them on pain of death not to return until they had found them.

The two men journeyed for many years without finding either the nut or the man, until finally they returned home and found the nut in a small shop. The man turned out to be Drosselmeyer's own nephew. The King, once the nut had been found, promised Pirlipat's hand to whoever could crack it. Many men broke their teeth on it before Drosselmeyer's nephew finally appeared. He cracked it easily and handed it to Pirlipat, who swallowed it and immediately became beautiful again, but Drosselmeyer's nephew, on his seventh backward step, stepped on the Queen of the Mice and stumbled, and the curse fell on him, giving him a large head, wide grinning mouth, and cottony beard; in short, making him a nutcracker. The ungrateful Pirlipat, seeing how ugly he had become, refused to marry him and banished him from the castle.

Marie, while she recuperates from her wound, hears the Mouse King whispering to her in the middle of the night, threatening to bite the nutcracker to pieces unless she gives him her sweets and dolls. For the nutcracker's sake, she sacrifices her things, but the Mouse King wants more and more and finally the nutcracker tells Marie that if she will just get him a sword, he will finish him off. She asks Fritz for a sword for the nutcracker, and he gives her the one from one of his toy hussars. The next night, the nutcracker comes into Marie's room bearing the Mouse King's seven crowns, and takes her away with him to the doll kingdom, where she sees many wonderful things. She eventually falls asleep in the nutcracker's palace and is brought back home. She tries to tell her mother what happened, but again she is not believed, even when she shows her parents the seven crowns, and she is forbidden to speak of her "dreams" anymore.

As Marie sits in front of the toy cabinet one day, looking at the nutcracker and thinking about all the wondrous things that happened, she cannot keep silent anymore and swears to him that if he were ever really real she would never behave as Pirlipat did, and she would love him whatever he looked like. At this, there is a bang and she falls off the chair. Her mother comes in to tell her that Drosselmeyer has arrived with his nephew. The latter takes Marie aside and tells her that by swearing that she would love him in spite of his looks, she broke the curse on him and made him human again. He asks her to marry him. She accepts, and in a year and a day he comes for her and takes her away to the doll kingdom, where she is crowned queen and eventually marries him.
The Classic Christmas Story Ballet

The origin of the Nutcracker, a classic Christmas Story, is a fairy tale ballet in two acts centered on a family’s Christmas Eve celebration. Alexandre Dumas Père’s adaptation of the story by E.T.A. Hoffmann was set to music by Tchaikovsky and originally choreographed by Marius Petipa. It was commissioned by the director of Moscow’s Imperial Theatres, Ivan Vsevolozhsky, in 1891, and premiered a week before Christmas 1892. Since premiering in western countries in the 1940s, this ballet has become perhaps the most popular to be performed around Christmas time. The story centers on a young girl’s Christmas Eve and her awakening to the wider world and romantic love. The composer made a selection of eight of the more popular pieces before the ballet’s December 1892 premiere, forming what is currently known as the Nutcracker Suite, Op. 71a, as is heard in Moscow Ballet productions. The suite became instantly popular; however, the complete ballet did not achieve its great popularity as a Christmas performance event until almost 100 years later.

Moscow Ballet’s version of the Nutcracker ballet, known as the “Great Russian Nutcracker,” includes other unique elements in the telling of the traditional holiday tale. In the Moscow Ballet version, the setting is in Moscow and the city’s famous onion-domed skyline is featured as a backdrop. Traditional Russian folk characters Ded Moroz (Father Christmas) and Snegurochka (Snow Maiden) escort Masha and the Nutcracker Prince to their dream world in Act II.

