



Cinderella

SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE 

Teachers Notes
HOUSE: ED 2010

SUITABILITY

Ages K – 6

DATES

22 – 23 April

Introduction



A. Introduction

These Teacher's Notes have been designed to assist you with classroom preparation and extension work in relation to the production of *Cinderella*. We hope that this resource will assist your students to further enjoy and enhance their performing arts experience back in the classroom. The activities are designed for students from K to Year 6.

The activities included in this resource, provide opportunities for students to explore the broad themes and style of the performance. NSW Board of Studies syllabi have been used as guides for the planning of these activities. You should consider adapting and rephrasing the questions and activities to suit the particular terminology, curriculum foci and outcomes used in your school.

Some websites are suggested throughout this resource. It is recommended that you first visit the sites and assess the suitability of the content for your particular school environment before setting the activities based on these.

B. Classroom Context and Curriculum Links

The Shone Reppe Puppets production of *Cinderella* is an imaginative interpretation of a classic fairy tale. A creative yet simple use of puppetry re-invents both the familiar characters and story while highlighting key themes and messages. *Cinderella* addresses timeless questions about love, justice, optimism and kindness - themes that still have great resonance for audiences today. The entertaining moments in this performance provide rich material for classroom activities and discussions with links to various curriculum areas including:

Music: *Appreciating (listening)*

English: *Listening (language structures and features)*

Visual Arts: *Appreciating*

Drama: *Making, Performing, Appreciating (elements of drama, role)*

C. Performance Event Description and Synopsis

This whimsical and clever performance combines a variety of theatrical techniques to bring the story of Cinderella to the stage. The Shona Reppe Puppets production is a contemporary work that draws on long established European traditions of puppetry and theatrical illusion designed to captivate young audiences. This is a one woman show performed by creator and designer, Shona Reppe. Shona is not only highly skilled as a puppeteer, she demonstrates her own superb acting skills to narrate the story, introduce characters and she plays the role of the fairy god mother. Her precise comic timing, skillful manipulation of puppetry and slight of hand magic tricks are what make *Cinderella* so entertaining and spell-binding. Aided by a wonderful soundtrack and an ingenious set design full of secret drawers, cupboards and other hidden surprises, Shona keeps audience members constantly enthralled. You can read more about this production at the following web link:

Shona Reppe Puppets - Cinderella Reviews

http://www.shonareppepuppets.co.uk/shonareppepuppets/Reviews_Cinderella.html

Pre Performance

Activity One - Cinderella Freeze Frames



Curriculum Links Drama/English

1.1 In this activity, students will work in groups to create a series of freeze frames or tableau to tell the story of *Cinderella*. Begin this activity by getting students to recount the story of *Cinderella* as part of a class discussion. Check to see if there are any different versions of the story. You may have some variations to share with the class. A short animated version of *Cinderella* can be seen on *You Tube* at the following link:

You Tube - *Cinderella*

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hebtX_RMdFw

As a challenge, students may be introduced to different versions of the *Cinderella* story as well as versions developed in a range of cultures. Versions of *Cinderella* and teaching ideas across curriculum areas may be sourced through the following teacher website portal:

<http://www.emints.org/ethemes/resources/S00000849.shtml>

A class discussion could focus on why different versions exist - students may compare and contrast the key features of selected versions of *Cinderella*.

1.2 As a preparation for the group work, ask your students to first work individually to practice acting as some of the characters from *Cinderella*. Encourage your students to emphasise the use of facial expression and body language. Direct students to adopt and hold frozen poses as the following characters:

- Cinderella sitting in the ashes
- One of the step-sisters putting on make up
- The prince finding the glass slipper
- The fairy godmother changing mice into horse
- Cinderella at the ball
- The step-mother scolding Cinderella.

1.3 Divide the class into groups of four or five. Explain that each group is to create a series of freeze frames (no more than six) to tell the story of *Cinderella*. The groups must show the story only in images and cannot use a narrator, movement or voice to explain each image. The body language, use of space and levels should clearly show the moment from the story that the group has chosen to represent.

Allow the groups time to prepare prior to each group presenting their work to the class. Provide encouraging feedback on groups that were able to sustain focus and concentration, had clear and effective use of space and levels and created characters through communicative and accurate body language.



Activity One - Cinderella Freeze Frames - Continued

1.4 If you have access to a computer and data projector show your students the images from the production at the Shona Reppe Puppets website. See the link below:

Shona Reppe Puppets - *Cinderella* Gallery

<http://www.shonareppepuppets.co.uk/shonareppepuppets/Gallery/Pages/Cinderella.html>

Use the following questions to help students reflect on the production images:

- From the images, what type of theatre performance is *Cinderella*?
- What characters can you see in the images?
- How many actors are there?
- Which characters do you think the coloured gloves might be?
- How do you think you might feel or respond to this performance?
- What sort of music might be played during this performance?

