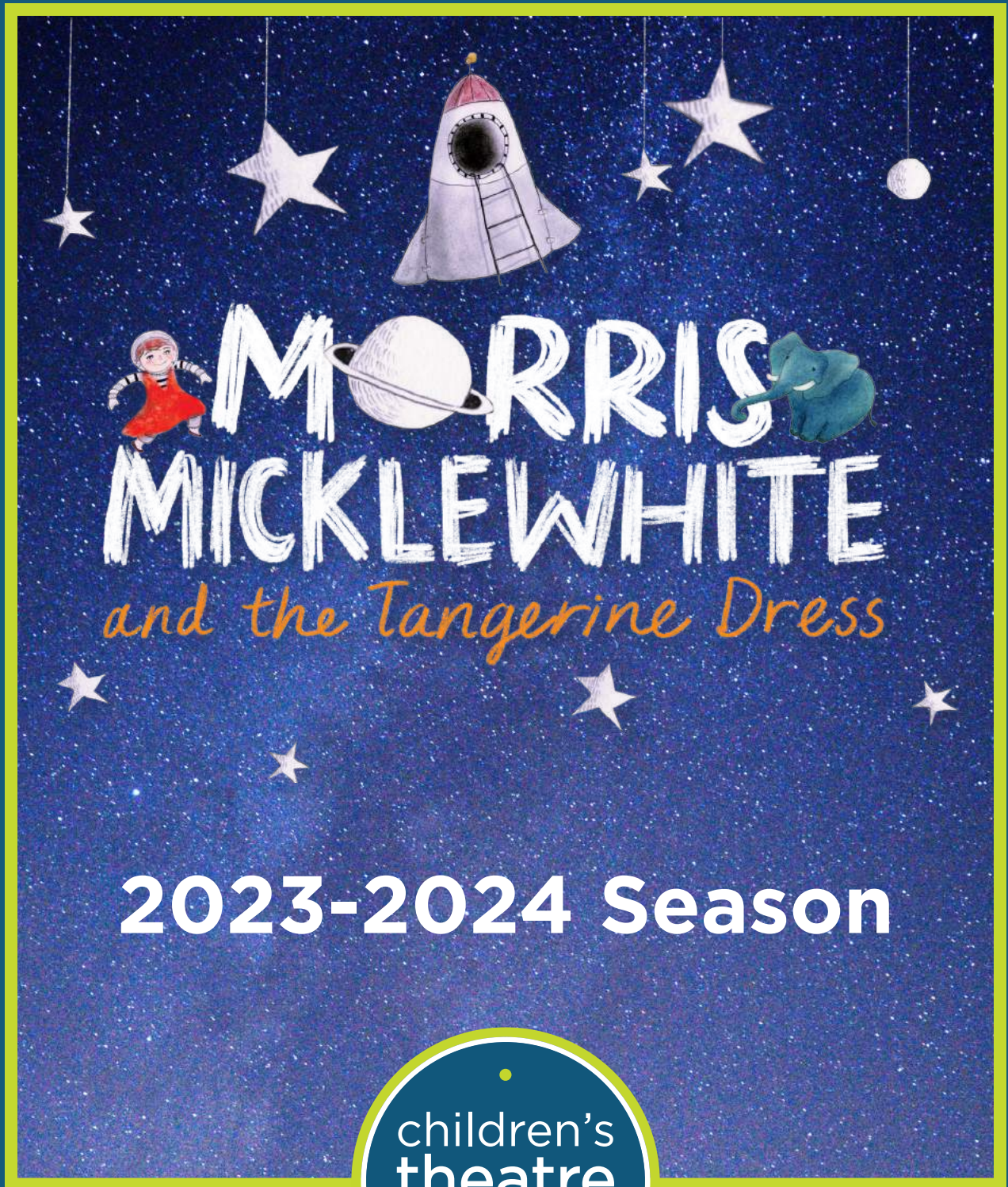


# ***Morris Micklewhite and the Tangerine Dress Educator Guide***



•  
children's  
**theatre**  
company  
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# Behind the Scenes

Learn more about the artists, history, and themes of this production.