Composition History

Tchaikovsky accepted the commission from director of Moscow’s Imperial Theatres, Ivan Vsevolozhsky. While composing the music for the charming Christmas story, Tchaikovsky is said to have argued with a friend who wagered that the composer could not write a melody based on the notes of the octave in sequence. This resulted in the Grand Adage from the Grand Pas de Deux of the second act where Clara/Masha dances with her magical Christmas present, the Nutcracker Prince. Among other things, the score of The Nutcracker is noted for its use of the celesta, the featured solo instrument in the “Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy” from Act II.
Images from The Nutcracker Ballet

The Moscow Ballet  wordpress.com

The Mariinsky Ballet  rogovoyreport.com

San Jose Ballet  Cleveland.com

Clevelandbanner.com  Tennessee Youth Ballet

Ventura County Ballet Company  filmoregazette.com
HISTORY OF NUTCRACKERS....

From: http://www.nutcrackermuseum.com/history.htm  Leavenworth Nutcracker Museum

- Nuts have been a significant part of the food supply since the beginning of time, and over the years, man has created ingenious ways to open the shells.
- Excavations of early civilizations have revealed nutshells that were probably broken by stones when too hard for the teeth to crack. Pitted stones used for cracking nuts have been found in various parts of the United States and Europe and have been dated back to the Archaic Period, 4,000 to 8,000 years ago. These nomadic peoples would camp near the nut trees when it was time for the nuts to fall. Kernels were eaten whole or ground to make flour or nut butters.
- The oldest known metal nutcracker dates to the third or fourth century B.C. and is shown in a museum in Tarent, Italy. The Leavenworth Nutcracker Museum shows a bronze Roman nutcracker dated between 200 B.C. and 200 A.D. It was found in 1960 after being buried for over 1800 years.
- Iron lever nutcrackers are shown in the Ironworks Museum in Rouen, France with some dating back to the 13th century, and brass nutcrackers are known to have existed in the 14th and 15th century. At first these metal nutcrackers were hand wrought, but in later centuries, hot metals were poured into molds. England became famous for its brass production and produced many nutcracker styles, and the United States was known for its cast iron products.
- The first wooden nutcrackers were simply two pieces of wood fastened together by a leather strap or metal hinge. By the 15th and 16th century, wood carvers in France and England were creating beautiful wooden nutcrackers. They used the wood from their locality, but preferred boxwood because of its fine grain and uniform color. Many of these delicately carved nutcrackers can be seen in the Leavenworth Nutcracker Museum.
- By the 18th and 19th Centuries carvers in Austria, Switzerland and northern Italy were producing many carved nutcrackers in the likeness of animals and humans.
- The screw nutcrackers did not appear until the 17th century and at first these were simple in structure. However, it was not long before artisans were carving and shaping intricate designs.
- Standing wooden nutcrackers in the form of soldiers and kings were shown in the Sonneberg and Erzgebirge regions of Germany by 1800 and in 1830, the term “Nussknacker” appeared in the dictionary of the Brothers Grim. It was defined as “often in the form of a misshaped little man, in whose mouth the nut, by means of a leaver or screw, is cracked open”. In 1872 Wilhelm Füchtner, known as the “father of the nutcracker,” made the first commercial production of nutcrackers using the lathe to create many of the same design. The Leavenworth Nutcracker Museum shows an 1880 miner of Wilhelm Füchtner along with a miner presently made in the Füchtner family workshops.
- Today many wooden toy soldier nutcrackers are manufactured in Germany to meet the demands of the many collectors in the United States. This interest is renewed each year by the many productions of the Nutcracker Ballet. Collectors can now find designs in the characters from the ballet as well as hundreds of other designs.
NUTCRACKER FOLKLORE

From: http://www.magicofnutcrackers.com/Nutcrackers/HistoryofNutcrackers.htm

- According to German folklore, nutcrackers were given as keepsakes to bring good luck to your family and protect your home. The legend says that a nutcracker represents power and strength and serves like a trusty watch dog guarding your family from evil spirits and danger. A fierce protector, the nutcracker bares its teeth to the evil spirits and serves as the traditional messenger of good luck and goodwill.

"Don’t be afraid, my beard is long, my head is large, my look is grim but that matters not. I won’t bite you. In spite of my big mouth and grim appearance, I look with my heart for your happiness."

