

2015-2016

DISCOVERY



Resource Guide

Charlotte's Web



Written by Joseph Robinette
Based on the book by E.B. White
Set Design by James D. Dandefur
Costume Design by Anne-Marie Wright
Incidental Music by Jeffrey Lunden
Music Director- Jeff Biering
Stage Manager- Danielle Thomsen
Directed by Kevin Del Aguila

APRIL 22, 2016

9:30 & 11:30 A.M. • VICTORIA THEATRE

The Frank M. *Cait* FOUNDATION
Discovery Series

**VICTORIA
THEATRE**
ASSOCIATION
www.victoriatheatre.com



Welcome to the 2015-2016 Frank M. Tait Foundation Discovery Series at Victoria Theatre Association. We are very excited to be your partner in providing professional arts experiences to you and your students!

The story goes that on one early fall morning in Maine in 1949, E.B. White walked into his barn and noticed that a spider had spun a web. Mr. White realized that in addition to the intricate designs inside the web, this spider was weaving an egg sac. In October, with the spider long gone, Mr. White carefully cut out this egg sac, put it in a candy box with air holes, and took it to New York where it was placed on a shelf in his bedroom to be quickly forgotten. Several weeks later, to his surprise, the spiderlings hatched and began to escape through the tiny air holes. He decided to leave them alone to spin their webs throughout his place. That is until his housekeeper complained! In 1952, a few years after this experience, his masterpiece about time, true friendship and mortality, was published.

The information and activities in this resource guide have been carefully crafted to help you and your students explore the many ways a “page to stage” experience can open up learning opportunities. Grade level icons will help you determine which activities are good for students, too. And don’t forget to take advantage of the local resources listed inside to extend the play-going experience and make even more curricular connections for you and your students. Thank you again and welcome!



Gary Minyard
Vice President of
Education & Engagement

You will find these icons listed in the resource guide next to the activities that indicate curricular connections. Teachers and parents are encouraged to adapt all of the activities included in an appropriate way for your students’ age and abilities. *CHARLOTTE’S WEB* fulfills the following National and Ohio State Standards and Benchmarks for grades 2-6:

English/Language Arts Standards

- Grade 2-** CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.2.1, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.2.2, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.2.3, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.2.4, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.2.5, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.2.6
- Grade 3-** CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.3.3, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.3.5, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.3.6
- Grade 4-** CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.4.2, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.4.3, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.4.5, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.4.6, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.4.7
- Grade 5-** CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.5.2, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.5.3, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.5.5, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.5.6
- Grade 6-** CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.3, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.5, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.6, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.7

Ohio Department of Education Drama/Theatre Standards

- Grade 2-** 1CE-7CE, 1PR-3PR, 1RE-6RE
- Grade 3-** 1CE-5CE, 1PR-6PR, 1RE-5RE
- Grade 4-** 1CE-6CE, 1PR-7PR, 1RE-5RE
- Grade 5-** 1CE-5CE, 1PR-5PR, 1RE-5RE
- Grade 6-** 1CE-5CE, 1PR-5PR, 1RE-7RE

National Core Arts Theatre Standards:

Grades 2-6:
CREATING, PERFORMING, RESPONDING,
CONNECTING Anchor Strands 1-11

For more information on the National Core Arts Theatre Standards [click here](#)

Ohio’s New Learning Standards for Social Studies

Civic Participation and Skills (Grades 2-6)

This resource guide was created by Elaine Stoughton. All activities are available for distribution and use in the classroom or at home.

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About the Play

Charlotte's Web

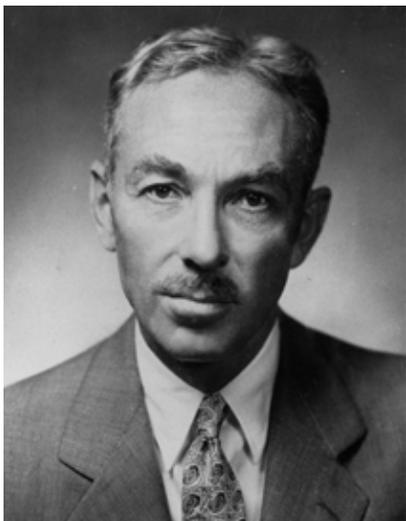
The play you are about to see is based on E.B. White's classic book, *Charlotte's Web*, which has been read by generations of children since it was first published in 1952.