## What is this show about?

Morris likes lots of things: doing puzzles, painting pictures, pretending to be an astronaut, and wearing a tangerine dress from his school's dress-up box because it "reminds him of tigers, the sun, and his mother's hair." But some of his classmates think boys can't wear dresses because... well, because they're boys. With his vivid imagination and space-animal friends, Morris travels the galaxy in search of an answer to the all-important question: "Do astronauts wear dresses?"

## A World Premiere Production

*Morris Micklewhite and the Tangerine Dress* at Children's Theatre Company is a world premiere production. Co-commissioned with Chicago Children's Theatre and The Rose Theater, CTC has been working with playwright Juliany Taveras to adapt the 2014 picture book by Christine Baldacchino into a stage play. The picture book is a 2015 recipient of the Stonewall Book Award for Books in Children's and Young Adult Literature.

## Imaginative Play

Morris is an imaginative, creative boy whose favorite part of the classroom is the dress-up corner. As your students will see in the show, imaginative play allows students to be anyone, do anything, be any place, and experience life outside of reality. While engaging in imaginative play, students learn critical thinking skills, build expressive language, increase social skills, and learn how to manage their emotions. Students will get to see Morris's imagination come to life on stage. Discuss with your students how they might stage some of their imaginative adventures!

“ I had a very similar experience to Morris when I was about his age. I wanted to play superheroes with the boys during playground time, and my favorite superhero was Batman. But the boys refused to let me play with them unless I agreed to be the girl who needed to be rescued. To top it all off, the girls in my class didn't want to play superhero because they were convinced superheroes were a boy thing. So, I ended up spending most of my playground time playing alone. Luckily, like Morris, I had a big imagination. I could imagine being Batman and leading my own charge of superheroes...I want my readers to know that they can wear whatever they want to wear. They can be the person that they want to be.”

- Christine Baldacchino, author of *Morris Micklewhite and the Tangerine Dress*



# Before You Go

Use these activities in your classroom to prepare your students for their field trip to CTC.



# Stand Up If...



**Grades:** Grades K and up

**Time Required:** 5-15 minutes

**Supplies:** None

**Set-up:** This activity can be done in a circle or with students seated at their desks.

In *Morris Micklewhite and the Tangerine Dress*, Morris and his classmates learn the importance of confidently being themselves. In this activity, students will build community as they share and observe common experiences and celebrate differences.

## Instructions:

1. With the students seated in a circle or at their desks, tell them they will hear a series of prompts starting with “Stand up if...” If the statement applies to them, they should stand. After each prompt, choose a couple of students to ask follow-up questions related to the statement.
2. All students sit again before being prompted with another “stand up if” statement.
3. 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 detailed and connect directly with themes that they will encounter in *Morris Micklewhite and the Tangerine Dress*.

### Sample Prompts: “Stand up if...”

#### General Statements:

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

#### Statements related to

#### *Morris Micklewhite and the Tangerine Dress:*

- You like to play pretend.
- You would like to travel to space.
- You have a favorite piece of clothing.
- You have ever felt left out.

## Variations and Adjustments

To add more movement, you can all stand in a circle and prompt students with the phrase “Cross the circle if...” This allows students to easily see how many students indicate that the prompt applies to them.

Read the *Morris Micklewhite and the Tangerine Dress* picture book to your class immediately prior to this activity.

See the next page for an extension of this activity  
that directly relates to gender stereotypes.

# Boy Thing or Girl Thing?

**Grades:** Grades 1 and up

**Time Required:** 10-30 minutes

**Supplies:** None

**Set-up:** This activity can be done in a circle or with students seated at their desks.

In *Morris Micklewhite and the Tangerine Dress*, Morris's classmates declare that Morris can't wear the tangerine dress because "boys don't wear dresses." This activity provides an opportunity to define **stereotype** to your students and allows them to examine and challenge gender stereotypes. Students will learn that they can decide for themselves what they like and don't have to ascribe to stereotypes.

**Stereotype:** A simple idea that many people believe about a large group of people that is **not true** for everyone in that group.