- “Nutcrackers embody the ‘Cycle of Life’, As the seed of a nut falls to the ground, it grows into a strong tree, living over hundreds of years nourishing the woodcutters and woodcrafters. The legends tell of a feast celebrated just before harvesting the logs of the Elder trees, where nuts and fruits were eaten as if to pass on the magic and mystery of this eternal cycle . . . and so on to the collectors of these exquisite wooden nutcrackers.

Writers, composers and artists sang and danced the praises of the legend of the Nutcracker beginning with the novel “The Nutcracker and the King of Mice,” written sometime between 1776 and 1822, by E.T. Amadeus Hoffman. This novel became the basis for Tchaikovsky’s magnificent “Nutcracker Suite”, which debuted as a ballet in St. Petersburg in 1892 and lives on as a holiday tradition throughout the world.
Great Reads and More

BOOKS

*Nutcracker* Hardcover—October 30, 2012
by E.T.A. Hoffmann(Author), Maurice Sendak(Illustrator), Ralph Manheim

*The Nutcracker* Hardcover—September 25, 2007
by Susan Jeffers (Author, Illustrator)

*The Story of the Nutcracker Ballet* (Pictureback)
Paperback—September 26, 2006
by Deborah Hautzig (Author) Diane Goode (Illustrator)

*The Nutcracker* Hardcover—October 14, 2010
by Alison Jay(Illustrator)

*The Nutcracker* (Little Golden Book)Hardcover—September 9, 2014
by Rita Balducci(Author), Sheilah Beckett(Illustrator)

by Geraldine McCaughrean(Author), Kristina Swarner(Illustrator)

*The Nutcracker* Hardcover—September 18, 1999
by Janet Schulman (Author) E. T. A. Hoffmann (Author) Renee Graef(Author)

DVD’s

*George Balanchine’s Nutcracker*
Darci Kistler(Actor), Damian Woetzel(Actor), Emile Ardolino(Director)& 0 moreRated: G (General Audience)Format: DVD

*Nutcracker: The Motion Picture*  Hugh Bigney(Actor), Vanessa Sharp(Actor), Carroll Ballard(Director)
Rated: G (General Audience)Format: DVD

*The Nutcracker: The Untold Story*
Elle Fanning(Actor), Nathan Lane(Actor), Rated: PG (Parental Guidance Suggested)Format: DVD

CD’S

*Tchaikovsky: The Nutcracker - Complete Ballet*  Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky(Composer), Valery Gergiev(Conductor), Kirov Orchestra and Choir(Orchestra)Format: Audio CD

*Nutcracker Soundtrack* (London Symphony)
P.I. Tchaikovsky(Artist)Format: Audio CD

*Nutcracker Suite* (Royal Philharmonic)
Tchaikovsky’s Nutcracker(Artist)Format: Audio CD
Make Your Own Snowflake Ballerina Garland

Craft design from krokotak.com

The Mariinsky Ballet from rogovoyreport.com
Instructions:

Draw a ballerina figure from the template. Fold ballerina figure in half on the dotted line and cut.

For the skirt, fold 3 times then cut like a snowflake. You can use any variety of shapes.

After the skirt has been cut out, fold it in two and make a slip to insert the ballerina. Unfold only when the figure is already in place. You can string several ballerinas together to make a beautiful garland.

Ventura County Ballet Company from filmoregazette.com
Coloring Pages
Toilet Paper Tube Nut Cracker

For more creative learning ideas check out www.makinglearningfun.com
Cardboard Tube Nutcracker Puppet

Cardboard tubes can be turned into puppets that can be fun to make and even more fun to play with after.

**Supplies:**

- Pattern (Left)
- Crayons, markers or colored pencils
- Scissors
- Cardboard tube

**Instructions:**

- Print out the Nutcracker pattern.
- Color your nutcracker and then cut out.
- Glue to cardboard tube. Fold arms on the dotted line before gluing.
- Have fun creating your own playtime activity.

This craft is reprinted courtesy of [MakingLearningFun.com](http://MakingLearningFun.com).
Nutcracker Paper Bag Craft

To make puppet, glue head & mouth pieces to bottom and side of a paper bag as shown.