The story opens on a farm with the birth of a litter of pigs. The farmer, Mr. Arable, is about to destroy the tiniest one, or the "runt," but is stopped by the pleading of his young daughter, Fern. She takes over the bottle-feeding and special care required for such a small pig—whom she names Wilbur. Under her care Wilbur grows healthy and strong. Now that he is growing, Mr. Arable decides he must sell him. Fern is devastated, but eventually the pig is sold to her uncle Homer Zuckerman. The Zuckerman farm is just down the road so Fern can visit Wilbur anytime she wants.

On the Zuckerman farm, Wilbur meets many new animals like Goose and Gander, Sheep, and Templeton the Rat; however, without Fern around all the time he starts to feel lonely. One night, a voice grants his wishes and promises to be his friend. The next morning, Wilbur discovers that voice came from a beautiful grey spider named Charlotte. Although Wilbur is uncertain of their new friendship at first, he soon learns that Charlotte is his loyal and true friend when she devises a plan to save him from the inevitable trip to the slaughterhouse. Through her talent at weaving words into her intricate webs, Charlotte saves the day and Wilbur's life in the process—proving that true friendship comes in all forms.

About the Author:

E.B. White's graceful and highly individual style of writing has made him one of America's most memorable and prolific essayists and short-story writers. Elwyn Brooks White was born on July 11, 1899, in Mt. Vernon, New York. He was the youngest of six children. Early in life he realized that in order to be noticed by his family, writing was his best option. After graduating from Mt. Vernon High School in 1917, he enrolled at Cornell University. While at Cornell he began to strengthen his writing skills and took a job as a reporter and writer for the *Cornell Daily Sun*. By the end of his junior year he was selected as Editor-in-Chief. Also while at Cornell, E.B. White was given the nickname "Andy" by a friend, and that name would stick for the rest of his adult life.

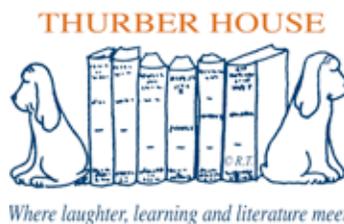


After graduating from Cornell in 1921, White travelled through the United States and Europe, writing stories for various newspapers and working odd jobs to save up enough money to travel to his next destination. In 1927 he moved to New York City where he began writing essays and other pieces for *The New Yorker*. In 1929 he married Katherine Angel, who also worked as a writer for magazines in New York. Their first son, Joel, was born the next year in 1930. In 1938 the White family moved to North Brooklyn, Maine, to live on a farm. He maintained close ties with *The New Yorker* and contributed a monthly column, "One Man's Meat" to *Harper's Magazine*. While living on his farm, White wrote two of his most popular books: *Stuart Little* and *Charlotte's Web*. Both books brought him numerous honors and awards. In 1963 White received the Presidential Medal of Freedom from President John F. Kennedy. He remained on his farm in North Brooklyn writing books for children and adults until he passed away in 1985.

Ohio Spotlight

E.B. White started writing short stories at a very young age. Did you know that budding young authors can visit The Thurber House in Columbus, Ohio? **The Thurber House** is a not-for-profit literacy center and museum. It was named for its most famous resident, James Thurber, humorist, author, and cartoonist for *The New Yorker*. **In fact, James Thurber and**

E.B. White were friends and both worked for the same magazines! The Thurber House hosts a variety of writing workshops for adults and children including the Young Writers' Studio, Writing Wizards, Fable and Ghost Writing workshops, a an 8-week summer camp. For more information, please visit www.thurberhouse.org.



Pre-Show Conversation Starters



Charlotte's Web is widely regarded as one of the greatest children's books ever. In fact, in 2015 the BBC voted it the Most Popular English-language Children's Book of all time. It's very likely that you have already read *Charlotte's Web* at school or at home. If you haven't, be sure to familiarize your students with the plot and characters before you attend *CHARLOTTE'S WEB* at the Victoria Theatre. Use the following questions and conversation starters for thoughtful dialogue with your students before you come to the theatre.

1. Making a new friend can be difficult and even a little scary, but it is something that everyone will experience. Ask students to remember a time when they were in a new situation surrounded by people they did not know. Ask students to reflect on that situation:

- How did you feel?
- Were the people around you kind and welcoming or mean and unfriendly?
- How did that affect your attitude?
- Why can it be scary to meet new people and make new friends?
- Why is it important to welcome others when they are in a new situation?