## Instructions:

1. With the students seated at their desks or in a circle, read the list below out loud and ask students to vote whether each one is a 'girl thing' or a 'boy thing.'
  - Pink
  - Blue
  - Dolls
  - Playing video games
  - Driving racecars
  - Cooking
  - Having long hair
  - Being good at math
  - Playing the drums
  - Dancing ballet
  - Being a firefighter
  - Working in a garden
  - Playing baseball
2. Once you've read through the whole list, ask the students if they have ever heard the word **stereotype** before. Explain that it is a simple idea that many people believe about a large group of people that is **not true** for everyone in that group.
3. Ask your students the following questions:
  1. Is it ok when stereotypes don't fit us?
  2. How does it feel when stereotypes don't fit?
  3. Why should we think about gender stereotypes or stereotypes telling us about things for 'boys' or 'girls'?
4. Remind students that gender stereotypes can be harmful because they take a simple idea and try to say it works for everyone in a group. Sometimes these stereotypes can make people stop doing an activity they really like and want to do. These stereotypes make it harder for people to be themselves and to like what they like.

## Variations and Adjustments

Read *Morris Micklewhite and the Tangerine Dress* with your class. Have students work together to create and then act out ways to intervene in the scenes where Morris gets teased for breaking gender stereotypes. Have students write a letter or make a card showing their support for Morris or for someone they know who broke gender stereotypes.

# Use Your Imagination—Stage Directions

**Grades:** Grades K and up

**Time Required:** 10-20 minutes

**Supplies:** Paper and coloring/drawing supplies

**Set-up:** This is an independent exercise for students to work at their desks.

In a script, **playwrights** use **stage directions** to communicate how they envision the technical aspects of a production, such as the lighting, scenery, costumes, and sound as well as the movement of the actors onstage.

Juliany Taveras, the **playwright** of *Morris Micklewhite and the Tangerine Dress*, writes **stage directions** in a very lyrical, vibrant way. Most of the time, audience members never see or hear the **stage directions**, but in this activity, students will have the opportunity to hear some of them for *Morris Micklewhite and the Tangerine Dress*.

Students will play the part of **designers** and draw their interpretation of the **stage directions**.

## Instructions:

1. With students seated at their desks, explain what **stage directions** are and that they will be hearing some stage directions from the play that they're going to see.
2. Read the following stage directions from the beginning of *Morris Micklewhite and the Tangerine Dress* out loud and tell them to listen and imagine what it looks like. You can invite them to close their eyes as they listen.

*"lights up!  
we are in the clouds.*

*or something like that,  
something otherworldly.  
both land and sky  
and shimmering empty space.*

*ah, yes:  
the sun is rising.  
the world is slowly beginning  
to take shape again.*

*but for now, in this moment  
of in between, we are still  
in the land of dreams...*

*...-and there are  
shadows, of the curious variety.*

*if we tilt our heads just so,  
we might see in them:  
a tiger's tail,  
an elephant's trunk,  
a zebra's stripes,  
a giraffe's looong neck..."*

3. Give the students time to draw what this looks like in their imaginations. Invite several students to share what they drew.

## Stage Directions

Instructions in a play for different aspects of the production. These could be instructions for the lighting, scenery, costumes, or sound.

**Stage Directions** also provide instructions for the movement of actors on stage. **Stage Directions** are written by the **Playwright**.

## Reflection Questions

How do you think CTC will make the stage look like this? Do you think they'll use special lights or effects?

How do these stage directions make you feel? What sort of mood do these stage directions set (happy, sad, excited, calm, etc.)?

*If you've read the picture book with your class*—What is similar about your drawings compared to the illustrations in the book? What is different?

## Variations and Adjustments

Hang the students' drawings up in the classroom and repeat the activity after you've seen the play. Have students compare their drawings from before their theatre experience and from after seeing the play at CTC.

After the activity, brainstorm with your students about what kind of music should be used to help set the scene. If you have access to instruments in your classroom, create a soundscape together that matches the mood of the stage directions.



# 3 Things

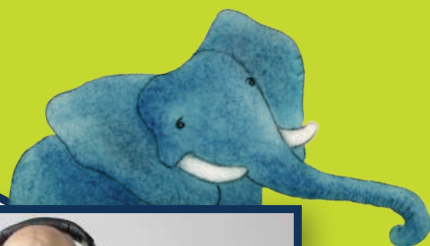
In the day or so before your field trip, share the following prompts with your students. You can read them aloud to your class or give each student a copy. When you return from the performance, review the list again. What do they remember noticing or thinking about during the performance?