Found on jimgamble.com
Recycled Percussion

Here are several ideas to make your own percussion instruments at school or at home.


Drums

Using a coffee can, Quaker Oatmeal box or Pringles can, you can create a unique drum with a different sound depending on shape and size. Decorate a piece of construction paper and wrap it around an old coffee can with a lid. Secure construction paper with tape or glue. Use your hands for drumming or use a set of homemade mallets. Make several different kinds and create a drum set.

Mallets

Using 2 pencils and 2 used spools of thread, glue 1 spool to 1 pencil and repeat. Paint the homemade mallets to use with your drums.

Shakers

Using small or large plastic used pop bottles or Pringles can, fill each bottle with rice and beans. Secure with cap. Cover with decorated construction paper or paint the bottle with vibrant paint colors.

Rain Sticks

Using a mailing tube, Pringles can or paper towel tube, cover one end with a lid or construction paper and masking tape to make it secure. Cut slits in sides of tube big enough for a small popsicle stick. Fill tube with rice. Slide popsicle sticks into the slits. Secure the other end with construction paper and masking tape or lid. Decorate.

To make rain sound, slowly tip tube from one end to the other letting the rice hit the popsicle sticks as they fall to the bottom.

Tambourines

Using two paper plates, staple the two fronts together. Use a hole punch to punch holes around the outside of the plates. Tie a bell to a short piece of yarn and tie to the holes in the plates. Secure bells with a knot. Decorate.
Theater, Music, Movement and Art Activities for the Classroom
These Activities can be adjusted for all ages for the Elementary School Classroom

Theater

Sensory Walk

Start with students in a circle. Create a calm and quiet atmosphere and dim the lights if possible. Tell students this is a quiet exercise where they will be using their imaginations not their voices. Ask students to listen to the sound of your voice and quietly begin to move about the room. Ask students to respect each other’s personal space as they move about the room. Begin feeding the students images and have them act out the image as they move about the space. For example: You are walking through a forest. It is sunny and warm. How do you feel? Is the sun warm on your face? What do you see? Are there flowers in the grass? What do you hear? Are there birds singing a pretty melody? Etc. Continue feeding the students images and continue to get them to act out what they experience as they walk about the room.

You may use a story or piece of literature as inspiration for the sensory walk.

When the exercise is done, bring students back to circle and debrief the exercise by asking about their experience while doing the exercise.

Mirror Exercise

Students are paired up and each pair is spread around the classroom. Ask one student in each pair to be player A and one person to be player B. Tell students this is a silent exercise. Have player A and B face each other. Player A begins as the leader and Player B must follow. Explain to students that they are looking into a mirror and seeing an exact mirror image of themselves. They are to follow the leader’s movements exactly. Ask the leader to move slowly. Ask students to maintain eye contact and try to match their movements so that the teacher cannot tell who is leading and who is following. After a time, switch so that B is the leader and A is following.

When the exercise is done, bring students back to circle and debrief the exercise by asking about their experience while doing the exercise.
Theater Activities Continued

**Pass the Prop**
Students gather in a standing circle. The teacher selects a prop such as a piece of fabric or a foam noodle. The prop is passed to each student in the circle. As each student receives the prop, they must come up with a way to use the prop as another object. For example: a piece of fabric is passed to student A and they create a baseball bat with it. Student B creates a lawn mower with the fabric. Student C creates a megaphone with the fabric. Each student must show how their prop is used and the rest of the students may guess what the object is supposed to represent.

**Cross the Room**
Divide the students into two lines facing each other at opposite ends of the room. Each line takes a turn crossing to the other side of the room. The teacher calls out what each line is crossing as. For example: Cross the room as if you were 2 years old. Now cross the room as if you were 16 years old. Now cross the room as if you were 30 years old. Now cross the room as if you were 60 years old. Now cross the room as if you were 100 years old.

