

“Cinderella”

By Stevens Puppets



An Educator’s Guide

You’re Invited to the Ball!

Cinderella, mistreated by her stepsisters, is befriended by the court jester who informs her about a royal ball. Despite her stepsisters' attempts to prevent her, Cinderella attends the ball with the help of her fairy godmother, who transforms her into a princess. At the ball, the jester reminds guests of a law prohibiting anyone from saying no to the prince. Cinderella dances with the prince, but must leave before midnight. The next day, the prince searches for the owner of a glass slipper, which fits Cinderella's foot. The stepsisters' attempts to deceive the prince are thwarted, and Cinderella marries the prince, fulfilling her dreams.

Before the show

Activate Schemata

Engage in a discussion with your students at their level to help them recall what they already know about the story of “Cinderella” and Fairy Tales and to predict what they will see. Use questions like this to begin the discussion.



- What characters will be in the story? What might they look like? What might they act like? How might they be related?
- Where will the story be set? (In a house? Outside? In a palace?)
- When will the story be set?
- What will be happening at the beginning of the story?
- What will be happening in the middle of the story?
- What will happen at the end of the story?
- What characters do you expect to see?
- How do you think that fairy tales evolve over time?
- What kind of puppets do you think you will see?
- Do you think there will be any animals in the show?
- Are you familiar with this story? Where have you seen it before?

Academic Standards that connect to the performance experience.

- Describe play-acting, pretending, and real life.
- Compare a story that is read to one that is acted out.
- Identify how the elements of place and time can change a story.
- Describe characters and plot development discovered during dramatic play.
- Demonstrate how the parts of the story go together by acting out a story with a beginning, middle, and end.
- Identify characters in stories from various cultures.
- Re-tell a story, demonstrating respect, from a culture other than one's own.
- Identify similarities between plays and stories.
- Describe a character in a story and tell why the character is important to the story.
- Communicate with others the concept of dramatic conflict and resolution in stories using dramatic play.
- Explain the difference between the stage, backstage, and audience areas.
- Identify universal characters in stories from different cultures.
- Discuss why costumes and makeup are used in a play.
- Understand how cultural differences are expressed through character, environment, and theme.
- Identify geographical or cultural origins of stories.
- Identify interpersonal skills that are learned through participation in a play.
- Discuss differences between stories that are presented in different modes or time periods.
- Devise a story about an age-appropriate issue and explore different endings.
- Discuss the concept of "willing suspension of disbelief" used in theatre to help create the illusion of real life in performances.
- Explore how theatre is used to understand different cultures.
- Discuss alternate performance possibilities of the same character in the same play.
- Define the visual elements that must be conveyed dramatically to make a scene effective.
- Make a list of types of props that might be found in a play.
- Explore how theatre can communicate universal truths across the boundaries of culture and language.
- Recognize theatre works as a reflection of societal beliefs and values.
- Create a new ending for a familiar story.

- Describe how a theatrical activity can entertain or instruct an audience.
- Discuss the ways in which theatre experiences involve empathy and aesthetic distance.
- Explain how a performance would change if depicted in a different location, time, or culture.
- Explore potential differences when performing works set in a variety of historical and cultural contexts.

Theater Etiquette

The main curtain will open during the show and the action will take place on the center of the stage. The curtain will close periodically between individual scenes to allow for changes of scenery and set pieces/props and then re-open on a new scene. The puppeteer will come out in front of the stage before the show to introduce it and after the show to take a bow, to demonstrate a marionette, and to answer some questions. Depending on space and time, the puppeteer will invite the teachers to bring their classes behind the stage to see the puppets and the backstage area and to ask more questions.

Sit on your bottom so the people behind you can see the show.

Remain quiet while a scene is in action so everyone can hear the dialogue.

Clap during scene changes to show you enjoyed the previous scene.

Laugh out loud when you think something in the show is funny.

After the show, clap when the puppeteer comes out in front of the stage to show you appreciated the puppeteer's performance and the artist's work.