Pre Performance

Activity Two - Fairy Tales

Curriculum Links English/Drama/Visual Arts

2.1 Book your students into the school library and/or use the following interactive web links to help your students read as many fairy tales as possible. Some they may already know well, so encourage them to find less well known tales.

Andersen Fairy Tales

<http://andersenfairytale.com/en/main>

British Council - Fairy Tales

<http://www.britishcouncil.org/kids-stories-fairy-tales.htm>

2.2 Students work in groups of four. Each group is to list as many fairy tales as possible from their research and their own knowledge. Each group is to share their list with the class.

Now, ask the class to list some of the common characters in fairy tales. You might like to refer to the animated films *Shrek* and *Shrek II* as an example of how classic fairy tales can be seen in a contemporary fairy tale.

2.3 Students will work in pairs. Each person will take turns sculpting their partner into a fairy tale character. Ask the pairs to name themselves either 'A' or 'B'. The person who is 'A' will be the first sculptor and they will manipulate their partner's physical pose to become a statue of the fairy tale character of the wicked witch. Once the sculptors have finished with their statues, ask all the sculptors to walk through the room so that they can see all the different versions of the fairy tale character. Conduct a general discussion about how these different versions of the character were created - students could identify effective facial expressions, gestures, etc. Once they have done this, they are to return to their partner and swap roles so that 'B' is now the sculptor and 'A' is the clay. Repeat this activity several times asking the class to work on the same character type so that they can observe the different interpretations. Some character types may include the hero, the buffoon, the mentor/helper, royal personage, etc. For the last two turns, ask the sculptors to create a fairy tale character of their choosing. The class attempts to guess who the characters are.

2.4 Students draw, paint or use computer software to create an image of one of their favourite characters from a fairy tale. When they have completed their image, ask them to write three adjectives around their character image that best describe their personality. Display the art works for the class to see.

2.5 As a writing exercise, students to write a letter or diary entry as one of the characters from *Cinderella*. Encourage students to write in the voice of the character by choosing words that reflect something about the character's personality. For example: the step-sisters might use critical words and words that are demanding; or the fairy godmother might use words that are gentle and encouraging. When students have finished their writing, ask them to share their work by either reading their work aloud in character or ask for volunteers to do this for the writers.

Pre Performance

Activity Three - Cinderella Improvisation



Curriculum Links Drama/English/Music

3.1 In this activity, students will use the skills of improvisation to create moments and images related to the story of *Cinderella*. You will need a recording of a waltz for this activity.

As a warm-up, divide the class into pairs. Play the waltz music and ask your students to pretend to be guests at the Prince's ball dancing to the music.

Stop the music. Choose five students to create the clock that strikes midnight, one student to be the prince and one student to be Cinderella. Explain that when you next stop the music all the dancers must freeze and the clock will make twelve chimes. Cinderella must run from the prince but she is not allowed to leave the space and must only run among the dancers. Her aim is to not be caught by the prince before the twelfth chime.

Repeat this game a few times using different volunteers.

3.2 All improvisation requires performers to work together spontaneously and agree with the situation that is created. If your students have not had practice at improvisation before, use this activity to introduce some of the basic skills concerning spontaneity, making offers and yielding, and strategies for avoiding/dealing with blocking behaviours.

Ask students to walk through the space and on your signal ask them to:

- Form groups of five and become the Pumpkin coach
- Form pairs and show the prince trying to fit the glass slipper onto the foot of one of the step-sisters
- In groups of three become the chef and his two assistants preparing food for the royal ball
- In groups of six become the clock that struck midnight
- Individually become Cinderella as she runs from the ball
- In pairs show the fairy godmother giving Cinderella advice
- In groups of three show Cinderella trying to help the step-sisters into their ball gowns
- Individually become the palace messenger and read the invitation to the ball aloud
- In pairs come up with the titles of four self-help books that you think Cinderella must read
- In groups of eight become the other guests at the ball as they dance.

Although the whole class participates in this activity, you can use 'spotlighting' to see some of their work. For example, when the class are working on an improvisation call 'Freeze...spotlight on (point to group)'. Everyone then watches as the group continues to improvise.

3.2 Extend the improvisation work to create scenes. Ask the class to sit facing a performance area. Ask for volunteers to improvise the following scenes for the class:

- The fairy godmother helps Cinderella prepare for the ball
- Cinderella's step-mother gives Cinderella chores to do
- The prince gives his messenger the task of finding the girl who wore the glass slipper
- Cinderella dances with the Prince and he tries to find out who she is
- The step-mother and step sisters arrive at the ball and expect everyone to look at them.