2. Read the following passage from *Charlotte's Web* about first impressions:

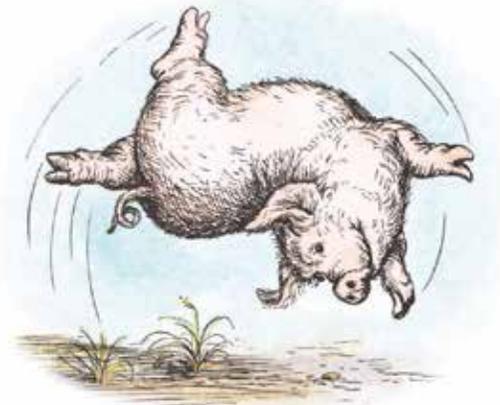
"Charlotte stood quietly over the fly, preparing to eat it. Wilbur lay down and closed his eyes. He was tired from his wakeful night and from the excitement of meeting someone for the first time. A breeze brought him the smell of a clover—the sweet-smelling world beyond his fence. "Well," he thought, "I've got a new friend all right! But what a gamble friendship is! Charlotte is fierce, brutal, scheming, bloodthirsty—everything I don't like. How can I learn to like her, even though she is pretty and, of course, clever?"

Discuss the passage with students:

- Did you ever have an experience like this, in which you thought a person was mean or scary or strange at first but later you found out that he or she was nice?
- Can you learn to like someone you originally disliked?
- What happens when people draw conclusions based on first impressions?

3. Keeping a friend is as important as making one. What are some things that you can do to be a good friend today? Make a chart on the board of ways to **make** a new friend and ways to **keep** a friend.

4. The story of *Charlotte's Web* takes place on a farm and at the State Fair. Have you ever visited the fair? Do you or anyone you know live on a farm? How is it different than living in the city? If any of your students live on a farm or participate in 4-H have them share some of their experiences.



COMPREHENSION

Spiders in Ohio



Spiders don't have to be scary!

Did you know that Ohio is home to almost 600 different species of spiders! The most common spider families in our state are:

- Orb Weavers—Araneidae (also Aranea)
- Ground Spiders—Gnaphosidae
- Sheet Web Weavers—Linyphiidae
- Wolf Spiders—Lycosidae
- Jumping Spiders—Salticidae
- Cobweb Weavers—Theridiidae
- Crab Spiders — Thomisidae



Ohio Wolf Spider

For many people the word **spider** brings to mind terrifying images, but in reality most spiders are harmless to humans and many are beneficial to us!

What type of spider is Charlotte?

She gives us a clue when she introduces herself: **Charlotte A. Cavatica**

The middle initial—**A**—stands for Charlotte's middle name: Aranea. This comes from the Latin language, since Aranea is the scientific name for spiders that weave orb-webs.

Cavatica—Charlotte's last name—comes from the Latin word cavus (which means pit or hole). Spiders like Charlotte prefer to spend their lives in shady places... like you might find in a barn.

At the time E.B. White was working on writing *Charlotte's Web*, the scientific name for barn spiders found in New England (like Charlotte) was Aranea Cavatica. Today, these spiders are called Araneus Cavaticus.

Spider Walk

What are spiders truly like? In *Charlotte's Web*, the spider Charlotte is kind, supportive, understanding, and likeable. However, in everyday life many people are scared of spiders.

Encourage your students to have a better understanding and appreciation of spiders by leading an investigation of discovery on a Spider Walk.

Use the table on the next page and lead your students on a walk through school property. If there isn't a lot of outside play area at your school, have the students complete the chart with a parent at home or take a trip to a local park. It shouldn't take long to come across a spider or two. After the Spider Walk, have students share their observations with the class.



CONNECTION

NAME: _____



Spider Walk Worksheet

On your walk, focus on finding different types of spiders and their unique habitats. Use the Spider Chart to record your findings by using words or pictures.

Describe the spider's appearance (color, size, markings):	Describe where you found the spider:	Describe the spider's web, if any:	What was the spider doing?	What was in the web, or what was the spider carrying?

Charlotte was a spider with beautiful personality. Giving human traits to animals in literature is called PERSONIFICATION. Use your favorite spider from the chart above and write a short story about the spider by assigning personality traits and characteristics.

CONNECTION

Adjectives to Describe

ENGLISH/
LANGUAGE
ARTS



Wilbur was Some Pig!

As you will learn, Charlotte the Spider has a way with words. In fact, her impressive vocabulary plays a big role in the second half of the play. Charlotte has many words to describe Wilbur. Words that describe a noun are called **adjectives**. Take a look at the list below of words you will hear during the play. Then read the definition, and use the blanks to think of another word that has a similar meaning.