Remain seated and quiet while the puppeteer demonstrates how a marionette works so everyone can see and hear.

Raise your hand if you would like to volunteer when the puppeteer asks someone to help demonstrate a puppet.

Clap for the volunteer when invited to in order to show you appreciate their bravery and participation and you think they did a good job.

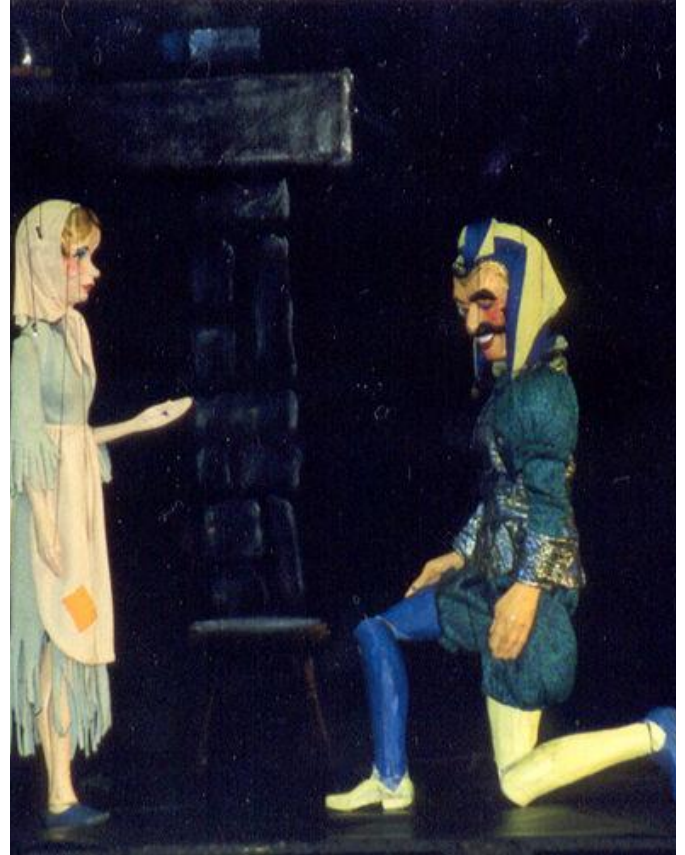
Raise your hand to ask a question of the puppeteer when invited.

Wait for instructions and to be dismissed before getting up after the show.

When invited backstage, stay in line with your classmates and with your teacher, be careful to look with your eyes but please don't touch anything and feel free to ask more questions of the puppeteer backstage about the show, the puppets, or the stage, or anything else you're interested in.

Academic Standards for Theater Etiquette

- Demonstrate appropriate audience behavior at a live performance.
- Exhibit appropriate audience etiquette and response.
- Exhibit the behavior necessary to establish audience etiquette, response, and constructive criticism.
- Demonstrate effective audience etiquette and constructive criticism for a live performance.
- Exhibit proper audience etiquette, give constructive criticism, and defend personal responses.
- Describe the difference in responsibilities between being an audience member at live or recorded performances.
- Describe the responsibilities of audience members, to the actors and each other, at live and recorded performances and demonstrate appropriate behavior.



Information relating to performance genre and content

Use this information and these resources about the story, the company/performers, and marionettes with your students before and after the performance. For example, the original texts and illustrations can be used for textual and visual comparisons of the different versions, how the story of Cinderella has evolved over the years. Information about marionettes can be used to discuss how this was the same or different from live actors or animated versions.

Cinderella is a fairy tale that has been told in variations around the world dating back more than 2000 years! The earliest known variation was recounted by the Greek geographer Strabo sometime between 7 BC and AD 23—is about a Greek slave girl who marries the king of Egypt.

