

The Wizard of Oz

Educator Guide



2025

children's
theatre
company

2026

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Behind the **SCENES**



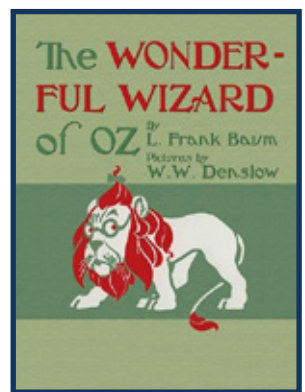
Learn more about the
artists, history, and
themes of this production.

What is this show about?

It's not every day that a wild tornado whizzes right over your head, taking the house and the whole farm with it! Or that the entire world magically shifts from black and white to technicolor right before your very eyes. But there's nothing everyday about a shoe-obsessed witch, flying monkeys, or a yellow brick road, either. Join Dorothy, her three oh-so-curious friends, and Toto (played by a real dog!) in this grand spectacle, featuring songs you know and love from the classic film!

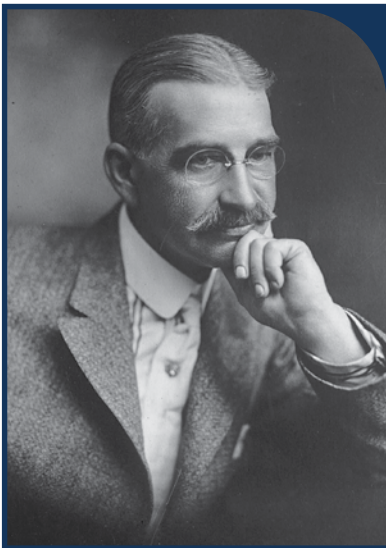
About the novel

The Wizard of Oz is based on the 1900 children's fantasy novel *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* by L. Frank Baum. The original book was wildly successful, and Baum went on to write 13 additional Oz novels, which serve as sequels to the original story. Since its publication, it has been adapted into multiple plays, musicals, and the famous 1939 MGM film.



Did you know?

L. Frank Baum got the name Oz from a filing cabinet drawer that was labeled "O-Z."



About L. Frank Baum

Born in 1856, in Chittenango, New York, L. Frank Baum is best remembered for his monumental 1900 classic *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. He returned frequently to the magical world he'd created, writing 13 books set in Oz. His considerable literary output included 55 novels, 83 short stories, over 200 poems, and many miscellaneous writings, including scripts and "lost" novels. He passed away in 1919. - Penguin Random House, [L. Frank Baum](#)



Bill Berloni (Dog Trainer)

Meet the Totos!

An interview with William Berloni, Animal Trainer



CTC: What are the breeds, names, and ages of the dogs playing Toto?

Bill Berloni: Both dogs are Cairn Terriers which was the breed of the dog used in the movie. Alfie plays Toto and he is 6 years old. Nessa is the understudy and she is 11 years old.

CTC: How long have they been performing?

BB: Alfie has been performing four years, first as understudy and then taking over the lead role about two years ago. Nessa has been performing for nine years. She was the lead Toto for many years. Now semi-retired she likes coming along for the ride, sleeping in hotels and dressing rooms.

CTC: When did you get them, and begin working with them?

BB: Both dogs are rescued and it takes a minimum of a year to get a dog ready for the stage. We adopted Alfie from Southern Paws Rescue in March 2022. Nessa came from CRUSA and was adopted in January 2015. They begin training as soon as we adopt them.

CTC: Do you have a particularly memorable experience from when they were performing?

BB: Our training is based on positive reinforcement and trust. I always enjoy the Poppy scene. Toto is supposed to sleep with Dorothy. Our dogs are so comfortable onstage they actually lay on their backs in Dorothy's arms and rest. That shows how safe and comfortable they feel and I am always pleased to see it.

CTC: What are their specialties?

BB: Their specialties are staying still during "Somewhere Over The Rainbow" and escaping from the basket in the Witch's chamber. Everything else in between is easy.

CTC: What are their favorite treats?

BB: In the animal training world, treats have value like money. There are low-end treats and high-end treats. When we use high end treats, freeze-dried dog treats are their favorites.

CTC: How do they like to spend their time when they're not performing?

BB: Performing can be tiring. Just like humans, they spend their days resting and taking it easy. This helps clear their minds and then look forward to coming to the theatre and having fun being with all their new friends. So basically they are couch potatoes until we say, "Do you want to go to the theatre?" and they run to the door in excitement.