Runt	An animal that is smaller than average	Tiny
Weakling	An animal that is physically weak or frail	_____
Injustice	A lack of fairness	_____
Slop	Food fed to farm animals	_____
Trifle	A thing of little value or importance	_____
Glutton	An excessive, greedy eater	_____
Salutations	A formal greeting	_____
Brutal	Savagely violent	_____
Bloodthirsty	Eager to shed blood	_____
Unremitting	Never slackening or relaxing	_____
Dud	A thing that always fails to work properly	_____
Hysterics	A widely emotional reaction	_____
Radiant	Shining or glowing brightly	_____
Schemer	A person involved in underhanded plans	_____
Hankering	A strong desire to have or do something	_____
Charitable	Assisting those who are in need	_____
Gander	A prolonged look or glance	_____
Distinguished	Successful and commanding great respect	_____

CONNECTION

Friendships on the Farm

ENGLISH/
LANGUAGE
ARTS



At the end of *Charlotte's Web*, Wilbur is amazed when Charlotte does something wonderful for him. When he asks her why she says, "You have been my friend... that in itself is a tremendous thing."

There are many examples of friendship in *Charlotte's Web*. If you have read the book, feel free to complete this worksheet before you attend *CHARLOTTE'S WEB*, if not then come back and complete it after the show!

1. The Goose is a friend to Templeton when she lets him have the rotten egg.

2. _____ is a friend to _____ when _____
_____.

3. _____ is a friend to _____ when _____
_____.

4. _____ is a friend to _____ when _____
_____.

5. _____ is a friend to _____ when _____
_____.

6. _____ is a friend to _____ when _____
_____.



E.B. White was inspired to write *Charlotte's Web* while working on his farm. "One day when I was on my way to feed the pig, I began feeling sorry for the pig because, like most pigs, he was doomed to die. This made me sad. So I started thinking of ways to save a pig's life. I had been watching a big grey spider at her work and was impressed by how clever she was at weaving. Gradually I worked the spider into the story that you know, a story of friendship and salvation on a farm. Three years after I started writing it, it was published."

CONNECTION

Spin your own Web



When Wilbur gets in trouble, Charlotte the Spider tries to save the day by writing adjectives that describe Wilbur in her web. She writes things like, "Some Pig," "Terrific," "Radiant," and "Humble. These words all describe Wilbur's personality and show that he is one special farm animal.

Teachers—Pair your students into groups of two. Allow each student to "interview" the other. After the interviews, have each student pick an adjective that describes their partner best. What are some words you would use? Here are some examples:

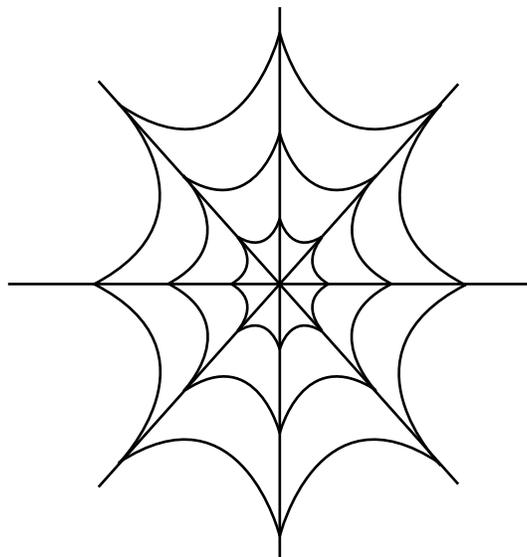
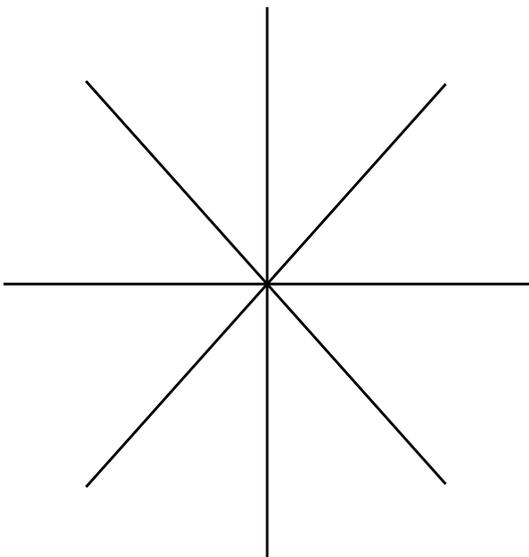
- Funny
- Happy
- Kind
- Silly
- Nice
- Brave

Now create your own glitter web and fill it the adjectives you chose!

