



Dr. Seuss's  
The Cat  
in the Hat

Presented by  
Plaza Theatrical Productions

## Table of Contents:

Teacher introduction and background:.....	Page 3
Author background:.....	Page 4
Production Writers:.....	Page 5
Activity: Song writing and Rhyming: .....	Page 6
Activity: Reading the Cat in the Hat:.....	Page 8
Activity: Researching Cats:.....	Page 9
Activity: Cat Curiosity :.....	Page 10
Activity: Create a Cat:.....	Page 11
Theatre Etiquette:.....	Page 12

Dear Teacher,

We have created the following study guide to help make your students' theatre experience with the production, *THE CAT IN THE HAT*, as meaningful as possible. For many, it will be their first time viewing a theatrical production. We have learned that when teachers discuss the play with their students before and after the production, the experience is more significant and long lasting. Our study guide provides discussion topics, as well as related activities. These are just suggestions; please feel free to create your own activities and areas for discussion.

**We hope you enjoy the show!**

Author: DR. SEUSS (From Seussville.com)



The magical master of rhyme and word play, Dr. Seuss, otherwise known as Theodor Seuss Geisel, has been captivating the minds of children and adults alike for 80 years (with his first novel being published in 1937). With his quirky, mischievous characters and original writing, his books have inspired movies and productions worldwide.

Theodor, or Ted, to his family and friends, didn't want to write true stories, necessarily, but rather, good stories. He also worked as a cartoonist, publishing his cartoons under the name, T. Seuss in 1927 - which marked the first time he used the name Seuss. In 1928, he used Dr. Seuss for the first time. Although he wasn't a Doctor, he did consider pursuing a PH.D. in English. However, he left graduate school to pursue his career as a cartoonist.

Success didn't happen right away for Dr. Seuss. He married his wife, Helen, in 1927 and they moved into an apartment on New York's lower west side while he tried to establish himself as a cartoonist.

He scraped by for a year until one of his cartoons was seen by an Advertising Executive from the Flit company, and he was hired to draw cartoons for them.

## Song writing and Rhyming:



After reading the story to students in class, break them up into groups of two or three and challenge them to write a song or poem based on their favorite part of the story.

They can start by taking a line from the story and using it as their "hook" or "refrain."

- A **hook** in a song is the lyric that catches the ear of the listener and is usually the title of the song. For example, in 'Row, Row, Row Your boat' the hook is exactly that. It is also a returning point for the song writer as they start a new verse. The hook is often found at the beginning or end of each verse.

- A **refrain** is a phrase, line, or group of lines that is repeated throughout a poem.

They can also think about the rhymes which Dr. Seuss has already set up for them in the text. For example:

- The sun did not shine
- It was too wet to play
- So we sat in the house
- All that cold, wet day.
- I sat there with Sally.
- I sat there we two.
- And I said
- "Oh how I wish we had something to do!"

Already, students have a rhyming verse for their song or poem. What might be the hook of this verse that they could return to?

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Also, have them think about what the music of this song would sound like? Folk music, rock, lullaby, etc.

## The Cat in the Hat / (Core Standards: Literature)



The source material used for the production, *The Cat in the Hat*, is the Dr. Seuss book of the same title. Read the story to students in class before they see the production. Then have students try to retell the story using the following specifics based on their grade level:

Kindergarten: With prompting and support, have students answer questions about key details in the text. For example:

- What was the weather like outside before the Cat in the Hat came to visit?
- Where was the children's Mother?
- What pet did the children have?

Grade 1: Have students retell the story they just heard in their own words.

Grade 2: Have students retell the story they just heard in their own words, identifying the who, what, where, when and why of the story.

Grade 3: Have students retell the story they just heard in their own words, and identify the main idea or theme of the story, referring to events in the text.

Grade 4: Have students retell the story they just heard in their own words, referring to and quoting accurately from the text.

## The many different kinds of Cats (Core Standards: Writing & research)



The Cat in the Hat is a mischievous guest but in reality, besides the domestic house cat, there are several different breeds of cats or felines. Have students research, write and present a paper selecting a feline from the list below. Questions they can answer include:

- Where does this feline live?
- Does this feline like a cold or hot climate?
- What is the typical life span of this feline?
- What does this feline eat?
- How fast does this feline run?
- Is this species of feline endangered?
- Would this feline make a good pet? Why or why not?

### Cats:

- Tiger
- Panther
- Siamese Cat
- Lion
- Maine Coon Cat
- Leopard
- Jaguar
- Cheetah
- Cougar
- Lynx
- Snow Leopard



### Activity: Cat Curiosity

When the children are bored because of the rain, and they don't know what to do, the Cat in the Hat comes in and starts to cause mischief. The children are then faced with how to handle this trouble maker. Have students discuss a time when they knew someone was doing something wrong and either what they did to stop it, or how they could've stopped it.

The cure for boredom:

The poet, Dorothy Parker said the cure for boredom is curiosity. Discuss this quote with students. What are they curious about? How can their curiosity spark activity? What do they do at home when they're bored? Perhaps try one of their suggested activities in class on a rainy day when it is 'too wet to play.'

### Activity: Create a cat



#### What you will need for each student:

- 2 sheets of construction paper (whatever color you would like your cat)
- A scissors
- A glue stick
- A black marker or crayon
- 2 different sized jars, 1 medium and 1 large

#### Instructions:

- Place the jars on the construction paper and trace the bottoms of them.
- Cut out the two different sized circles.
- Place the smaller circle on top of the larger circle for the cat's head and body (as in the picture at the top of the page). Glue together.
- Using the other piece of construction paper, draw a tail, 2 triangles to use for ears and 2 small circles to use for feet. Cut out and glue on your cat.
- Then draw on a face with a marker or crayon.

## Theatre Etiquette:



We want your students to have the best experience when they see a live performance so below is a list of reminders of how to behave when they visit the theatre or the show comes to them.

- Keep in mind that the actors on stage can hear you if you talk, so always be courteous to the actors and other audience members around you by paying attention during the performance and not talking or texting.
- Arrive early. Seeing a show is a special experience and you don't want to miss any of it.
- Remember not to bring any food, beverages or gum into the theatre or where you're seeing the show unless you're told it's okay.
- No taking pictures or recording during the performance.
- Be sure to laugh and applaud when appropriate and remember to have fun!

**See you at the show!**