## During the performance:



### Look for...

1. Toy animals. What animals do you notice?
2. A spaceship. What is it made out of?
3. Actors playing multiple characters.



### Listen for...

1. The swish, swish, swish and crinkle, crinkle of the tangerine dress.
2. Music that sets the mood.
3. Rumbling sounds. What does the rumbling tell us about how Morris is feeling?

### Think about...

1. What was a moment when someone was a good friend to Morris?
2. Morris's favorite thing to do during free time is play dress up. What's your favorite free time activity?
3. Why do you think Morris stayed home from school?

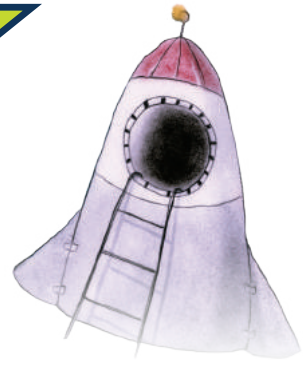




## **Before You Go—At Home**

**Print this section and send it home with permission slips. This section supports family engagement and provides tools to help families reflect with students about their theatre experience.**

# Before You Go—At Home



## Resources for Families

*Extend your child's theatre experience at home!*

### Questions to ask your child **BEFORE** they see the show:

- When you play pretend, what is your favorite thing to be?
- What is your favorite piece of clothing? How does it make you feel when you wear it?
- What about your field trip are you most excited about?

### Questions to ask your child **AFTER** they see the show:

- Where did Morris travel in his imagination?
- How can you stand up for others if they are being teased?
- What was your favorite part of the play?

Check out CTC's *Morris Micklewhite and the Tangerine Dress* Audience Guide for more information, discussion questions, and activities for the whole family.

[childrenstheatre.org/morris](http://childrenstheatre.org/morris)





# Swish, Swish—Sonic Fabrics

In *Morris Micklewhite and the Tangerine Dress*, Morris finds a tangerine dress in his school's dress up chest. He loves the sound the dress makes (*swish, swish, swish, crinkle, crinkle*). Go on a sonic exploration of fabrics with your child at home before their field trip!

Look around your home for scarves, blankets, dresses, jackets, etc. that make interesting noises. Gather them together and see what fun sounds you can make together.

Using your imaginations, can you turn the clothing pieces you gathered into other things? Can a scarf become really long hair? Can a puffy jacket become shining armor?





# Heading to CTC

Provide this resource to all teachers, staff, and chaperones attending the field trip. This section contains field trip procedures, accessibility information, and CTC's approach to theatre etiquette.

# Trip Guide

## CTC Theatre Etiquette

At CTC, we encourage audiences to engage with the live theatre experience and react freely. It's ok to laugh if something is funny, exclaim if something is surprising, gasp if something is scary, and maybe even dance along in your seats if the music inspires you. We value the real-time, honest reactions of our student audiences.

We do, however, thank you for your partnership in making sure that any reactions from your students are kind and respectful towards the actors onstage and towards all of the people who worked so hard to make the show possible. If there is a group seated near you that is being disrespectful, please don't hesitate to notify an usher.

## Arrival

Check-in begins 1 hour prior to the performance. Buses can unload in the circle driveway on 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave S between 24<sup>th</sup> St. and 25<sup>th</sup> St. An usher will greet you at your bus and will need to know the name of your school and how many buses you are traveling with. If all of your buses have arrived, we will ask you to unload and make one line. We will lead you inside to the MacMillan Family Lobby.

Groups are seated in the order of arrival, and your entire group must be present before you can check in. Seating begins 30 minutes prior to the start of the performance.

CTC does not print or issue individual tickets or stickers for student matinee performances. Instead, as you line up in the lobby, one of our ushers will count your group to ensure that you are not over your allotted number of seats. It is helpful if you can provide the usher with a final count for your group, but not required.

## Seating

Seating in the theatre begins 30 minutes prior to the performance. An usher will lead your group into the theatre in one line. We recommend spacing chaperones throughout the line to aid in guiding the students. To ensure that everyone gets a seat, please take whichever seat the usher is asking you to, including chaperones. Once your whole group has been assigned a seat, you are more than welcome to rearrange students and chaperones as you need to and utilize the restroom facilities.

