



NEW MEXICO YOUNG ACTORS Present:

Disney's Beauty and the Beast, Jr.

Music by **Alan Menken**

Lyrics by **Howard Ashman** and **Tim Rice**

Book by **Linda Woolverton**

Directed by **Paul Bower**

Choreography by **Josh Megill**

Dear Teachers,

Welcome to New Mexico Young Actors' production of *Beauty and the Beast*. We are offering this study guide as a way to help you prepare your classes for our upcoming production and your experience at the theater. Included in this guide are a historical note about the story, a synopsis of the musical, a list of characters, a vocabulary list and lesson ideas, and some audience protocol reminders. We always enjoy hearing from you and your students and look forward to receiving any pictures, stories, or comments about the production. Thank you for your support of New Mexico Young Actors. We look forward to seeing you at the KiMo!

HISTORICAL NOTE

The original story of Beauty and the Beast was written by Gabrielle-Suzanne de Villeneuve in 18th-century France. That story was shortened by Jeanne-Marie Leprince de Beaumont (1711–1780) and published in 1756. Walt Disney drew inspiration for its 1991 animated film from Beaumont's version as well as a Beauty and the Beast film from 1946 directed by Jean Cocteau.

When Walt Disney Pictures full-length, animated feature film *Beauty and the Beast* was released, critics praised its songs worthy of a Broadway musical. It was observed that Broadway is as vital to the film's staging and characterizations as it is to the songs themselves. **Disney's Beauty and the Beast** went on to win Academy Awards for Best Song and Best Original Score and made history as the first animated feature ever nominated for a Best Picture Oscar.

When the decision was made to actually bring it to the Broadway stage, everyone associated with the production knew it had to be extraordinary. It had to have that special magic that audiences have come to expect from the Walt Disney Company.

This stage version of *Beauty and the Beast* was produced by Robert W. McTyre for Walt Disney Theatrical Productions. The Oscar-winning score by composer Alan Menken and the late lyricist Howard Ashman was not only expanded by Menken, but lyricist Tim Rice added several new songs for the Broadway version. Author Linda Woolverton adapted her work into this new stage play. Choreographer Matt West then teamed up with costume designer Ann Hould-Ward to come up with a look for the Enchanted Objects which would work on stage. Stan Meyer, scenic designer, and Natasha Katz, lighting designer, were challenged to create a unique fairy tale atmosphere for the stage. Director Robert Jess Roth ultimately brought all these elements together with the performers to create the finished piece.

Beauty and the Beast is currently enjoying a resurgence after Disney's release of a live-action version of the film to critical acclaim in 2017 starring Emma Watson and Dan Stevens in the title roles.

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST SYNOPSIS

A Prince, living in a shining castle, is disturbed one winter's night by an old beggar woman, who comes to his castle and offers him a single rose in return for shelter from the bitter cold. He is repulsed by her appearance and turns the old woman away. The old woman's ugliness melts away to reveal a beautiful enchantress. Though the Prince is apologetic when he sees her beauty, the Enchantress turns the cruel, unfeeling Prince into a hideous Beast. His stubborn pride compels him to remain in his bewitched castle with Lumiere, the love-struck candelabra, Cogsworth, the pompous clock, the kindly Mrs. Potts, and an inquisitive teacup named Chip. To break the spell, the Beast must learn to love another and earn her love in return, before the last petal falls from the enchanted rose. If not, he will be doomed to remain a Beast for all time.

Belle is a beautiful and intelligent young woman who lives with her father, Maurice, in a small village. When her father is imprisoned by the Beast, Belle offers to take her father's place in return for the release of her father from his prisoner's cell in the Beast's castle. The Beast accepts Belle's offer to exchange places. Later in the story, the Beast falls in love with Belle, but is afraid to tell her. He offers instead his magic mirror and her freedom to rejoin her father in the village. Belle unknowingly betrays the Beast to Gaston, who leads a frenzied mob to destroy the Beast. At the castle, the Enchanted Objects repel the mob, but Gaston manages to stab the Beast in the back. The Beast threatens to kill Gaston, but instead releases him. Gaston runs away terrified.

