



NEW MEXICO YOUNG ACTORS

present

BIG BAD

by Alec Strumm

TEACHER STUDY GUIDE

SUMMARY

The most notorious criminal in fairy tale land, the Big Bad Wolf, is the defendant in a class-action lawsuit. The plaintiffs include Little Red Riding Hood, Grandmother Hood, Bill Woodcutter, the Three Little Pigs, the Shepherdess, and the Boy Who Cried Wolf. And although the plaintiffs have an excellent lawyer in the Fairy Godmother, the counsel for the defense, Evil Stepmother, might give her the greatest challenge of her career. This a full audience participation piece as the audience acts as the jury in determining the outcome of the trial.

CLASSROOM DISCUSSION (PRE-PERFORMANCE)

1. *How many of you have experienced a live dramatic performance? What did you see?*

2. *What are some of the differences between seeing a live performance and watching television or going to a movie?*

- Theater features live actors on-stage. They have spent many weeks rehearsing for the performance.
- The audience is a very important part of the performance. Appreciation and enthusiasm for the performers is shown by close attention and participation and applause at the proper times. The success of the play often depends on the audience.
- The atmosphere of a live performance 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 play.
- 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.

3. *Introduce your students to the following theatrical terms:*

Actor
Acts/Scenes
Box Office
Curtain Call
Costumes
Director
Musical Theater
Play
Playwright
Producer
Program
Props
Scenery/Set
Stage
Stagehand
Usher

4. *Introduce your students to the following vocabulary found in our courtroom comedy:*

Legal Terminology:

Attorney
Class Action Lawsuit
Cross Examine
Defendant
Defense
Guilty
Hearsay
Hung Jury
Innocent
Judge
Jury
Mistrial
Objection
Plaintiff
Pro-Bono
Prosecution
Statement
Swearing-In
Testify
Verdict
Witness

Other Content Words:

Abominable
Chaos
Depraved
Fiend
Infamous
Heinous
Honorable
Justice
Kosher
Lurking
Neurotic
Pageant
Reprehensible
Vegan

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. Lights may go out before the performance begins 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.
- Try your best to remain in your seat once the performance has begun. There is no intermission during the performance of *Big Bad*, which is 40 minutes in length.
- 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. In *Big Bad*, it is very important as the audience will determine the outcome of the story.
- Listen to how the music sets the moods 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.

CLASSROOM DISCUSSION AND EXTENSION ACTIVITIES (POST-PERFORMANCE)

1. *Write an Epilogue:* Predict what happened next in the story. Write an article in which you tell the readers what happened after the Big Bad Wolf receives his sentence. What happened to the other characters in the story? Be as specific as possible and keep with the spirit of the original story.
2. *Discuss real life situations that reflect the moral in Big Bad.*
 - a) Ask the children what stories they can come up with that illustrate how important it is to be honest in all situations. Discuss how lying could actually create more trouble than being honest about real life scenarios.
 - b) Big Bad presents a courtroom scene in which the characters are asked to testify for or against the accused. There are many opportunities to introduce your students to basic legal terminology and courtroom procedures. Perhaps you could create a courtroom scene in your classroom. Ask the students to develop a story in which two people have to go to court. Create strengths and weaknesses to each side of the case and act it out as a class.

c) It seems as though the Big Bad Wolf is presumed guilty before the trial even starts. Why is the concept of “innocent until proven guilty” so important to the justice system in our country? What if it were the other way around? What are the pros and cons of a jury trial? Discuss what it might be like to sit on a real jury.

d) Discuss what it might be like to work as a lawyer or a judge? What are some of the rewards of those careers? What are some of the challenges? Have the students share the kind of work they would like to do as they get older. Some may desire to be doctors, teachers, artists, fire fighters, police officers, mechanics, etc. What are some of the benefits and rewards to the professions that they list? What kind of training is required for different kinds of jobs?

3. *Music:* Was music used in the performance? Was it live or recorded? How could you tell? When was the music used? Why? Did it help develop the plot? What types of music were used, or were different types used? Can you describe how different kinds of music would make you have different kinds of feelings? When a play is a musical, an actor must have additional skills. Can you name some? A musical costs much more to produce. Can you name some additional expenses? (e.g., orchestra, a practice piano, a score, a choreographer, etc.)

4. *Sets:* Describe the sets used in the play you just saw. What props or details were used to suggest specific times or settings? How could lighting be changed to create a mood, season, time of day, etc.? What materials might have been used in building the sets? How were the sets and props moved on and off the stage? Describe a simple scene (a day in school, a trip to the mall, a ride in the car or on the bus) and ask students to describe a basic set for the scene.

5. *Costumes:* What would you need to know to create costumes for a play (research, sewing, theatrical effects, etc.)? Why is the right costume important to the character in the play?