## Lunch

Lunch space must be reserved in advance. If your group has reserved space in our lobby to eat lunch after the show, please bring the lunches inside with you when you arrive. We will store them in the lobby during the show. We recommend consolidating lunches into paper or reusable shopping bags. Large coolers and bins can be heavy and unwieldy, and individual lunches can easily be lost or forgotten on the bus.

After the show, those with reserved lunch space will have a designated area of the lobby to utilize. The lunch space allows for picnic-style eating on the floor. You may be sharing the lobby with other schools or may be directed to our other theatre's lobby if we have multiple groups staying for lunch. Custodial services are provided by CTC.



# Accessibility

## Mobility Accessibility

The MacMillan Family Lobby and Cargill Stage are fully accessible on the ground level. CTC's accessible seating area is located in the front row of the theatre. Please email [schools@childrenstheatre.org](mailto:schools@childrenstheatre.org) in advance to request accessible seating, if needed. The rest of the seating can be accessed by going up a set of stairs. The restrooms in the MacMillan Family Lobby are fully accessible.

An Accessible/All-Gender/Family Restroom is located next to the elevator on the 2nd level in the Target Lobby. An adult-sized changing table is available upon request.

## Sensory Sensitivities

The performance is live streamed in the lobby for anyone needing to take a break during the performance. Please feel free to come and go from the lobby as you need to throughout the show.

Please let an usher know if someone in your group would benefit from a fidget, ear plugs, noise canceling headphones, or coloring/activity sheets during your visit.

## Assistive Listening Devices

Please let an usher know if you would like to use an assistive listening device. These devices come equipped with an over-the-ear earpiece. This earpiece can be unplugged, and other devices, such as cochlear implants, can be plugged into the receiver using the 1/8" jack. If you will be plugging in your own device, please bring the appropriate cord as CTC does not have these on hand.

## Sign Interpretation and Audio Description

A sign interpreted and/or audio described student matinee performance is scheduled for each production at CTC. We suggest booking your field trip for these scheduled performances if you need either of these services. Please contact [schools@childrenstheatre.org](mailto:schools@childrenstheatre.org) if you are unable to reserve your field trip for the scheduled performance(s) and need to request this service for a different date. CTC requires at least 3 weeks' notice to schedule ASL interpretation or Audio Description.

## Prayer/Private Nursing Space

During your visit, please ask a member of our staff to use our private space for nursing, pumping, prayer, or other needs.

# *Morris Micklewhite and the Tangerine Dress*

## Content Advisories

**Language: 0 out of 5 stars** ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

**Themes and Situations: 1 out of 5 stars** ★ ★ ★ ★ ★  
Morris gets laughed at and teased for wearing a dress.

**Violence and Scariness: 0 out of 5 stars** ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

**Sensory Advisories: 1 out of 5 stars** ★ ★ ★ ★ ★  
Morris's imagination and feelings are portrayed through stage magic. Sound effects and lights may be loud and jarring.

**Potentially Anxious Moments: 1 out of 5 stars** ★ ★ ★ ★ ★  
Morris gets laughed at and teased for wearing a dress. Morris feels nervous about returning to school because of this.

Please contact [schools@childrenstheatre.org](mailto:schools@childrenstheatre.org) with any questions.

# Trip Guide

This tool is called a **social story** and tells students what to expect at the theatre. Hand it out to anyone who may benefit from knowing procedures in advance.



**Bus**—I will ride on the **bus** from my school to the theatre.

---



**Lobby**—I will enter the **lobby** and be greeted by the theatre staff and ushers. I can say hello to them. There may be a lot of other students from different schools in the lobby at the same time. I will stay with my teachers.

---



**Bathroom**—If I need to go to the **bathroom**, I will let my teacher know, and they can take me. I can go to the bathroom any time I need to during the show.

---



**Enter the Theatre**—When it's time to **enter the theatre**, there may be a line at the door. I will wait in line for my turn to go through the door.

---



**My Seat**—An usher will show me to my **seat**. During the show I will sit in my seat next to my classmates.

---



**During the Show**—If the show is funny, I can **laugh**. If something surprises me, I can **gasp**. At the end of the show, I can **clap** to tell the actors I enjoyed the performance.