Supplies Needed:

- Black Construction Paper
- Liquid School Glue
- Loose glitter
- Old Magazines or Newspapers

To draw your spider web start out by drawing a series intersecting lines on the paper. Then draw curved lines between each. Next, go through the magazines or newspapers and find words that describe your interview partner. Cut them out and place them aside.



Working quickly, squeeze a thin line of glue on your pencil markings to create the web. Carefully stick your words to the web and cover the rest of the glue with glitter. When dry, hang up the classroom webs for all to see!

CREATIVITY

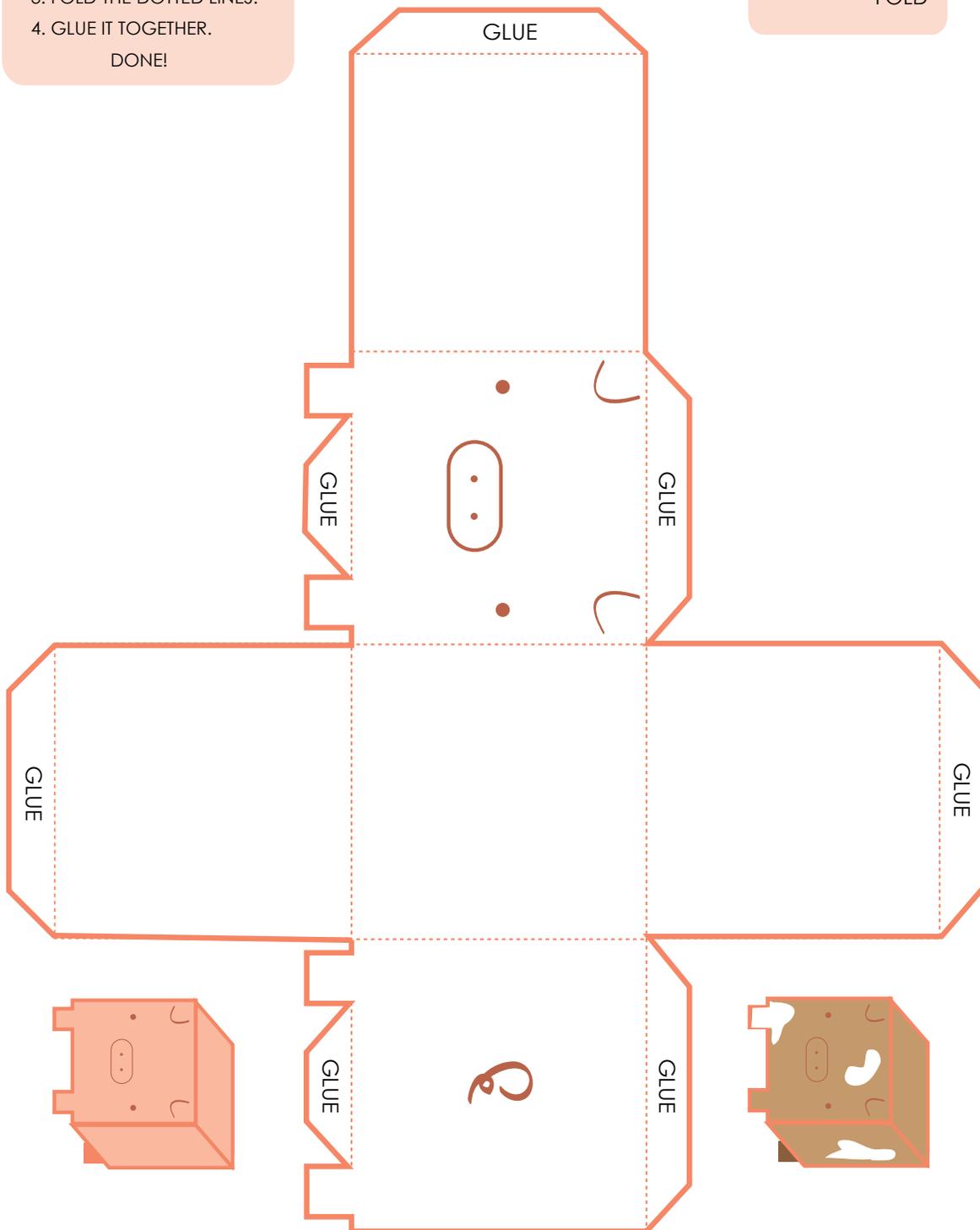
Make a Desktop Wilbur!