Different categories can be explored depending on the story or theme that the students are working on. You might use types of animals if you are working on fables. You might use characters from a fairy tale such as a prince, queen, peasant, etc.

**One Word Story**
Students begin in a sitting circle. The teacher begins the story with one word. The object of the exercise is to create a full story with each student only speaking one word at a time. Students must complete full sentences that make sense and the story must have a beginning, middle and an end. Go around the circle in the order that the students are sitting in. The teacher may side coach if necessary to help decide where the sentences end or the story itself ends. Example of prompting might be “and now we need a conflict, and now we need to resolve the conflict, and now we need to bring our story to an end”. Encourage students to use descriptive adjectives to make the story more interesting.
Theater Activities Continued

Write Your Own Story to Perform

The teacher sits students either on floor or in desks all facing the teacher. The teacher helps guide students in creating a short play by using their suggestions. The teacher can make a copy of the form on page 24 or use the dry erase/smart board to create story. The teacher starts by asking who the characters are in the story. Get about five characters. Decide what lesson should be learned or what you would like to explain about how the world works or what adventure your gods, goddesses and heroes will undertake. Next, under opening of story, create a setting (where does the story take place, why are the characters at this place). Under 1st incident, come up with a conflict which is counter to the lesson to be learned using two of the characters. Next using another character, come up with another complication or conflict which makes it even harder for the lesson to be learned. Repeat for the subsequent complications. Next, find a resolution from the conflicts that lets the characters resolve the story. Create a title for the story. The teacher should read back the story adding exciting details to make the story come alive.

For older students you may divide them in groups of 3-5 and have students come up with their own unique story. Then have students gather/create props, costumes and scenery for their story, rehearse the stories as a play and perform them for each other. This may be divided into multiple lesson days.

Example of Story Line

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title:</th>
<th>Little Red Riding Hood</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lesson to be Learned:</td>
<td>Listen to your parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characters:</td>
<td>Little Red, Mother, Father, Grandmother, Wolf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opening:</td>
<td>Little Red’s mother is giving her a basket of food for her grandmother but cautions her to not to talk to strangers as she crosses through the woods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Incident</td>
<td>A Wolf calls out to Little Red to stop for a while and chat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Complication</td>
<td>Little Red stops and talks to the wolf and tells him that she is on her way to grandma’s house</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Complication</td>
<td>The Wolf gets to grandma’s house first and gobbles up grandma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Complication</td>
<td>Little Red gets to grandma’s house and discovers that the wolf is dressed as grandma and wants to gobble her up too.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resolution</td>
<td>Little Red screams and her father who is nearby chopping wood comes and chops the wolf up and rescues Little Red and Grandma.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Music Activities

Sound Garden
Teacher gathers students in a sitting circle. Teacher explains that each student needs to come up with a unique sound. It can be singing a note, making noises with the mouth, snapping, clapping, anything that they like as long as they can produce the sound using their own voice and/or body. Students then lay down in the circle with their heads all pointing to the center of the circle and their feet to the outside of the circle. Teacher instructs students to close their eyes and one at a time add their unique sound to the circle. When all have added their sound, the teacher can side coach students to listen to the new sound that the class has created. The teacher can end the exercise when all students have had a chance to participate. This can be repeated with students choosing a new sound.

When the exercise is done, bring students back to circle and debrief the exercise by asking about their experience while doing the exercise.

Vocal Orchestra
Arrange students in a group facing the teacher. Teacher asks each student to create a vocal sound that is unique to the student. If teacher points to student, they must continue making their sound until teacher gives them a stop signal. Teacher conducts students as if they were an orchestra bringing students into the orchestra at the same time, bringing small groups at the same time, having single students bringing their sound in. Teacher can use dynamics of louder, softer, faster, slower, to help direct orchestra.

When the exercise is done, bring students back to circle and debrief the exercise by asking about their experience while doing the exercise.

Pass the Rhythm
Arrange student in a circle. Teacher claps out a rhythm and passes it to the student on the right. The student must then clap the same rhythm and pass it to the next student. This continues as each student claps out the rhythm and passes it to the next student until it has gone all the way around the circle. The teacher increases the difficulty of each rhythm pattern.