Alfie Cairn Terrier
(Toto)



Nessa Cairn Terrier
(Toto Understudy)

Before **YOU GO**



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

Walking the Yellow Brick Road

Grades: Grades K and up

Time Required: 15-30 minutes

Set-up: This activity works best in an open area where students can move, like the front of a classroom.

Supplies: Whiteboard or large chart paper and marker

In this activity, students will identify characteristics of different characters and use their bodies and voices to physically become those characters.

Characteristic – A distinguishing feature or trait belonging to a person, place, or thing that helps to identify it.



Instructions:

1. With students seated at their desks, explain what characteristic means and start brainstorming external characteristics of the following characters that you'll meet in *The Wizard of Oz*: Scarecrow, Tin Man, Cowardly Lion, and Dorothy. Write the students' responses on the whiteboard.
2. Characters are also identified by the sounds that they make. Repeat the brainstorm and identify what the characters might sound like.
3. Next, invite your students to begin walking around an open space (like the front of the classroom) when you say "go." When you say, "stop," they must freeze. Practice this a few times so that everyone understands.
4. Next, challenge them to start walking around the space like a specific character in the story. Remind them of the external characteristics that you thought of earlier. Give them a few moments to explore that character's movement then say, "stop." Point out a few things that you are noticing. For example, "I notice that (insert student's name) is moving on all fours like a lion" or "I notice that (insert student's name) looks really scared and is sticking to the corners of the space." As they are frozen, go around the room and select a student or two to say a line as the character.
5. Repeat the exploration with the other characters.
6. After you have explored a variety of characters as a group, invite one student to come to the front of the room and perform one of their character walks. Ask the rest of the students to guess which character they are performing.

Reflection Questions

- What was your favorite character to embody? Why?
- What characteristic was the most challenging to portray?

Variations and Adjustments

Use images of the different characters during your brainstorm to help students generate ideas.

Have a relay race in groups with each student being a different character. Challenge them to truly keep the embodiment of the character while they are racing.

There's No Place Like Home

Grades: Grades 3 and up **Time Required:** 20-30 minutes **Supplies:** None

Set-up: This activity works best in an open area where students can move, like the front of a classroom.

Students will explore the importance of “home” as a theme in *The Wizard of Oz* and will embody and activate the concept through tableaux.

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

Instructions:

- With students seated at their desks, begin a discussion surrounding Dorothy’s magic words: “There’s no place like home.”
 - What is the importance of this phrase to Dorothy and to the story?
 - What does this phrase mean to you?
 - Do you agree or disagree with this phrase?
 - How do you define the word ‘home’?
 - Is there a difference between a ‘house’ and a ‘home’? If so, how would you describe the difference?
- Explain what a tableau is and encourage students to consider the following when making their tableau:
 - Shapes**—What shape are they making with their body and what does it convey to others about their role in the tableau?
 - Expressions**—What does their facial expression reveal about their role in the tableau?
 - Relationships**—How does each person’s position relate to their classmates to help convey the theme?
- In small groups, have students create tableaux entitled ‘Home.’ How can they use their bodies to convey both the literal idea of home but also the emotions surrounding ‘home’?
- After each group has a chance to create their tableau, have the groups share out to the rest of the class. What do they notice about the other tableaux in the class? Are there similarities? Differences?



Melt the Witch!



Grades: Pre-K and up

Time Required: 20-40 minutes

Set-up: This activity works best with students at their desks or tables.

In *The Wizard of Oz*, Dorothy melts the Wicked Witch of the West. Conduct your own sensory science experiment to melt your own witches!



Materials you will need

- 4 cups baking soda
- 1 cup water
- 1 cup vinegar
- A bowl to mix the dough in
- A tray or tub to melt the witch in

Optional Materials

- Green food coloring
- Googly eyes
- Glitter
- Other decorations as desired

Instructions:

1. Mix a few drops of food coloring into the water.
2. Next, slowly add the green water to the baking soda in a bowl. The dough should be moldable, but not too sticky. You may not need the full cup of water.
3. Give each student a little handful of the dough to mold on a tray or in a small tub. If you're using them, have them add googly eyes and other decorations.
4. To melt the witches, pour small amounts of vinegar onto the mixture and watch the bubbles!

Variations and Adjustments

Keep experimenting—How long can you melt the witch? Which will you run out of first—the baking soda or the vinegar? Can you separate the two once they've been mixed together?

