

2022 – 2023

*Corduroy*  
**EDUCATOR GUIDE**

children's  
**theatre**  
company

# CORDUROY™

**February 21-March 31, 2023**

*A Children's Theatre Company Original Production*

Oh no, Corduroy's button has gone missing, and he can't go home with kindhearted Lisa without it! Join the beloved teddy bear as he takes a rollicking ride up the escalator and begins a delightfully destructive romp through every section of the department store. Will he find his button at the top of a teetering store display? Will Lisa ever get to bring him home, or will the bumbling security guard catch him first? Where, oh where, is Corduroy's **BUTTON**

based on the *Corduroy* and *A Pocket for Corduroy* books by **DON FREEMAN**  
adapted for the stage by **BARRY KORNHAUSER**  
directed by **PETER C. BROSIUS**



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>About Don Freeman &amp; <i>Corduroy</i></b> .....	<b>page 4</b>
<b>Springboard: Discussion questions &amp; curriculum ideas</b> .....	<b>page 5</b>
<b>Class Act: Classroom activities based in theatre</b> .....	<b>page 6</b>
<b>Team Builder: Classroom activities to build collaboration.....</b>	<b>page 9</b>
<b>Worksheet Station: Copyable worksheets &amp; projects.....</b>	<b>page 10</b>
<b>Further Resources</b> .....	<b>page 14</b>

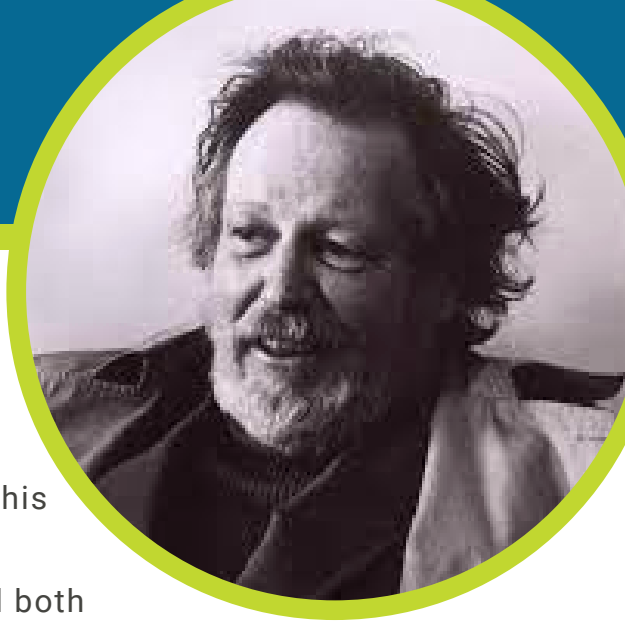


For virtual activities, videos, and more, join the creativity on the

[\*\*Flipgrid Discovery Library!\*\*](#)



# About Don Freeman and Corduroy



Don Freeman was born in San Diego, California, in 1908. After graduating high school and attending a summer course at San Diego School of Fine Arts, Don moved to New York, where he studied at the Art Students' League and developed a passion for theater. Don spent much of his time on Broadway and could often be found backstage, sketching actors and capturing everything that happened both on and off the stage in his sketchbook. He supported himself by playing his trumpet in a dance band, but after losing his trumpet on the subway Don decided to turn his attention to his sketches.

Don made a name for himself from his successful Broadway sketches and took his first step into children's literature when he was asked to illustrate for William Saroya. He quickly began writing and illustrating his own children's books, including *Corduroy*, *A Pocket for Corduroy*, and the Caldecott Honor Book *Fly High, Fly Low*. He collaborated frequently with his wife, Lydia, a fellow author and artist. Don died in 1978, and his wife went on to establish The Lydia Freeman Charitable Foundation.

