



NEW MEXICO YOUNG ACTORS

present

Peter Pan: A Musical Adventure

Music by Eric Rockwell

Lyrics by Joanne Bogart

Book by Craig Sodaro

TEACHER STUDY GUIDE

Dear Teachers,

Welcome to New Mexico Young Actors' production of *Peter Pan: A Musical Adventure*. We are offering this study guide 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 **curriculum 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 after your field trip. Thank you for your support of New Mexico Young Actors. We look forward to seeing you at the KiMo Theatre!

HISTORICAL NOTE

The tale of Peter Pan was created by James Matthew Barrie in the early 20th century. It was originally published as a play, *Peter Pan; or, the Boy Who Wouldn't Grow Up*, in 1904, and later as a novel, *Peter and Wendy*, in 1911. The story features the mischievous little boy, Peter Pan, who is able to fly, refuses to grow up, and has extraordinary adventures in the mythical Neverland with mermaids, pirates, American Indians, and a group of foundlings known as the Lost Boys. Other characters include the Darling family children—Wendy, John, and Michael—the Darling family dog, Nana, as well as the villain Captain Hook, his sidekick, Mr. Smee, a voracious crocodile, the fairy, Tinker Bell, and the princess, Tiger Lily. *Peter Pan* has held audience imagination for over a century as a play, novel, musical, and film. Some popular versions include the 1905 Broadway production starring Maud Adams, and the 1954 Broadway musical starring Mary Martin. Film adaptations include the 1991 Stephen Spielberg film, *Hook*, starring Robin Williams, the 2003 film, *Peter Pan*, and the 2004 film, *Finding Neverland*. Walt Disney's 1953 animated feature, *Peter Pan*, along with the inclusion of the film's characters and images in Disney's theme parks, have cemented the story in the minds of countless children.

SYNOPSIS

It's the summer of 1910 at the nursery of the Darling residence in London. Teenager Wendy Darling is telling a story to her younger siblings, John and Michaela, while their dog, Nana, sits on the floor. The children delay going to bed as Wendy continues to describe Peter Pan, the boy who never grew up, and the island of Neverland. As the children drift off to sleep, Peter appears at the open window and Nana barks loudly. Peter confesses that he's looking for his lost shadow and Tinker Bell has come to help in the search. The children are fascinated with their guests. Peter convinces the children to run away with him to Neverland.

In Neverland, we meet the Lost Boys on the look-out for pirates, the pirates on the look-out for the Lost Boys, and the Neverland Natives, also on the look-out for pirates. The Crocodile enters and chases Captain Hook back into the forest as the three groups sing "Come Back, Peter Pan." After the song, Peter arrives and introduces the Darling children to the Lost Boys. He knows the Lost Boys will be especially pleased to meet Wendy, who he introduces as their new mother.

Days later, Wendy is leading the Lost Boys in a school lesson on the lagoon. The Lost Boys, bored, decide to run off and have a picnic. The pirates, Smee and Starkey, enter with Tiger Lily as their prisoner. Peter imitates Captain Hook and convinces the pirates to release the princess. They do so just as Captain Hook enters, bewildered and irritated that the pirates let Tiger Lily go. The water surrounding the lagoon rises as the distracted Captain Hook nearly drowns.

Next, we find the Lost Boys in their cave as Wendy tells them a story. The Darling children long for home as Peter dismisses the idea of growing up and living in a real home. All say goodbye to Peter as they decide to leave with Wendy and her brothers. As the Lost Boys trek through the forest on their way to the shore, they are inadvertently kidnapped by the pirates. Captain Hook finds a thread from Michaela's sock that leads him directly to the Lost Boys' cave. Hook enters the cave and delightfully decides to poison Peter, who is fast asleep. Hook leaves and Tinker Bell saves Peter's life just as he is about to drink the poison, which has been disguised as Peter's medicine.

A short time later, Hook and the Pirates have Wendy and the Lost Boys captive on their ship. The Boys are preparing to walk the plank when Peter arrives and engages Captain Hook in a spectacular duel. The Natives arrive and convince the Pirates to run after a birthday cake as the crocodile appears and chases Hook into the sea.