Post Performance

Activity Four - The Ballad of Cinderella

Curriculum Links English

4.1 Students form pairs. Each pair is to write a poem, change lyrics to a well known song or create a short rap that addresses the themes and messages in *Cinderella*. Allow the pairs time to prepare their pieces and then ask volunteers to present their work to the class.

4.2 This activity asks your students to think about some of the messages and themes in the story of *Cinderella*. The demands of this activity make it more suitable for upper primary students.

Hold a class discussion or debate using the following statement:

Cinderella is a good role model for young women.

If you are holding a debate, the affirmative team might address messages that value kindness and a willingness to help others, the power of optimism and hope, and how good actions bring rewards.

The negative team might highlight the more stereotypical aspects of Cinderella such as a being a passive woman, how the story emphasizes beauty and marriage as a path to success and how, and how the story stigmatizes other family structures beyond the ideal nuclear family.



Post Performance

Activity Five - Performance Reflection

Curriculum Links English/Drama

5.1 This activity is an opportunity for students to share their responses to the performance. Depending on the age group of the students you might like to ask them to read some of the reviews of *Cinderella* at:

Shona Reppe Puppets - *Cinderella* Reviews

http://www.shonareppepuppets.co.uk/shonareppepuppets/Reviews_Cinderella.html

Ask students to identify language features like persuasive language, use of adjectives to evaluate and sections of the review that recount the action of the performance.

5.2 Before students complete the following drama activity, ask them to recount the performance. In their recount, get them to identify and describe the moments they liked the most. The class forms groups of four or five. Instruct each group to create a series of freeze frames (no more than six) that recount their excursion to the performance. They can show the journey to the Opera House, the expectation of the audience, some key moments from the performance and the journey back to school. Ask each group to present their work to the class. As a challenge, groups could attempt to present their freeze frames in the style of the performance.

5.3 The following questions can be used as guidelines for a discussion or written review of the performance.

1. Describe one example of how the performer used her facial expressions to create a funny moment in the performance.
2. Describe the puppet Cinderella. What sorts of materials were used to make this puppet and what do these materials tell us about her?
3. What were some funny moments in the performance? Can you describe them? Can you explain why they were funny?
4. Describe how the performer used her hands to play two other characters in the performance.
5. What did you like about the use of the bench, cupboards and drawers in the performance?
6. What moments in the performance made you feel excited? Why?
7. How did you feel at the end of the performance when Cinderella's dresses were floating in the air?
8. What types of music were played during the performance and what sort of mood and atmosphere did they create?

Post Performance



Activity Six - Puppetry

Curriculum Links Drama

6.1 Visit the following websites with your students. Watch the available clips from productions and look at the images:

Terrapin Puppet Theatre
<http://www.terrapin.org.au/>

Polyglot Puppets
<http://polyglotpuppets.com.au/muckheap#videos>

Spare Parts Puppet Theatre
<http://www.sppt.asn.au/>

Ask the class to complete the following either in writing or as discussion:

- Describe some of the interesting moments you saw in the video clips.
- What was appealing about these moments?
- Describe two or three puppet characters that you saw and liked.
- What do you think these puppets were made of?
- How were these puppets operated?
- Describe two favourite settings referring to use of colour, set and lighting.
- Describe the different types of puppets you saw in the video clips.

6.2 Invite your students to bring any puppets they have at home to class. Ask them to present their puppet and demonstrate how the puppet is operated. If some students do not have a puppet at home ask them to find a picture of one.

6.3 In this activity students will complete some research questions on puppetry as a dramatic form. Ask them to visit the following websites and complete the attached activities. They can then report their findings to the class:

Puppetry Definitions
<http://www.sagecraft.com/puppetry/definitions/index.html>

Find one type of puppet. Identify the key features of this puppet. You can also provide information on the origin of the puppet, how it is made and how it is operated.

Puppetry Traditions Around the World
<http://www.sagecraft.com/puppetry/traditions/index.html>

- Choose one type of puppet from one other culture.
- Explain the purposes these puppets have in their country of origin.
- Describe the puppets, how they are made, what they are made of and how they are operated in performance.
- Are there any specific types of stories that these puppets are used for?

The following website may be useful for students who wish to pursue ideas for how puppets can be made.