To make this exercise into a game students must clap the exact rhythm pattern or they will be eliminated and must sit in the middle of the circle. The last student standing is the winner.

When the exercise is done, bring students back to circle and debrief the exercise by asking about their experience while doing the exercise.
Movement Activities

Pass the Movement

The teacher gathers students in a standing circle. The teacher comes up with a gesture or movement that is simple enough for all of the students to do. The teacher begins by showing the students the movement. The teacher then passes the movement to the student next to them. Each student in turn, passes the movement to the next person in the circle. The teacher challenges the students to receive the movement exactly as they received the movement and pass the movement on in the same way.

Variation: Instead of passing the movement to the student next in order, the teacher may use the movement that they have created to move across the circle, continuing the movement as they travel and pass the movement to the student across the circle. Each student in turn must pass the movement to someone across the circle, using their movement to propel them across the room. The teacher should make sure that each student has a chance to participate.

When the exercise is done, bring students back to circle and debrief the exercise by asking about their experience while doing the exercise.

Sculptures

The teacher stands at the front of the room and spreads out the students in 4 lines facing the front of the classroom. Have lines 2 and 4 take one step to the right or left so that all students can see the teacher and the teacher can see all students. The teacher creates a calm, quiet space and tells students that this is a quiet exercise and that each student must respect each other’s personal space. Dimming the lights and/or adding music can help to create the right mood. The teacher asks the students to close their eyes and the teacher gives the students a word. Students are asked what image comes to mind when they hear that word. Students are then asked to open their eyes and using their body, create a frozen sculpture of that word. Students are encouraged to use their hands, arms, legs, facial expressions. Students are encouraged to try new levels. Once students find their position, they are asked to freeze so that the teacher can view the sculpture garden.

You can add many levels to this exercise, depending on the age of the class. Students can work in pairs to create their word. Students can work in groups to create their word. The teacher can give students a series of words and have each group of students perform each word sculpture one after another so it looks as if it is a dance or story.

The teacher can also use phrases from texts of literature that they are working on to create longer, sculpture movement stories. Sculpture words from *Aesop’s Pirate Adventure* are included on page 23.
Art Activities

**Design your own Mask**

The Ancient Greeks used masks in their theatrical productions. Masks can hide or reveal our true selves and masks can also help actors create or delineate characters.

Teachers can create mask templates using their own designs or find design templates on-line for coloring or to create actual masks for students to decorate and wear. Teachers can also find mask making supplies in local craft stores. Decorate with crayons, markers, paints, feathers, beads, sequins and anything else you can think of. Use yarn or elastic to tie masks on students.

**Create your own Puppet**

Puppets also date back to ancient civilizations and were also very popular during the Renaissance.

Puppets are great for story telling in the classroom. Puppets can be made out of socks, lunch bags, clothes pins, gloves, tongue depressors, paper and much, much more. Puppet templates can also be found at your local craft store.

**Make Your Own Percussion Instruments**

See page 21 for Recycled Percussion

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**Sculpture Words for *Clara & the Nutcracker***

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Angels</th>
<th>Doctor</th>
<th>Nutcracker</th>
<th>To Dance</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apple Dumpling</td>
<td>Doll</td>
<td>Papa</td>
<td>To Dream</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballerinas</td>
<td>Fritz</td>
<td>Presents</td>
<td>To Give</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballet</td>
<td>Fruitcake</td>
<td>Princess</td>
<td>To Listen</td>
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<tr>
<td>Book</td>
<td>Gifts</td>
<td>Queen</td>
<td>To Play</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bugle</td>
<td>Gingerbread</td>
<td>Royal Clockmaker</td>
<td>To Read</td>
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<tr>
<td>Candy cane</td>
<td>Hobby Horse</td>
<td>Slippers</td>
<td>To Receive</td>
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<tr>
<td>Castle</td>
<td>King</td>
<td>Snow</td>
<td>To Sing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cats</td>
<td>Kingdom</td>
<td>Snowflake</td>
<td>To Sleep</td>
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<td>Christmas Joy</td>
<td>Magic</td>
<td>Stage Hands</td>
<td>Toy Soldiers</td>
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<td>Mama</td>
<td>Sword</td>
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<td>Mice</td>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>Toyshop</td>
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<tr>
<td>Crumb Cake</td>
<td>Mouse King</td>
<td>To Battle</td>
<td>Uncle Drosselmeyer</td>
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<td>Mousetrap</td>
<td>To Celebrate</td>
<td>Wizards</td>
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<tr>
<td>CONCLUSION</td>
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</table>
Writing Activities after seeing *Clara & the Nutcracker*