The Beast, dying from his wounds, tells the weeping Belle that he is happy that he got to see her one last time. Belle tells him that she loves him just as the last petal on the enchanted rose falls. A magical transformation changes the Beast into the Prince once again. The spell has been broken! All the servants are also now human again, and Beauty with her Beast, who is now a handsome Prince, live happily ever after.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Belle, confident young heroine

Maurice, Belle's quirky father, an inventor

Beast, a Prince who was transformed

Gaston, an egotistical brute

Lefou, Gaston's dim-witted sidekick

Silly Girls, villagers who fawn over Gaston

Lumiere, the candelabra maitre d'

Cogsworth, the English clock butler

Mrs. Potts, the motherly teapot cook

Babette, a flirtatious, feather duster maid

Mme. de la Grande Bouche, a wardrobe opera singer

Chip, Mrs. Potts's teacup son

Enchantress, casts the spell on the Prince

M. D'Arque, the creepy proprietor of the asylum

Narrators, villagers who serve as storytellers

Servants, the castle staff

Villagers, residents of the village

VOCABULARY

The following are some words that are associated with *Beauty and the Beast*:

Act	Plot	Set	Props	Downstage	Upstage
Director	Producer	Program	Fiction	Repulsed	Haggard
Provincial	Peculiar	Betrayed	Hideous	Hospitable	Trespass
Forbidden	Acquaintance	Bleak	Humiliated	Lumps	Inspired
Paragon	Douse	Expectorate	Rapier	Temperamental	Baroque

French Terms

Bonjour	Monsieur	Baguette	Facade	Pardon	Mais oui	Mademoiselle
Madame	Grande	Bouche	Enchanté	Ma chère	Cherie	du jour
Ragout	Oui	Soufflé	en flambé	Toute suite	Savoir faire	Hors d'oeuvres

LESSON IDEAS

Classroom Discussion (Pre-Performance)

1. *How many of you have experienced a live theater performance? What did you see?*
2. *What are some of the differences between going to the theater and watching television or going to a movie?*
 - Theater features live on-stage actors. They have spent many weeks rehearsing for the performance.
 - The audience is a very important part of the performance. Appreciation for the performers is shown by close attention, participation, and applause at the proper times. The success of the production often depends on the audience.
 - The theater is a very special place. Its atmosphere is entirely different from your home, where the television is always available.
 - It is easy to identify with live actors. You can see how they use their bodies and voices to convey different emotions.
 - Actors wear costumes and make-up to help create the impression of the characters they portray.
 - There is much more to most live performances than actors. Special sets, effects, lighting, music, costumes, and of course, the audience add to the total experience.

Classroom Discussion and Activities (Pre or Post-Performance)

Language Arts

- Read the fairy tale, *Beauty and the Beast*. How does the musical differ from the story in prose? What are similarities? Explore other popular fairy tales as well.
- Consider symbolism in the fairy tale. How do the castle characters symbolize the objects that they are becoming? Cogsworth is transforming into a clock, Lumiere is transforming into a candelabra, Babette is becoming a feather duster. Analyze other objects in the story—the mirror, the enchanted rose. How is symbolism used with these objects?
- Create a “talk show” as a class. Have students act as journalists interviewing characters from the story. Ask questions you have always wanted to know about Belle, the Beast, Cogsworth, Lumiere, and others.
- Explore the relationship of protagonists and antagonists in classroom stories and draw a comparison to relationships in the musical, such as Belle and the Beast, Belle and Gaston, Belle and Maurice, Cogsworth and Lumiere.
- Write a sequel to the musical. What happens to the castle staff and villagers after Belle and the Prince are married? How do the relationships between Babette and Lumiere or Madame and Cogsworth blossom? Does Maurice ever become famous because of one of his inventions?
- Our story is set in France and incorporates many French terms. Have fun introducing your students to the French terms listed above. Ask your student to uncover other French terms that have been incorporated into the English language.

Science

- Maurice’s Amazing Invention
Have your students research amazing inventions before the discovery of electricity. Discuss the principles behind the major inventions and what they have achieved. Challenge small groups to design the invention that Belle’s father, Maurice, takes to the fair, keeping in mind the technology of the period.

Have students name their invention and create a diagram, a list of materials, assembly instructions, estimated costs, and a description of uses. If you have the chance, build a couple of the inventions and display them as well.

Art

- Create a class mural of the musical. Include scenes from the story such as the castle, the village, and the forest.
- Draw a picture of a favorite scene or character.
- Re-create the castle using clay forms in a box or using cardboard. Label the rooms that correspond to the castle locations in *Beauty and the Beast*.
- Draw an advertisement or program cover for the musical.
- Design stage scenery for *Beauty and the Beast* or another story that you would like to see on stage.
- A Coat of Arms—discuss with your students the purpose of a coat of arms in medieval times. Have students research historical coats of arms, then create one for *Beauty and the Beast*, incorporating symbols from the tale (the Rose, the Magic Mirror, etc.).