Versions of the tale of the Little Cinder Girl have been found throughout history in places such as Korea, Vietnam, Greece, Iran, France, Italy and Germany. The most common variations in modern western culture come from a collection written by Charles Perrault in 1697 as Cendrillon. From this version we get the common tropes of the Fairy GodMother, the glass slipper and the Pumpkin carriage. Another version was later published as Aschenputtel by the Brothers Grimm in their folk tale collection Grimms' Fairy Tales in 1812. From this version we get the wishing tree, the evil wicked stepsisters and the moral that our heroine is good and kind and that is ultimately why she succeeds.

For a synopsis and history of versions and variations:

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cinderella>

For the french text (to read or to listen to) through Project Gutenberg:

<https://gutenberg.org/ebooks/33931>

For resources into the origins of the story:

<https://d.lib.rochester.edu/cinderella.html>

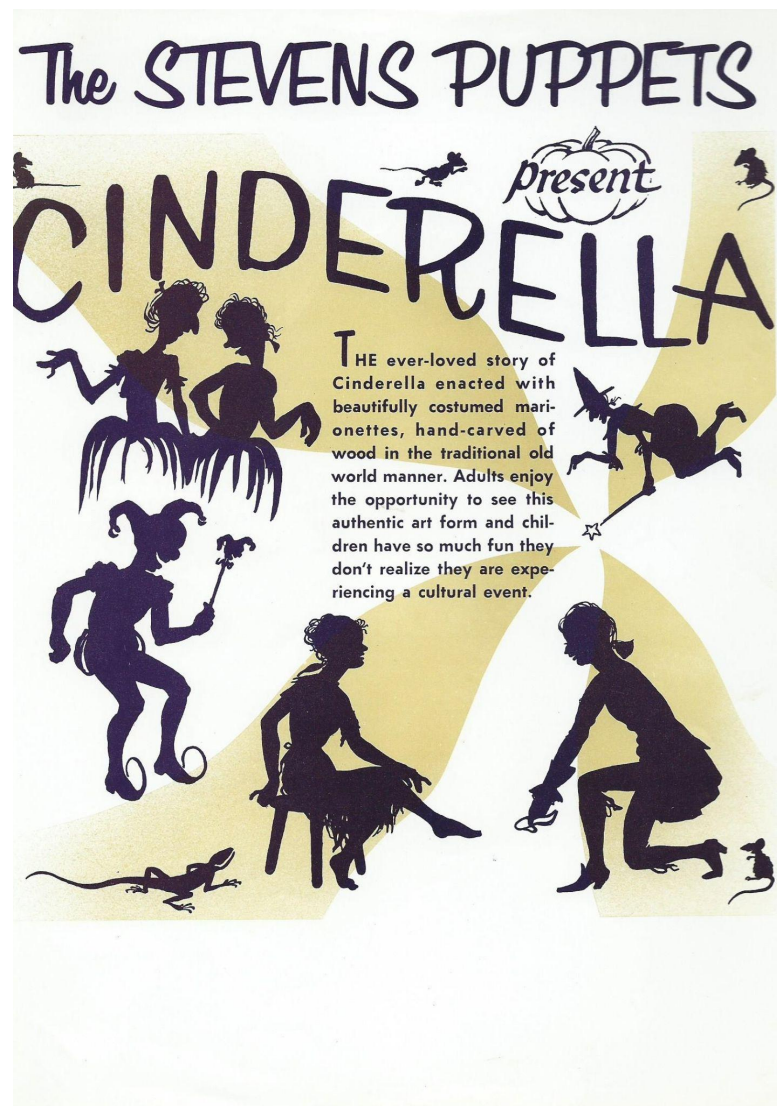
Stevens Puppets' production was created by Martin Stevens in the 1960s, and adapted by Dan Raynor. Martin Stevens hand-carved the wooden marionettes, jointed them and strung them, and built the set pieces and props. His wife, Margi Stevens, painted and costumed the marionettes and painted the scenery. The original voices of Martin and Margi were replaced in 2025, recorded digitally in a studio and feature the talents of Raynor family members and friends. Dan Raynor edited the recording and added music and sound effects.