Before starting the experiment, have your students hypothesize what will happen when the vinegar goes onto the witch. After the experiment, have students write down what they observed.

How do you think the Wicked Witch Of the West will melt in the play?

Magical Design

In *The Wizard of Oz*, Dorothy is given a pair of ruby slippers by Glinda. In the box below, design your own pair of magical footwear!



My magical shoes would give me the power to

When your shoes are finished, create a commercial for your fantastic footwear to present in front of the class.

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. Ruby slippers. Where do they end up at the end?
2. The yellow brick road. How does the floor change to become the yellow brick road?
3. A hot air balloon. Which character rides in the balloon?



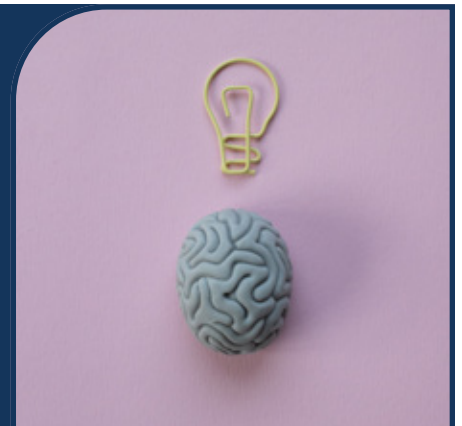
Listen for...

1. Actors singing songs. Do you recognize any of the songs?
2. Talking trees. Are they nice trees or mean trees?
3. A wicked witch cackle. After the show, practice your own witchy cackle!



Think about...

1. Dorothy becomes fast friends with the Scarecrow, the Tin Man, and the Cowardly Lion. How do you make friends?
2. What does “home” mean to you?
3. If the Wizard of Oz could grant you any characteristic, what would it be?



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.

Resources for Families

Extend your child's theatre experience at home!

Questions to ask your child BEFORE they see the show:

- What do you already know about *The Wizard of Oz*?
- How do you think they will make the tornado on stage?
- What about your field trip are you most excited about?

Questions to ask your child AFTER they see the show:

- What do you think was the most valuable lesson that Dorothy learned?
- If you had to choose just one—a brain, a heart, or courage—which would it be? Why?
- Why do you think *The Wizard of Oz* is still so popular more than 100 years after it was written?

Building Confidence and Creativity—Classes and Camps at CTC

Children's Theatre Company offers engaging theatre classes and camps for ages 2-18. **If your child was inspired by the performance they saw on stage, our classes and camps are the perfect next step!** From Fundamentals of Acting and Creative Play to Backstage Crafting, Audition Prep, and Musical Theatre, every program helps young people explore their creativity and build confidence. Guided by our professional teaching artists, students learn through active, hands-on experiences that inspire collaboration, resilience, and self-expression—on stage and beyond!

Learn more at childrenstheatre.org/classes

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It's a Twister!

Tornadoes are rapidly rotating columns of air that form underneath certain types of thunderstorms. In this activity, you will observe the creation of a water vortex that follows the same science that creates a real-life tornado. As air rises from the lower bottle and gets swirled around, a tornado is formed. In the atmosphere, real tornadoes also need some spinning winds to create the funnel.



Materials

- 2 empty soda bottles, washed and with the labels removed
- 1 cap from one of the bottles (the other cap can be discarded)
- Drill or other means of making a hole in the bottle lid
- Strong tape, such as duct tape or electrical tape
- Water
- Food coloring (optional)



Steps:

1. Make a small hole near the center of the soda bottle cap.
2. Using the duct or electrical tape, secure the cap upside down onto the bottle so that the threads are exposed.
3. Fill the other bottle 2/3 full of water and add a few drops of food coloring, if desired.
4. Connect the other bottle assembly to the top of the bottle with water in it.
5. Flip the bottles over so that the bottle containing the water is on top.
6. Holding the connection, start swirling the bottles. Be careful not to shake them! As the rotational speed increases, a water vortex will form in the upper bottle, and water will start flowing smoothly into the lower bottle.



The vortex is a funnel shape with a hollow center, just like a tornado! The air from the lower bottle can now pass unrestricted through the center of the vortex and into the bottle above.