---



**After the Show**—I will wait **patiently** for my teacher to lead me out of the theatre.

---



**Leave the Building**—I will leave the building with my classmates and get **back on the bus** to my school. There may be a lot of other students from different schools leaving at the same time. I will stay with my teachers.



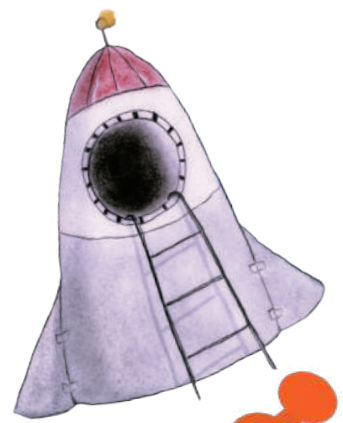


## After the Show

The discussion prompts and activities in this section are an extension of the theatre-going experience and allow students to reflect on the experience of seeing a live show and further engage with the art forms and themes of the performance.

# Springboard

Use this page to recall observations, reflect, and think critically about the show you just saw!



The part of the show that grabbed my attention the most was

While watching the show, I had the strongest reaction to

The show made me think about

Before seeing this show, I didn't know that

A question I have about the show is

If I were the director, one thing I would change is

One thing I saw during this show that I've never seen before was

After seeing the show, my friends and I talked about

Overall, the show made me feel



## Story Sequence—What Do You Remember?

So much happens in the plays we see and the books we read! See if you can remember the order of events in *Morris Micklewhite and the Tangerine Dress* by numbering the pictures below from 1<sup>st</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup>.



These pictures are from the picture book by Christine Baldacchino. How are the images similar to or different from what you saw on stage at Children's Theatre Company?



**Grades:** Grades K and up    **Time Required:** 15-30 minutes    **Supplies:** None

**Set-up:** The main action of this activity works best in an open space, like the front of a classroom.

During the play, Morris travels on a space safari in his imagination. In this activity, students will create **tableaus** of this space jungle **setting** using their bodies and imaginations. Extend the activity by creating multiple settings from the play or asking students to create an original imaginary setting of their own!

**Tableau:** Tableau is a French word that means “a frozen picture.” Tableaus can be used in the classroom to explore characters, settings, and major plot events in a story.

**Setting:** A setting is where and when the story takes place.

## Instructions:

1. Explain what **setting** means and what a **tableau** is and that the students will be creating tableaus of different settings from the play they just saw.
2. Remind students of Morris's space adventure that he went on in his dream and with his classmates at the end of the play. Have students take a quiet minute to think about the space jungle adventure and imagine what they might see if they were there. Are there new planets to explore? Tall grass or giant leaves?
3. One at a time, have students come to the front of the classroom and say what part of the setting they are before making a frozen shape as that object. For example, the first student might come to the front and say, “I’m Saturn” and make a round shape with their body. The second student may come to the front and build off of that idea by saying, “I’m a roller coaster on Saturn’s rings.” They would make a frozen shape of what that would look like next to the first student. Students can build off of ideas from classmates, or they can create a different part of the setting. For instance, in this example, the second student may have come to the front and said, “I’m the tall jungle grass” and make a shape on the opposite side of the space as the first student.
4. Keep going until the full group is involved in the tableau. Take out an imaginary camera and take a picture of their space jungle!
5. If students are having a hard time coming up with ideas, show them the two images from the picture book on the following page and have them pick something from the pictures to embody.

## Reflection Questions

What did you find challenging when creating a setting using just your bodies?  
How was our space jungle similar to what you saw on stage? How was it different?

## Variations and Adjustments

- Repeat the activity by creating tableaus of different settings from the play (Morris's classroom, the playground, etc.).
- With a large class, you can split up into smaller groups of 5+ to increase active time for each student. Have each group share out their tableaus after each setting.
- With a large group, you can also decide to only have 5-10 students participate in each tableau while the rest of the class observes.
- Bring each tableau to life by having students add a sound to their object. You can do this all at the same time, or by tapping individual students on the head when it is their turn to voice their sound.