Stevens Puppets, and its founders Martin and Margi Stevens, are important in the history of American puppetry and are featured in museums around the country. More information about the company, the founders, and the shows can be found at:

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

Marionettes are a subset of puppets which are suspended from and controlled by strings. For more information about marionettes:

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marionette>



Additional pre-show activities

Before or after the performance, a unit exploring European FairTale Collections would be appropriate. Related content would include

- *The different languages and cultures this story has been told in.*
- *The importance of the “moral” in stories like this.*
- *Explore socio-emotional learning in regards to stepsisters' treatment of Cinderella.*
- *What are some classic fairy tale tropes and how are they utilized by the authors to help us understand the society we live in?*
- *The evolution of fables from oral tradition into written word that led to many of these collections being recorded. (Examples can include the Grimm Fairy Tales, Mother Goose, Aesop's Fables, and 1,001 Arabian Nights.)*



After the show, you could ask students to

- *identify elements of the fairy tale that played an important part in the show and how the story and the characters and the visual elements were different than what they expected.*

You can use this unit of guided discovery for students to complete individually or in groups or to design your own unit about Cinderella, Fairtales, and/or morals and anti-Bullying

Academic Standards that relate to the activity if applicable

- Identify how the elements of characters and use of rhyme and rhythm can change a story.
- Identify characters in stories from various cultures.
- Re-tell a story, demonstrating respect, from a culture other than one's own.
- Identify universal characters in stories from different cultures.
- Discuss why costumes and makeup are used in a play.
- Recognise and explore the bullying experienced by Cinderella and abuse by her sisters.

- Discuss differences between stories that are presented in different locations or time periods.
- Explore how theatre is used to understand different cultures.
- Explore how theatre can communicate universal truths across the boundaries of culture and language.
- Recognize theatre works as a reflection of societal beliefs and values.
- Explore potential differences when performing works set in a variety of historical and cultural contexts.
- Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.



After the show

Post-show activities connected to the Academic Standards

Language Arts, Science (geography), Social Studies (different cultures, social justice, conflict resolution), History Activities

Review the discussion questions for activating schemata and prediction and discuss how the story met their expectations and how it surprised them. At your students level, engage in a continuing discussion with questions like these:

- What in the story seemed unreal or unlikely to you? Why? Why do you think the author did that?
- Why do you think the stepsisters bullied Cinderella?
- Why do you think the stepsisters have such a strong rivalry?
- Why do you think the Jester's job was so crucial to his self esteem??
- What is the importance of saying "No" in this story?
- What does the story tell you about justice and cruelty?
- Do you think the Fairy God Mother was an allegory?
- How do you think stories teach lessons? Is this important to society? Do you think it's the most effective method?
- How does the Fairy God Mother and Cinderella's kindness towards Larry impact his loyalty to them?
- How was this story similar and different from the other Cinderella stories you've seen, heard, or read? Why do you think those choices were made? Why is that important?

Academic Standards that relate to the activities

- Describe play-acting, pretending, and real life.
- Compare a story that is read to one that is acted out.
- Identify how the elements of place and time can change a story.
- Describe characters and plot development discovered during dramatic play.
- Demonstrate how the parts of the story go together by acting out a story with a beginning, middle, and end.
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- Create a new ending for a familiar story.
- Describe how a theatrical activity can entertain or instruct an audience.
- Discuss the ways in which theatre experiences involve empathy and aesthetic distance.
- Explain how a performance would change if depicted in a different location, time, or culture.
- Explore potential differences when performing works set in a variety of historical and cultural contexts.
- Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.
- Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.
- Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

Puppet Theater Activities

Have students discuss, perhaps draw/diagram, the performance venue with the puppet stage in it and identify where the audience was, where the puppets were, where the puppeteer was. Identify where the speakers and lights were. Identify where the puppets hung backstage. How did the puppeteer handle the marionettes when there were more than two on stage? Did anyone see how small the stage and the show packed up before or after the show? Why is that important?

How did the puppeteer control the marionettes? Where were the joints so they could move? How were the head/neck joints different on the horses and on the people? How were the shoulder joints different than the elbow joints and how were the thigh joints different than the knee joints? Why? Notice how these joints work differently on your own body. Which joints move which way and in which ways can each joint not move?