**For Younger Students**

1. Make a list of qualities that are needed to be a good friend or a good sibling.
2. Draw two columns on a piece of paper. In the first column, list reasons why it is important to be thankful for the gifts you receive. In the second column, list times when you forgot to thank others for the gifts they gave you.
3. As a group, think about what it would be like to be a in a magical kingdom. Write a song about your experience. Then create a dance that demonstrates your magical experience. Perform as a class.
4. Pick a character from *Clara & the Nutcracker* and draw a picture of the character. Next to the picture, list 5 words that describe that character.
5. Draw a self-portrait. Write 5 words that describe your best character traits.
6. Draw two columns on a piece of paper. List the character traits from question # 4 in one column and list your traits from question # 5 in the second column. Compare the traits.

**For Older Students**

1. Pick a character from the production of *Clara & the Nutcracker*. Write a series of diary entries for each day describing the character’s journey through the play. Start each page with Dear Diary, then write about your day from a first person’s point of view, as if you were really the character having these adventures.
2. Create a Newspaper. Divide students into groups and have each student write a story for their group newspaper. The stories should center around adventures to a magical land or should be about Clara and her family during the holidays. Students may use pictures or illustrations to make their newspaper come to life.
3. With a partner, students write a song or poem that describes a fantasy battle with toys and mice. Students create movements to go with the song or poem. Students practice then perform for the class. Students may add costumes and props to make it more exciting.
4. Divide students into small groups. Students think about an inanimate object that might come to life through magic. Students write a story about how this object came to life. Students rehearse and perform play. Students may add props and costumes if desired. (use page 24 activity and page 28 template)
5. Have students write a play review of *Clara & the Nutcracker*. Talk to students about what it means to critique a play. Have students write about what they liked best and what they might change. Students may include favorite actors, moments in the play, costumes, sets and music.
Discussion Questions after seeing *Clara & the Nutcracker*

These questions can also be used as Writing Prompts

1. Clara and Fitz receive gifts special gifts in Clara & the Nutcracker. What is the best give you have ever been given? What makes it so special? What is it like to be the gift giver?
2. Some great stories are told during Clara & the Nutcracker. Why do we tell stories? How important is storytelling in today’s world? What types of stories do you like to hear the most? What are favorite stories that you like to tell the most?
3. Clara learns to be brave from the Nutcracker. What is the bravest thing you have ever done? What is courage? Where do we find courage?
4. Clara finds a friend in the Nutcracker. What are the type of qualities you look for in a friend? What are ways in which you try to be a good friend? What is the best adventure that you have shared with a friend?
5. The Nutcracker is a leader of the toys. What qualities does it take to be a good leader? Who do you know that displays good leadership qualities?
6. At the end of Clara & the Nutcracker, the Nutcracker tells Clara that everyone has some imperfection. What are your imperfections? How do you celebrate not being perfect?
7. Clara & the Nutcracker takes place during the Holidays. What are your favorite activities to do with your family during the Holidays? Are there activities that you celebrate every year? What are the Holiday traditions that are important for your family every year? Why are they important?