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 one hour prior to the performance. Buses can unload in the circle driveway on 3rd Ave S between 24th St. and 25th 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 and upstairs to the Red 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 Red Lobby and UnitedHealth Group Stage are on the 2nd floor. At the building entrance, school groups will be led to the left and up a flight of 24 stairs to get to the lobby. Those wishing to use the elevator will find it to the left in the same vestibule as the stairs. CTC's accessible seating area is located in the last row of the main level of the theatre. Please email schools@childrenstheatre.org in advance to request accessible seating, if needed. The rest of the seating on the main floor can be accessed by going down a set of gradual stairs, and the balcony is accessed by going up another flight of 18 stairs. There is no elevator access to the balcony level.

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

Quiet Room/Sensory Sensitivities

The Quiet Room is located at the rear left side of the main floor of the UnitedHealth Group Stage. There are 3 stairs to get to the seating in the Quiet Room. The Quiet Room is separated from the audience by a glass window, so students can verbalize freely. Those utilizing the Quiet Room can still see and hear the performance. The performance is also live streamed in the lobby. The Quiet Room is open to everyone and cannot be reserved. Please feel free to come and go from the Quiet Room 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 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.

The Wizard of Oz Content Advisories

Language: 0 out of 5 stars ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Themes and Situations: 2 out of 5 stars ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Dorothy faces some fearsome characters who try to cause harm to her and her friends.

Violence and Scariness: 3 out of 5 stars ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Miss Gultch hits Toto with a rake off stage. The Wicked Witch of the East is killed by a house falling on top of her. A haunted tree hits Dorothy and throws apples at her and the Scarecrow. The Wicked Witch of the West throws a fire ball at the Scarecrow, and he catches on fire. The wild forest where they meet the Lion as well as the Haunted Forest where they meet the flying monkeys is dark and scary. The Scarecrow is ripped into many pieces by the flying monkeys. The Wizard of Oz is portrayed by a large and frightening floating head. The Wicked Witch of the West threatens to kill Dorothy to get the ruby slippers.

Sensory Advisories: 2 out of 5 stars ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Stage magic such as fog, haze, and flashing lights may be used to create the twister that takes Dorothy to Oz, the fireballs that the Wicked Witch of the West throws, and the Wizard of Oz's floating head.

Potentially Anxious Moments: 2 out of 5 stars ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Toto is taken away from Dorothy by Miss Gultch. Dorothy and Toto are kidnapped by the flying monkeys. The Wicked Witch of the West threatens to drown Toto. The Wicked Witch of the West threatens to kill Dorothy to get the ruby slippers.

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.



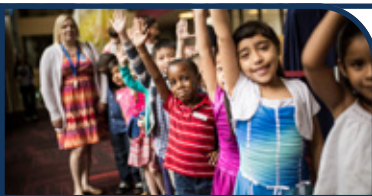
Bus—I will ride on the bus from my school to the theatre.



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.



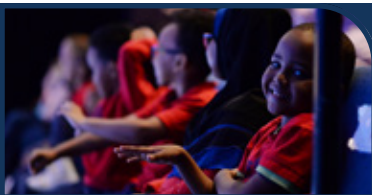
Enter the Theatre—When it's time to enter the theatre, there may be a line at the door. I will wait in line for my turn to go through the door.



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.

After the Show

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

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

While watching the show, I had the strongest reaction to

Character Interview

Grades: Grades 2 and up **Time Required:** 15-30 minutes **Supplies:** None

Set-up: This activity works best utilizing the front of the classroom as a stage and the students' desks as the audience.

In this activity, students will use their imagination to invent backgrounds, justify actions, and answer questions from a character's perspective.

Instructions:

1. Place a chair in the front of the room. Ask for a volunteer to come to the front of the class and pretend to be the Wicked Witch of the West.
2. The rest of the students will play the role of Emerald City news reporters who are interviewing the Wicked Witch of the West for the local newspaper. The student playing the Wicked Witch of the West should respond as the character. It may be helpful to model asking the Wicked Witch of the West a couple of starter questions before opening it up to the class. It can also be helpful to remind the "reporters" that it is their goal to learn about the Wicked Witch of the West, not to yell at her or scold her.
3. After interviewing the Wicked Witch of the West, do the same activity for other characters in the story such as Dorothy, Glinda, the Wizard of Oz, or the Tin Man.

Sample Questions:

- Why do you want the ruby slippers?
- What were you feeling when you saw Glinda had given the slippers to Dorothy?
- Why do you think the Wizard wanted Dorothy and her friends to take your broomstick?

Variations and Adjustments

If time allows, give multiple students the opportunity to play the Wicked Witch of the West and other characters.

Encourage the students playing reporters to also act in character. How would a reporter sound and move their body?