Author and illustrator Don Freeman wanted to write a picture book about a character who explores a department store at night. His goal was to create a story that juxtaposed the luxury of department stores with the relatively modest lives of their patrons. How did he settle on a stuffed bear as the hero of such a tale? "I don't remember how or when a toy bear came into my life," wrote Don to editor Linda Zuckerman, "but he must have come from way out of my past. You know, I could just see a bear wearing corduroy overalls with one button missing ... the minute I settled on *Corduroy* and Lisa, everything came together." He chose the name "Corduroy" for his cuddly main character because it was once his nickname for his son, Roy.

Though *Corduroy* is inarguably a classic picture book now, it almost never found its way into print. Initially, *Corduroy* wasn't chosen to be published by Viking Press because they only published a small number of books each year. Don Freeman continued to remind the editors at Viking Press about this plucky little bear until, eventually, they decided to publish him. Don wrote the first draft in 1967, and the first copies graced bookstore shelves in 1968. Don's sequel, *A Pocket For Corduroy*, was published in 1978, but sadly Don passed away before he could see it in print.

# Springboard

Ideas of what to talk about, write about, or explore while connecting *Corduroy* to your classroom curriculum



Write a review of the performance or a letter to the actors.

Rewrite or retell the story from the perspective of The Night Watchman. How does the story change?

Hide a button in your classroom and challenge students to find it!

What does it mean to be friends? How do you know someone is your friend?

Compare and contrast the book and play.

Read all of the books in the *Corduroy* series.

Lisa's mother doesn't think Lisa should get Corduroy because he is missing a button, but Lisa thinks he will still be a great friend. What qualities do you look for in a friend?

Have you ever lost something like Corduroy lost his button? How did you feel when you lost it? How did you feel when you found it?

Write or draw a picture of what happens next in the story. What other adventures do Corduroy and Lisa go on together?

Learn to sew buttons back onto clothing.

Lisa does extra chores so she can save enough money to buy Corduroy. Have you ever saved money? What were you saving the money for?

What is the lesson or message of *Corduroy*?

Design a pocket for Corduroy with paint, markers, or other craft supplies.

Lisa has responsibilities like chores and homework. What are some of your responsibilities?

Practice fine motor skills with threading or sorting activities involving buttons

The Night Watchman is passionate about his job. What is something you are passionate about doing well?

Introduce students to the texture of Corduroy fabric. How would they describe the feeling? Why do you think Corduroy was named after this type of fabric?

Create a Corduroy puppet using a paper lunch sack, markers and paper



# ***Class Act: Actor's Tools***

Actors use many tools to help them tell a story – three we focus on at CTC are body, voice, and imagination.

Explain that projecting means using a loud voice and enunciating means speaking clearly. Have students practice projecting and enunciating by saying the title of the play, *Corduroy* as a group, and then individually.

Brainstorm emotions that actors might portray. Try saying, “Corduroy” using those emotions. Students will naturally begin to use their body to portray the emotion as they say the line. Brainstorm how your body looks or feels different when you are feeling these emotions. Allow a few students to showcase their work as a solo.

# ***Class Act: Button. Button? BUTTON!***

**Objective:** This activity allows students to develop an understanding for how the tone of their voice can communicate meaning. In the play, Corduroy says “Button,” over and over again, but because he changes how he says it, we can still understand what he’s thinking and feeling. In theatre, the meaning behind the word is called subtext.

**Directions:** Start by having students say, “Button,” clearly in their regular voices. Brainstorm different ways you manipulate our voice.

This is a great moment to introduce (or solidify) the musical elements of tempo (speed of sound), pitch (high or low tone), and volume (loud or soft) and apply them to your voice.

Take a moment after exploring each voice to discuss what these different voices sound like. What emotion might they associate with the different tempos and pitches?

Next, move on to exploring different emotions. You can use the following prompts and/or makeup your own.

“Say “Button, button, button,” like...

- You are greeting Lisa for the first time.
- You realize you are missing your button.
- You hear a scary noise.
- You have to find a hiding spot from the Night Watchman.