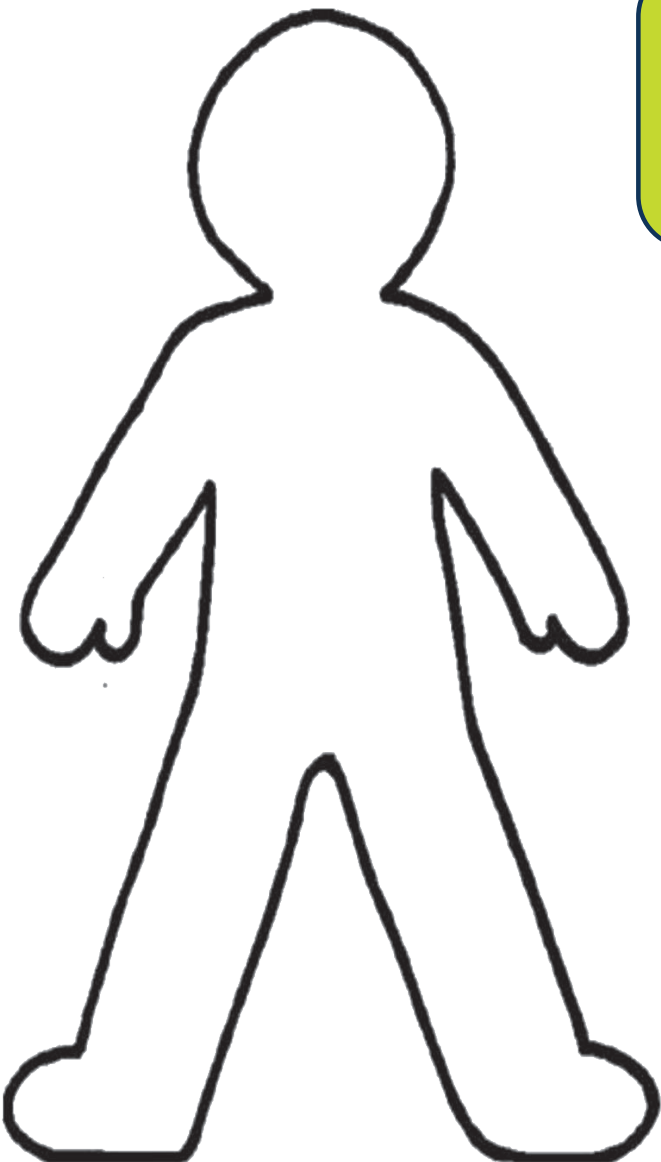
If your students are having a hard time coming up with ideas, show them the following images from the picture book and have them pick something from the pictures to embody.



# Costume Design–Favorite Clothes

In *Morris Micklewhite and the Tangerine Dress*, Morris’s favorite thing to wear is the tangerine dress from his school’s dress-up bin. The **Costume Designer** designed the dress that you saw on stage.

Using the figure below, draw your favorite piece of clothing and fill in the title with your name, the color, and type of clothing you drew.



**A Costume Designer** is someone who decides what characters will wear on stage.

**Name**

& the

**Color**

**Type of Clothing**



## Further Resources



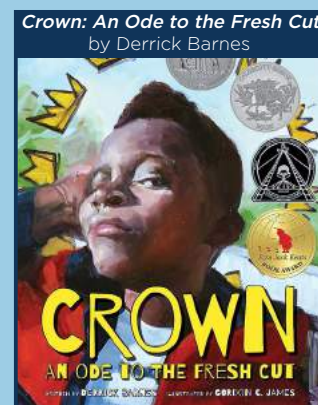
[Storytime with the MET](#)—A MET educator reads *Morris Micklewhite and the Tangerine Dress* and connects it to a piece of art in the MET's collection.

[Julie's Library](#)—Julie Andrews reads and discusses *Morris Micklewhite and the Tangerine Dress* on her podcast.



[Understanding Personal Expression](#)—A lesson plan exploring personal and gender expression from the Human Rights Campaign Foundation

## Other books to explore:



Mail letters to:  
Children's Theatre Company  
2400 Third Avenue South  
Minneapolis, MN 55404

Questions? Email:  
[schools@childrenstheatre.org](mailto:schools@childrenstheatre.org)