Back in the Darling nursery, Mrs. Darling is waiting up for her children when Wendy arrives with her brothers and the Lost Boys, who decide to stay with Wendy. Peter declares his desire to return to Neverland and Wendy promises to keep the window open for him as the curtain closes.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

WENDY DARLING - oldest Darling child

JOHN DARLING - second oldest Darling child

MICHAELA DARLING - third oldest Darling child

MRS. DARLING - mother of the Darling children

NANA - the Darlings' pet dog, also their nurse and caretaker

LIZA - the Darlings' maid

PETER PAN - the boy who wouldn't grow up

TINKER BELL – a tiny fairy, so small only Peter Pan can see her

CAPTAIN HOOK - Peter Pan's chief enemy

THE CROCODILE – he ate Captain Hook's hand and has been chasing him ever since

THE LOST BOYS OF NEVERLAND – Tootles, Nibs, Pots, Pans, Slightly, and Curley

THE PIRATES – Smee, Starkey, Cookie, Skylight, and Noodles

THE NEVERLAND NATIVES TRIBE – Great Big Little Panther (their leader), Tiger Lily (his daughter), Chattering Chipmunk, Two Moons, and Raging Waters

THEATRICAL TERMS TO KNOW

Actor

Acts/Scenes

Balcony

Box Office

Curtain Call

Costumes

Director

Lobby

Musical Theater

Orchestra

Pit

Overture

Play

Playwright

Producer

Program

Props

Scenery/Set

Stage

Stagehand

Usher

CONTENT VOCABULARY AND TERMS

Adequate

Ambush

Booty

Buccaneers

Compassion

Conceited

Couth

Despicable

Disposition

Exertion

Flatter

Gizzards

Forecastle

Impersonate

Lagoon

Landlubber

Porridge

Ragamuffins

Reprimand

Scurvy

Smidgen

Tattletales

Tempting

Unravel

Yardarm

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.

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. Lights may go out before the performance begins and seating is very difficult after that time.

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.

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 *Peter Pan*, which is one hour and fifteen 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.

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.

CLASSROOM EXTENSION ACTIVITIES (PRE- or POST-PERFORMANCE)

Language Arts

- Read aloud or listen to an audio version of the original novel, *Peter Pan*. How does the musical differ from the story in prose? What are similarities? Explore other popular stories that have been turned into musicals.
- 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 Peter, Wendy, Captain Hook, Tiger Lily, and others.
- Explore the relationship of protagonists and antagonists in classroom stories and draw a comparison to relationships in the musical, such as Peter and Captain Hook, Peter and Wendy, Wendy and Tinker Bell, Captain Hook and Smee.
- Write a sequel to the musical. What happens after the Lost Boys live with Wendy’s family for a while? Does Peter ever grow up? Does Wendy mature and eventually have a family of her own? Do any of the Darlings or Lost Boys return to Neverland? If so, for what purpose? Does Captain Hook survive?
- Read some other famous pirate stories, such as *Treasure Island* by Robert Louis Stevenson, or *The Gold Bug* by Edgar Allen Poe.

Science

- Explore Flying

In the story of *Peter Pan*, Peter and the Darling children are all able to fly by using their imaginations. How have humans used their imaginations to take to the sky throughout the centuries? Discuss the mechanisms and history of hot air balloons, hang gliders, helicopters, airplanes, winged suits, and rockets.

- Reptiles. The crocodile features prominently in *Peter Pan*. Use this as an opportunity to explore crocodiles, alligators, and other reptiles. Investigate the physical features, habitat, diet, and classification of various reptile species.

Art

- Create a class mural of the musical. Include scenes from the story such as Neverland, the Lost Boys' cave, the Darling nursery, and the pirate ship.
- Draw a picture of a favorite scene or character.
- Re-create Neverland using clay forms in a box or using cardboard. Label the locations that correspond to the Neverland locations in *Peter Pan*.
- Draw an advertisement or program cover for the musical.
- Design stage scenery for *Peter Pan* or another story that you would like to see on stage.

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 one of the classic *Peter Pan* films. 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?

History/Social Studies

- Our story is set in England around 1910. This was the time of King Edward VII known as the Edwardian era. What were some of the customs and influences of this era? How was life different in England 100 years ago than it is now?
- Explore the geography of England and the British Isles. Ask the students to find England on a world map. Research traveling to Britain in the early 20th century. How might one make the journey and what might a visitor find while touring England at that time?
- Pirate lore is part of pop culture today, but real pirates have been a part of history for centuries. Have your students research a famous pirate from history. Where did he or she roam? What was the life of a pirate like? Did they really have buried treasure, maps, walking the plank, etc.?

OTHER RESOURCES

Books

Peter Pan by J. M. Barrie (originally published 1911)

Peter Pan and Wendy: the junior novelization by Elizabeth Rudnick (2023)

Tiger Lily by Jodi Lynn Anderson (2012). A young adult novel, told from the perspective of Tiger Lily

Internet

History website with information about pirates:

<https://www.history.com/news/8-real-life-pirates-who-roved-the-high-seas>

San Diego Zoo's fact-packed website with information on crocodiles and other reptiles:

<https://animals.sandiegozoo.org/animals/crocodilian>

NASA's comprehensive website with hundreds of learning resources (including the history of flight):

<https://www.nasa.gov/learning-resources/>

This study guide was compiled by Billie J. Little and Paul Bower; updated by New Mexico Young Actors in 2024. Copyright 2024. All Rights Reserved.