I Am—Character and Self-Portraits through Poetry

Grades: Grades 5 and up **Time Required:** 20-60 minutes

Set-up: This activity can be done with students seated at their desks

Supplies: Writing materials and the “I Am” template on the following page, if desired

Dorothy and the other characters in *The Wizard of Oz* discover new things about themselves and their identities. This activity allows students to create a deeper, more empathetic understanding of multiple characters’ motivations in *The Wizard of Oz*.

After exploring characters from *The Wizard of Oz*, students will use the same tools to explore their own identities.

Instructions:

1. As a class, discuss what you remember about different characters from *The Wizard of Oz* (Dorothy, Scarecrow, Tin Man, Cowardly Lion, Wicked Witch of the West, Wizard, etc.). Assign or have each student pick one character to focus on for this activity.
2. Hand out the “I Am” template from the following page or have the prompts pre-written on the board.
3. Give the students time to fill out the template from the perspective of the character that they chose. Tell them that they are putting themselves inside the character’s head.
4. Once the students have completed their writing, group them together by character to share out in small groups. Have them discuss similarities and differences between their “I Am” poems.
5. Have one or two students from each character group share out in front of the full class.
6. Facilitate a discussion with the class.
 - Did this activity change your opinion of the character?
 - Which prompt was the most difficult to fill in?
7. Repeat the activity with the students filling out the “I Am” template about themselves to create an original self-portrait poem.

Reflection Questions:

- Did you find you had anything in common with the characters from *The Wizard of Oz*?
- What was more challenging, filling out the poem for yourself or for one of the characters in the play?

“I Am” Template

An “I Am” poem is a way to further understand a character in a story. First fill out the template for a character from *The Wizard of Oz*. Then, fill out for yourself!

Character’s Response

Your Response

I am... _____

_____ (your name)

I am... _____

_____ (two special traits or physical characteristics)

I wonder... _____

_____ (something to be curious about)

I pretend... _____

_____ (something to imagine)

I want... _____

_____ (an actual desire)

I am... _____

_____ (first line of the poem repeated)

I worry... _____

_____ (something that is bothersome)

I cry... _____

_____ (something that is very sad)

I am... _____

_____ (first line of the poem repeated)

I say... _____

_____ (something to believe in)

I try... _____

_____ (something to make an effort about)

I hope... _____

_____ (something to hope for)

I am... _____

_____ (the first line of the poem repeated)

If I Only Had A Brain/Heart/The Nerve

The Scarecrow, Tin Man, and Cowardly Lion all want something from the Wizard only to learn that they had what they wanted all along. You have those qualities too! Fill in the prompts below with answers for you!

Brain—What are you learning in school?
What is something that you know a lot about?



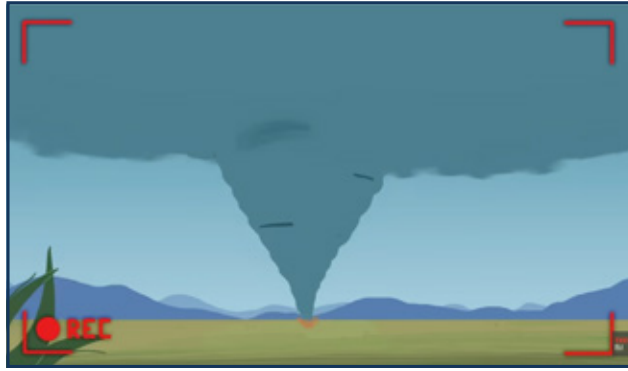
Heart—How have you shown kindness to others?



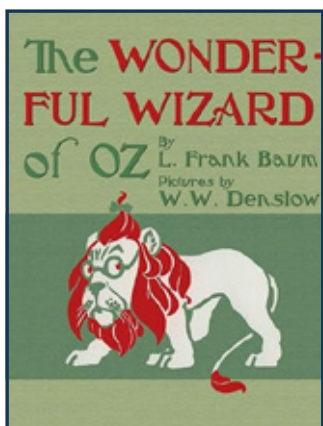
Courage—How have you been brave?



Further Resources



Tornado science from Ted-Ed - [Learn More](#)



Full Text of [The Wonderful Wizard of Oz](#)



[Learn More](#) about the first Broadway musical adaptation of *The Wizard of Oz* from 1903



More creative teaching ideas for *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* from - [LitWits](#)

Questions? Email:

schools@childrenstheatre.org

Mail letters to:

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