Can’t get enough of Talespinner Children’s Theater for your students? Invite us out to your classroom for a personal workshop!
Theater Glossary from Ohio Academic Content Standards

**dra-mə \ˈdräm-\ the-a-ter \ˈthe-.tər\ n** : a formal or informal process where the drama/theatre experience (process) is tantamount to the performance (product); drama: plays, dramatic literature and the works of authors providing literal dramatization of life; theatre: production activities—acting, directing, designing, scene construction, operating and managing—in synthesis for performance.

**Action** The unfolding events of a drama.

**Actor** A performer in a dramatic/theatrical work.

**Art forms** Forms (structures) germane to the fine arts—dance, drama/theatre, music and visual art.

**Audience** Those who participate in drama as spectators.

**Basic acting skills** Abilities such as changing voice, posture, movement and language, that are fundamental to creating a character in a dramatic/theatrical work.

**Block** To determine the placement and movement of actors in a dramatic/theatrical work.

**Cast** To assign the parts or roles of a play to actors (verb); the actors in a dramatic/theatrical work (noun).

**Character** One of the people within a dramatic/theatrical work; the part or personality an actor portrays.

**Choreographer** One who arranges or directs the movements and details of a dance or other performance.

**Conflict** The struggle between opposing forces that brings about the action in a dramatic/theatrical work or story; can be internal (within a character) or external (between a character and an outside force).

**Costume designer** A person who designs costumes.

**Critique** To evaluate a work (verb); an evaluation of a work (noun).

**Design components** Components such as clothing, props, sound or lighting that create the environment for a dramatic/theatrical work.

**Dialogue** A conversation between two or more characters in a work that is used by writers to give insight into the characters themselves.

**Director** The person responsible for making decisions about the artistic interpretation and presentation of a dramatic/theatrical work.

**Dramatization** Events or actions presented in a dramatic manner or for theatrical presentation.

**Elements of theatre** The ingredients of dramatic/theatrical activity including space, time, imitation, action, language and energy.

**Exposition** The information given to the audience about the characters and setting of a play.

**Improvisation** The spontaneous, unscripted use of words and actions to create a character or represent an object.

**Lighting designer** A person who plans the lighting.

**Makeup designer** A person who designs an actor's makeup.

**Monologue** A scene written for one actor in which the actor speaks aloud to him/herself, to another character or to the audience.
Theater Glossary from Ohio Academic Content Standards (Continued)

Mood  The feeling or atmosphere that a writer creates for a reader; a reflection of an author's attitude toward a subject or theme; the feeling or atmosphere created by a dramatic/theatrical work.

Pantomime  Acting without speaking.

Playwright  A person who writes plays.

Plot pyramid  A sequence of events that includes rising action, climax, falling action and resolution.

Presentational Theatre  Works of drama in which the audience is recognized, perhaps by actors speaking directly to the audience.

Production staff  Persons responsible for the design and production of a dramatic/theatrical work.

Prompt  A cue or suggestion for action.

Properties master  A person who selects props.

Props  From the word properties. The objects used on stage to enhance the believability of characters and action.

Reflection  The process of thinking about one's own thinking, thought processes and actions or products.

Resolution  The point in a dramatic/theatrical work when the main conflict is resolved.

Scenic designer  A person who designs the setting.

Script  Written dialogue and directions for a dramatic work.

Setting  Time and place of the action of a dramatic/theatrical work; the scenery used to represent a time and place.

Sound designer  A person who plans sound effects.

Stage directions  Directions in a script written to tell how to perform the action on stage.

Stage manager  A person responsible for maintaining the stage.

Tableau  A scene or picture depicted by silent and motionless actors.

Technical crew  A group of people responsible for technical aspects of production such as sound and lighting.

Technical elements  Components, such as scenery, sound, lighting, costume design, props and makeup, which are used to develop setting, action and characters in dramatic/theatrical works.

Theme  Meaning or message of a literary or dramatic work.

Time period  A time period recognized for its distinct characteristics. In drama, recognized historical time periods include Origin, Greek/Roman, Medieval, Renaissance, Restoration, 17th Century, 18th Century, 19th Century, 20th Century and Contemporary.

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