6. *Art Activities:*

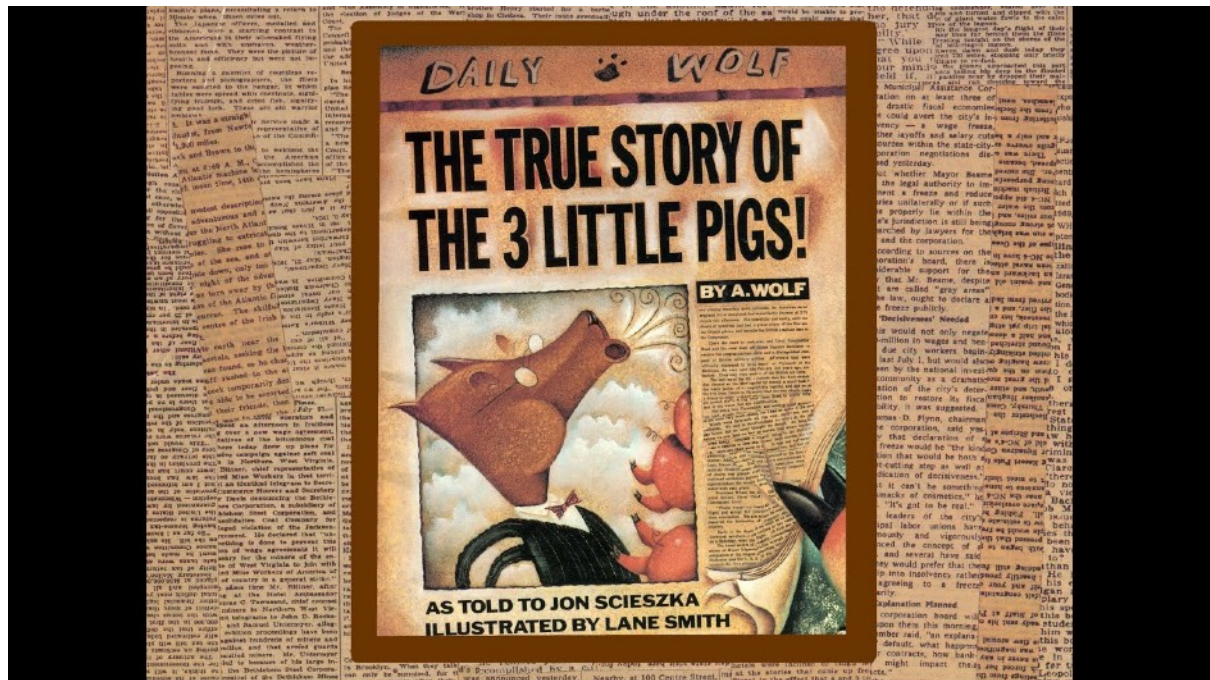
- Draw a picture of a favorite scene or character.
- Draw a picture of what the audience might look like from on-stage.
- Re-create a scene from the play using clay forms in a box.
- Design a program cover for the play using the title, date, and an illustration inspired by the play.
- Draw an advertisement or program cover for the play.

7. *Language Arts:*

- Choose a character that you liked and write a single day's diary for that character. Write a letter to a cast member telling what you liked about her or his character.

- Discuss the play. Was there a hero or heroine? A villain? The setting? Was there a moral to the story?
- In 25 words or fewer, describe the plot of the play.
- Discuss the work of a movie/theater critic. Write a newspaper-type review of the play
- Discuss live theater. Are the actors aware of the audience? Why might an actor change his presentation because of audience reaction? Would it be easy to be an actor? Conduct an interview with a classmate pretending to be one of the actors and find out the actor's feelings about being on stage, memorization, rehearsals, costumes, audience, etc.
- Make a list of all the personnel needed for a play (director, actors, musicians, author, designers—set, costumes, lights, sound—stagehands, choreographer, producer, etc).

BIG BAD – INTERNET EXTENSIONS



A read-aloud version of author Jon Scieszka's retelling of the Three Little Pigs from the wolf's point of view.

<https://government.mrdonn.org/mocktrials.html>

A teacher's website with ideas and information for teaching using a mock trial in your own classroom.

<http://www.storynory.com/archives/fairy-tales/>

A library of classic fairy tales, including those of Aesop (The Boy Who Cried Wolf) the Brother's Grimm (Little Red Riding Hood), and others.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Big_Bad_Wolf

Wikipedia-an excellent place to get started in researching the tales of the Big Bad Wolf

Much of this material is contributed with the kind permission of the Cincinnati Children's Theater, Pioneer Drama Service, and Plays for Young Audiences. This study guide was compiled by Billie J. Little, a former member of the Board of Directors for New Mexico Young Actors, Inc.; Paul Bower, former Executive Director of NMYA; and Rachel Ribeiro, current Executive Director. Revised February 2023.