What did you notice about how the puppets were carved and painted? Were there colors on the puppets that were unnatural or looked like make up? Why do you think these were used? How do you think the pumpkin worked at the end? How did the Horseman throw it?

Academic Standards that relate to the activity.

- Explain the difference between the stage, backstage, and audience areas.
- Discuss why costumes and makeup are used in a play.
- Define the visual elements that must be conveyed dramatically to make a scene effective.

Storytelling Activities

Individually or in groups, rewrite or act out the story with different endings or set in a different distinct place. How would that change the characters that would be included? How would that change the story or the dialogue?

Academic Standards that relate to the activity.

- Identify how the elements of place and time can change a story.
- Demonstrate how the parts of the story go together by acting out a story with a beginning, middle, and end.
- Identify characters in stories from various cultures.
- Identify universal characters in stories from different cultures.
- Identify geographical or cultural origins of stories.
- Discuss differences between stories that are presented in different modes or time periods.
- Devise a story about an age-appropriate issue and explore different endings.
- Create a new ending for a familiar story.
- Explain how a performance would change if depicted in a different location, time, or culture.
- Explore potential differences when performing works set in a variety of historical and cultural contexts.



Bibliography

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<https://gutenberg.org/ebooks/33931>

Stevens Puppets tours fully-staged productions of fairy-tales and classic children's literature, featuring hand-carved wooden marionettes in front of colorfully hand-painted scenery. The charming puppets come alive in their miniature worlds, transporting their audiences through magical journeys of endearing stories, raucous laughter, and artistic beauty. The puppeteers give life to their little actors, weaving a spell of childhood over audiences of all ages, as they invite everyone along for a trip through "once upon a time."

Stevens Puppets was founded in 1933 by the Peabody Award winning Martin Stevens, preeminent American puppeteer and founder of the Puppeteers of America. With his wife,

Margi, Mr. Stevens created ground-breaking touring marionette shows which are featured in books, in museums, and on tour. Mr. Stevens' marionettes and stage design have influenced generations of puppeteers in America and abroad, often cited as artistic benchmarks and industry standards.

Dan and Zan Raynor, the owners, have been with Stevens Puppets for over 20 years, each coming from live theatre backgrounds of acting and directing professionally. Dan holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Theatre and Zan holds a Master of Theology with a doctorate in Canon Law. Dan has taught theatre at the Northwest Arkansas Academy of Fine Arts and directed professionally for theatres in several states, including televised events in California. He has performed with and directed many professional musicians like Neil Young and Huey Lewis, as well as acting professionally with many theatre companies in California. In addition to performing on stage as an actor and dancer, Zan has directed high school and college theatre programs, as well as designing lights, costumes, and choreography for numerous theatre companies in the Midwest and Northeast. Zan has taught every level of school, from Montessori preschool through University classes. She has been a high school principal as well as theatre and Latin teacher. They divide their time between studio artwork, both original and restoration, training other performing artists, managing complex tours, and performing themselves all around the country at schools, libraries, festivals, and fairs.



Mindful that they are stewards of this important legacy, Dan and Zan Raynor lovingly restore the original Stevens' productions, ensuring that future generations continue to enjoy these historic treasures. They also create new productions of classic stories with hand-carved casts of characters in the tradition of the master and manage tours throughout the country performed by puppeteers they have personally chosen and apprenticed.

Dan and Zan have recently completed the restorations of "The Sleeping Beauty", "Rumplestiltskin", "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow", "Aladdin", and "The Wizard of Oz". These marionette plays feature Martin and Margi Stevens' original puppets, Margi's period costumes, the Stevens' hand painted scenery, all lovingly and authentically restored or re-created by Zan and Dan Raynor. *Fun fact.* The "fly-apart" marionette of Rumplestiltskin was the first of its kind, an original innovation of Martin Stevens and a keystone of his company's patrimony.