## ***Class Act: Character Interview***

**Objective:** In this activity, students will use their imagination to invent backgrounds, justify actions, and answer questions from a character’s perspective. Students will generate questions to better understand a variety of characters and build empathy. Students will offer advice and ideas to help the characters.

**Directions:** Place a chair at the front of the room. Ask for a volunteer to come to the front of the class and pretend to be the Grinch.

The rest of the students will play the role of the school guidance counselor and the Grinch has just been sent to the office for trying to steal the schools holiday decorations, gifts, etc. Invite the “counselors” to ask the Grinch questions that a school counselor might ask and have student playing the Grinch respond as the character. It may be helpful to model asking the Grinch a couple of starter questions before opening up to the class. It is helpful to remind counselors that it is their goal to help the Grinch, not to yell at him.

Sample questions:

- “Why did you take all of the school’s holiday decorations?”
- “What were you feeling when you decided to take them.”
- “How do you think the students felt when they saw their decorations had been taken?”
- Give students an opportunity to offer some advice to the Grinch.

After interviewing the Grinch, do the same activity for other characters in the story such as Cindy Lou Who, Max the Dog, Mayor Who, or Grandma Who.

## ***Class Act: Object Transformation***

**Objective:** This exercise will encourage students to think outside of the box and turn everyday objects into something else. This activity allows students to work collaboratively while stretching their imaginations.

**Directions:** Break students into small groups. Give each group a small cardboard box or similar everyday object. In their groups, have students reimagine a potential alternative use for the cardboard box. Allot 10–15 minutes for exploration and encourage students to keep brainstorming the entire time.

After the brainstorm session, ask each group to choose their favorite idea and crate a 30-second commercial for the new product.

Showcase each commercial for the rest of the class.



## ***Class Act: Narrative Picture***

**Objective:** This activity challenges students to compare and contrast characters, infer meaning in a picture, and practice creative problem solving skills. Students will use their imagination to create imagined situations within a sequence of events.

**Directions:** Show the class the illustration below from the book *Corduroy* by Don Freeman. Give each student an opportunity to share with the class what they observe about this picture.

Divide students into small groups and have them re-create the picture with their bodies. Once all the students are frozen in the scene, allow each to make up a line of dialogue their character/object would say. Allow each student in the scene to say what their character/object is thinking in the scene. Reflect on how what we say and what we think are different. How do you decide what to say out loud and what to keep to yourself?

Dismiss students back to their small groups to brainstorm what might have happened right before this photo was taken. Create a tableau of this situation.

As a large group, analyze the conflict of this scene and brainstorm how this conflict might be solved. Dismiss students back to their small group to create a tableau of a potential solution to the conflict. Allow each group to showcase all three tableaus (beginning, middle, and end) in front of the class.

Ask the audience to make observations about the created scenes. How was the conflict solved?





# Team Builder: Stand Up If...

**Objective:** This exercise activates prior knowledge around concepts or topics in life, reading, and writing. The exercise also builds community as participants share and observe common experiences and celebrate differences.

**Directions:** Ask students to stay seated at their desks. Tell students they will hear a series of prompts starting with “Stand up if...” If the statement applies to them, they should stand. Choose a couple of students to ask follow-up questions related to the statement. All students sit again before being prompted with another “stand up if” statement.

Begin with non-content-related prompts to establish the pattern and get everyone moving and listening. Then move to content-related statements that will gradually get more sensitive and/or detailed as the exercise progresses.

Sample Dialogue:  
“Stand up if...”:

General Statements:

- You like pizza.
- You like to read.
- You play an instrument.
- You have seen a play before.
- You have been in a play before.

Statements related to Corduroy:

- I know what it means to be a friend.
- I have lost something before.
- I have saved money to buy something.
- I have done chores around the house.
- I have a toy I love.

# Team Builder: Building Appliances

**Objective:** This activity challenges students to use their voice and body to work together and create a cohesive machine.