Music, Dance, & Film

- Ask the students to identify musical instruments that they heard in the musical. Discuss other instruments that could have been added for greater effect.
- Can you identify any recurring musical themes or motives in the music?
- How did the music express the action or emotion of the story (tempo, volume, range of notes, etc.)?
- Did you hear any incidental music (purely instrumental music that functioned as background music for a scene change)?
- Discuss how dance adds to the storytelling of a musical.
- Schedule a movie day and show all or part of the 1991 Disney animated *Beauty and the Beast* or the 2017 live-action version. Compare and contrast the films and the musical.

Math

- Create a budget for a theatrical production. List all of the expenses involved (set design and materials, professional musicians, lighting design, props, costumes, theater rental, scripts, royalties, etc.). Discuss ways that a theater company might raise money to cover all of the expenses.
- Using a spreadsheet, create a rehearsal schedule for a theatrical production. Discuss how much time it might take for the cast to learn all of the staging and dancing. How many hours a day/week/month does it take to put on a production?

Be Our Guest!

Have your students work in groups to find out how much it would cost if the class decided to host a castle dinner party—Lumiere style! They may use the castle dining room and place settings, and the Castle Servants will be there to assist, but the rest is up to them.

Course One— Stuffed Mushrooms (2 per person)

1 loaf of bread for stuffing per 25 mushrooms

1 onion for stuffing per 25 mushrooms

Course Two—Cucumber Salad

1 lb. of cucumber per four salads

1 Tbsp. of pepper per seven salads

1 lb. of carrots per ten guests

1 bottle of dressing per seven salads

Course Three– Roasted Chicken & Vegetables

- 1 Whole chicken per six guests
- 10 lbs. of potatoes per 15 guests
- 1 onion per five guests
- 1 lb. of carrots per ten guests

Course Four– Strawberry Shortcake

- 1 lb. of strawberries per five guests
- 1 package of shortcakes per four guests
- 1 can of whipped cream per ten guests

Students should determine the number of each item they need for a party of 25 and then calculate the cost to buy the ingredients. To determine the cost per item, students can do their own research, or you can determine the cost ahead of time.

History/Social Studies

- *Beauty and the Beast* is set in Medieval France. Research this era. What were some of the customs and styles of this time period?
- Plan a Medieval Day for your class! Have simple costume pieces available for the students to wear, such as hats or vests. Research French Medieval food and have the class prepare a couple of authentic dishes.
- Home Is Where the Heart Is
Discuss how Belle feels when she first goes to live in the Beast's castle. What does Belle miss about her home? Ask students what they feel when they are away from home. What is "home"? A house? Family? A neighborhood? A city? If, like Belle, they were suddenly taken from their homes, what would they miss the most? Have students pantomime an action that represents something they love most about their homes.
- Tales and Timelines of Technology
Have your students create a Medieval Technology Timeline, which traces the advancement of technology from the plow and the horseshoe between A.D. 500 and 700 through the development of the blast furnace, between 1300 and 1500. Divide students into groups and assign each group a century to research and plot.

Theater Etiquette

Discuss the role of the audience and proper theater etiquette.

- Arrive on time so that you do not miss anything and so that you will not disturb the rest of the audience while trying to get comfortable in your seat. Lights go out before the curtain goes up and seating is very difficult after that time.
- It is easier for you (and the rest of the audience) to see and hear the performance if you stay in your seat and listen very carefully.
- The KiMo Theatre is a historic building. Please respect and preserve the beauty of the KiMo by not bringing food and beverages (including gum and candy) into the theater. These items are permitted in the lobby only.
- There is no intermission during the performance, which is 75 minutes in duration. Be sure to use the restroom before the performance begins.

- Although you may wish to say something to the actors, you need to hold your thoughts, as you will disturb their concentration.
- Sing or participate *if* and *only if* you are invited to do so. Your participation is often very important.
- Listen to how the music sets the mood and affects your own feelings.
- Show the cast and crew your appreciation for their hard work with applause. Do this when you like a song, dance, or joke.
- Be sure to turn off *all* electronic devices and cell phones. Do not text during the performance. This is very inconsiderate to the performers and distracting to your fellow audience members.

SOURCES

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This study guide was compiled by Billie J. Little, a former Board member of New Mexico Young Actors, Inc., and Paul Bower, Executive Director of NMYA. Copyright 2019. All Rights Reserved.