Is your desk as messy as a barn? Use the paper template below to create a Wilbur that can sit on your desk!

1. COLOR THE TEMPLATE.
2. CUT ON THE BOLD LINES.
3. FOLD THE DOTTED LINES.
4. GLUE IT TOGETHER.
DONE!

- CUT
- FOLD



CREATIVITY

Resources for Students & Adults

Additional books by E.B. White:

Stuart Little, 1945.

The Trumpet of the Swan, 1970.

Publications for Teachers and Parents:

Organic Creativity in the Classroom: Teaching to Intuition in Academics and the Arts, Written by Jane Piirto. Prufrock Press: 2013.

Nurturing Creativity in the Classroom, Edited by Ronald A. Beghetto and James C. Kaufman. Cambridge University Press: 2010.

Signs of Change: New Directions in Theatre Education, Written by Joan Lazarus. Intellect Ltd; Revised and Amplified Edition: 2012.

Theatre for Change: Education, Social Action, and Therapy, Written by Robert Landy and David T. Montgomery. Palgrave Macmillan: 2012.

Play: How it Shapes the Brain and Invigorates the Soul, Written by Stuart Brown and Christopher Vaughn. Harvard University Press: 2009.

Websites:

<https://www.scholastic.com/charlottesweb/>: Explore Zuckerman's Farm, the State Fair, make your own comics, and more! This website contains games, activities, and a behind the scenes look at the making of the film version of Charlotte's Web.

<http://www.harpercollinschildrens.com/HarperChildrens/kids/gamesandcontests/features/charlottesweb/default.aspx>: This website features information on E.B. White as well as more classroom and at home activities for students who love Charlotte's Web.

<http://gws.ala.org/category/literature-languages>: The American Library Association has compiled a comprehensive database of the best literature and language websites just for children. Here students can learn more about new authors, other languages, how to be a better writer, and more. Perfect for budding young authors and readers!

<https://www.victoriatheatre.com/education-engagement/about-education/>: During the 2014-2015 Season, the Education & Engagement Department at Victoria Theatre Association hosted over 200 events and worked with over 100,000 members of the Dayton community. That's a lot! Stay up-to-date on exciting information like Summer Camps, Free Master Classes, Adult Education Opportunities, Backstage Tours, and more!

<http://www.americansforthearts.org/>: American's for the Arts is another great website full of research and information about the importance of Art in the classroom. Check out their amazing reports, and then use #ArtsTransform to share your personal stories.

Victoria Fuse's Local Resource Discovery

Want to experience Farm Life right here in Dayton? Visit Aullwood Audubon Center and Farm and see their expansive farm and nature center. In 1957, Dayton resident Marie Aull donated 70 acres of land to the National Audubon Society to create the first nature center in the Midwest. Today the Aullwood Farm and Nature Center has over six miles of trails, as well as different habitats that include a farm, forest, prairie, marsh, and pond. Farm animals include sheep, cows, chickens, horses, and of course, pigs! For more information or to schedule a trip, please visit http://web4.audubon.org/local/sanctuary/aullwood/Farm_1.html



RESOURCES

Brought to you by
VICTORIA THEATRE
ASSOCIATION

138 North Main Street
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The Education & Engagement programs of Victoria Theatre Association are made possible through the support and commitment of The Frank M. Tait Foundation and the following sponsors and donors whose generosity have opened the door of live theatre to the students of the Miami Valley:

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- KIDS' NIGHT ON BROADWAY



The mission of Theatreworks USA is to create, produce, and provide access to professional theatre for young and family audiences nationwide, including disadvantaged youth and under-served communities. Since our founding in 1961, we have presented more than 90 million children and their families with opportunities to enjoy our theatrical productions in 49 states and Canada. For more information, please visit <http://www.theatreworksusa.org/>



HAPPY 150th BIRTHDAY
VICTORIA THEATRE!

Did you know that on January 1, 2016, The Victoria Theatre turned 150! All year long we are celebrating and we need your help! We are collecting stories from patrons about how attending shows at the Victoria Theatre impacted their lives. If you've been inspired by a Discovery Performance over the years, we want to hear it! Please contact Elaine Stoughton at 937-228-7591, ext. 3039 for information on how to share your story!

DON'T FORGET

All schools that receive scholarships for a show and/or transportation are asked and encouraged to create thank-you letters or cards for our sponsors. Please address your students' thank-you notes to:

DISCOVERY Sponsors
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