**Directions:** Break your classroom into groups of three to five students. Each group will be assigned an appliance like the ones that scare the Night Watchman in Corduroy. Using all members of their group, they must find a way to become their assigned appliance using their body and voice. This should be done with simple, repeatable actions and sound effects. Allow for time to create and then have the groups demonstrate their creations for the rest of the class.

Example appliances:

- Washing Machine
- Vacuum Cleaner
- Stove
- Blender
- Dryer
- Fan

# Counting Coins





Lisa saves up her money to buy Corduroy. Pretend you are saving up money, but you only have coins.

Quarters = 25¢ or \$0.25

Dimes = 10¢ or \$0.10

Nickels = 5¢ or \$0.05

Pennies = 1¢ or \$0.01

<p><b>\$1.23</b></p> 	<p>_____ Quarters = \$ _____</p> <p>_____ Dimes = \$ _____</p> <p>_____ Nickels = \$ _____</p> <p>_____ Pennies = \$ _____</p> <p>TOTAL = \$ _____</p>
<p><b>\$0.47</b></p> 	<p>_____ Quarters = \$ _____</p> <p>_____ Dimes = \$ _____</p> <p>_____ Nickels = \$ _____</p> <p>_____ Pennies = \$ _____</p> <p>TOTAL = \$ _____</p>
<p><b>\$3.02</b></p> 	<p>_____ Quarters = \$ _____</p> <p>_____ Dimes = \$ _____</p> <p>_____ Nickels = \$ _____</p> <p>_____ Pennies = \$ _____</p> <p>TOTAL = \$ _____</p>
<p><b>\$2.90</b></p> 	<p>_____ Quarters = \$ _____</p> <p>_____ Dimes = \$ _____</p> <p>_____ Nickels = \$ _____</p> <p>_____ Pennies = \$ _____</p> <p>TOTAL = \$ _____</p>

# Story Sequence

So much happens in the plays we see and the books we read! See if you can remember the order of events in *Corduroy* by numbering the pictures below from 1st – 6th.



# Goal Setting

In *Corduroy*, Lisa sets a goal to save money to buy Corduroy. A goal is something you desire and want to achieve. Often, we don't reach our goals right away. We need to take steps to work towards them. Use this worksheet to help you plan how to work towards a goal you set for yourself. You can start today!

What is your goal?

Why do you want to reach your goal?

When do you want to achieve your goal?

List 3 steps you can take to get closer to your goal.

1.

2.

3.



# Corkboard Conversations

Use the sticky notes below to think critically about *Corduroy*

Three adjectives that describe this play are...

- 1
- 2
- 3

This play made me feel...

This play made me think about...

A status I would post on my social media after seeing this show is...

A question I still have is...

This play taught me...



My Rating of *Corduroy*  
at Children's Theatre Company

# FURTHER RESOURCES

## More About Corduroy:

Adapting 'Corduroy'  
for the Stage

[Learn More](#)

Downloadable  
Activities

[Resources](#)

Viola Davis on 'Corduroy  
Takes a Bow'

[Learn More](#)

Reading is  
Fundamental

[Resources](#)

Fun Learning for Kids  
Corduroy Activities

[Resources](#)

Explore A City for  
Corduroy

[Watch](#)

Storytime with the MET |  
'Corduroy'

[Watch](#)

Behind the Scenes of  
'Corduroy'

[Watch](#)

## More About Don Freeman

Why did he write  
'Corduroy'?

[Learn More](#)

Don Freeman  
Biography

[Learn More](#)

Roy Freeman reads  
'Corduroy'

[Watch](#)

Don Freeman's  
Sketch Book

[Explore](#)

Mail Letters to:

**Children's Theatre Company**  
2400 Third Avenue South  
Minneapolis, MN 55404

Submit Student Questions at:

[www.childrenstheatre.org](http://www.childrenstheatre.org/offbookquestions)  
/offbookquestions

Check out more activities on:



Flipgrid

Questions? Email:

[schools@childrenstheatre.org](mailto:schools@childrenstheatre.org)

children's  
theatre  
company