Puppet Building and Building Materials
<http://www.sagecraft.com/puppetry/building/index.html>

Post Performance

Activity Seven - Acting As Puppets

Curriculum Links Drama

7.1 In this activity students will manipulate and control their movement to represent the movements of string puppets. To begin it is important for students to complete a physical warm up. This will help to energise them. Some suggested warm-up activities are:

- Stretches that work through the different body parts
- Yoga stretches
- Spine rolls
- Flexing and rotating different joints
- A running game like 'Stuck in the Mud' or 'Tip'
- Mirror work with a partner (good for focus and control of movement)

7.2 Direct students to find a chair to sit on and to remain seated with their hands on their laps and heads forward with chin resting on the chest. Ask them to imagine there is a string attached to the top of their head. On your signal the imaginary string is pulled and their head and upper torso will move upward. Continue with this movement activity by asking your students to imagine there are strings attached to their arms and legs. As the imaginary strings are pulled, these limbs are lifted up and then returned to position. It is important to remind the students that their faces should be in a fixed expression like that of a doll. Also remind your students that any limb when raised will wobble slightly to show the heaviness of the limb hanging on the end of the string. Continue instructing your students to move as marionettes by having them leaving their chairs and completing one mimed activity and then returning to their chairs. Allow time for practice and then show the work to the class.

7.3 Students form pairs. Each pair is to prepare a short role-play where two marionettes complete a small task. Some suggestions are:

changing a car tire, building a sandcastle, fighting a dragon or putting up a Christmas tree.

View student work giving feedback on the use of control and movement to create the illusion of marionettes.

Post Performance



Activity Eight - New Fairy Tales

Curriculum Links English/Drama

8.1 This activity provides an opportunity for your students to write short, original fairy tale scripts. The following website has examples of contemporary fairy tales. These are more suitable for upper primary students.

Rosemary Lake - New Fairy Tales
<http://www.rosemarylake.com/>

Ask your students to read a selection of these fairy tales and draw up a comparison table that shows the similarities and differences between the new fairy tales and original fairy tales.

8.2 Divide the class into pairs or small groups. Allow sufficient time for each pair/group to write a short fairy tale script of their own. You may need to provide students with information and guidance on the conventions of the script text type.

Useful information about the conventions of fairy tale structure and planning a story can be located at:

<http://www-ma.beth.k12.pa.us/jhoke/jhwebquest/proc.htm>

<http://www-ma.beth.k12.pa.us/jhoke/jhwebquest/storymap.htm>

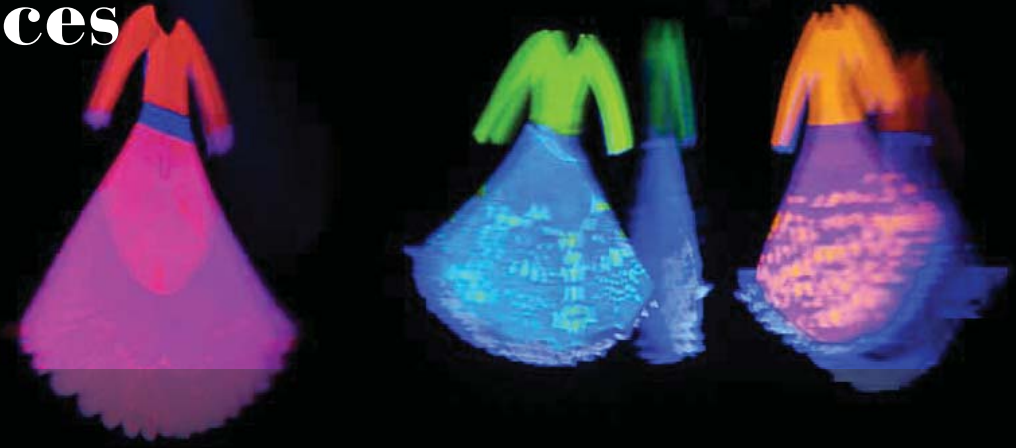
At points in their preparation, ask the groups to read you drafts of their scripts and offer feedback to help shape important action, edit material that is superfluous and develop character.

8.3 When the scripts have been completed, select two or three for the class to rehearse and perform. During rehearsals visit each group and help them identify specific movements that communicate the physical action of the activity. Students will probably need assistance with making decisions about the use of space, the timing of moments and the arrangement of the group members to create appealing and effective images.

8.4 View the group performances. Provide feedback on effective choices and original ideas for fairy tales.

8.5 As a challenge, students may perform their scripts by creating appropriate puppets (see Activity Six).

References



Andersen Fairy Tales

<http://andersenfairytales.com/en/main>

British Council - Fairy Tales

<http://www.britishcouncil.org/kids-stories-fairy-tales.htm>

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<http://polyglotpuppets.com.au/muckheap#videos>

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<http://www.sagecraft.com/puppetry/definitions/index.html>

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Rosemary Lake - New Fairy Tales

<http://www.rosemarylake.com/>

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<http://www.shonareppepuppets.co.uk/shonareppepuppets/Gallery/Pages/Cinderella.html>

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