

Pinocchio

Educator Guide



2026

children's
theatre
company

2027

Table of Contents

Behind the Scenes.....p.3

The Show, Art Forms, and Prior Knowledge

Before You Go.....p.5

Activity: Two Truths and a Lie

Activity: Write Your Own Story

Worksheet: Cricket's Riddles

Arts & Crafts: Geppetto and the Whale

Classroom Prep: 3 Things to Look For, Listen For, and
Think About

Before You Go—At Home.....p.12

Resources for Families

Activity: Field of Miracles

Heading to CTC.....p.15

Trip Guide

CTC Theatre Etiquette

Field Trip Logistics

Accessibility

Content Advisories

Social Story

After the Show.....p.20

Springboard for Critical Thinking

Activity: Freeze Frames of *Pinocchio*

Activity: It Is What It Isn't

Activity: Carving Puppets

Activity/Arts & Crafts: Puppet Show Posters

Further Resources.....p.26

Behind the **SCENES**



Photo of Reed Sigmund and Dean Holt by Dan Norman Photography

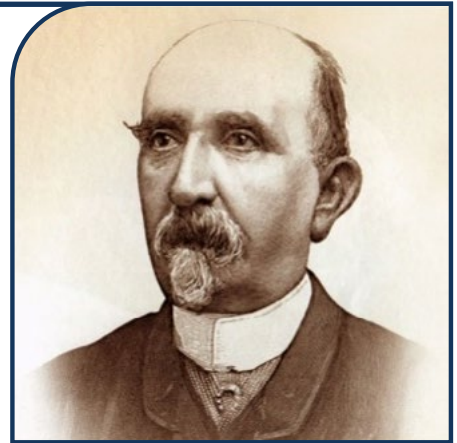
Learn more about the
artists, history, and
themes of this production.

What is this show about?

Using only the tools of their trade—paint brushes, scaffolding, wallpaper rolls—five theatre painters inventively stage a spontaneous retelling of Pinocchio's quest to become a "real boy." Get real answers to burning questions, like: How do he and Geppetto end up inside a whale? Will the good fairy actually fly? And what's up with Pinocchio's nose anyway? Discover the truth, amidst a few lies, in this music-filled play where Pinocchio learns empathy and accountability, things that truly bring a person to life.

Where does this story come from?

Pinocchio is based on the book *The Adventures of Pinocchio* written by Carlo Collodi in 1883. Carlo Collodi (born Carlo Lorenzini in Florence, 1826) was an Italian children's writer most famous for his children's novel *The Adventures of Pinocchio*. Involved in political matters, he wrote satires during the Wars of Independence, going on to found a satirical newspaper *Il Lampione* (*The Streetlight*). He won fame with a novel, *In Vapore*, before focusing on children's literature as a way to explore political allegory. He began writing *Storia di un burattino* (*Story of a Marionette*), serialized in *Il Giornale dei Bambine* (*The Children's Newspaper*). This story would later come to be known as *The Adventures of Pinocchio*. Collodi died in his native city in 1890, aged 63.



Carlo Collodi (1826-1890)

Pinocchio Adaptations

Despite *Pinocchio* being over 100 years old, Pinocchio remains one of the most well-known characters. Most people are familiar with the Disney version that was released in 1940. In the movie, Disney lightened some of the darker plot points. The Disney version is just one of the many adaptations of the classic story, and Pinocchio shows up as a character in many other original stories such as *Shrek*.



Disney version



Shrek version

Object Theatre

At CTC, the story of *Pinocchio* is brought to life through object theatre. Object theatre is a form of theatre where everyday, found items are used as characters and props in a story instead of traditional, custom-made props. In this production, the actors use paint brushes, newspaper, wallpaper rolls, tools, and scaffolding to bring the story to life. Before your trip, [show your class this video](#) which shows how everyday objects can come to life as characters.



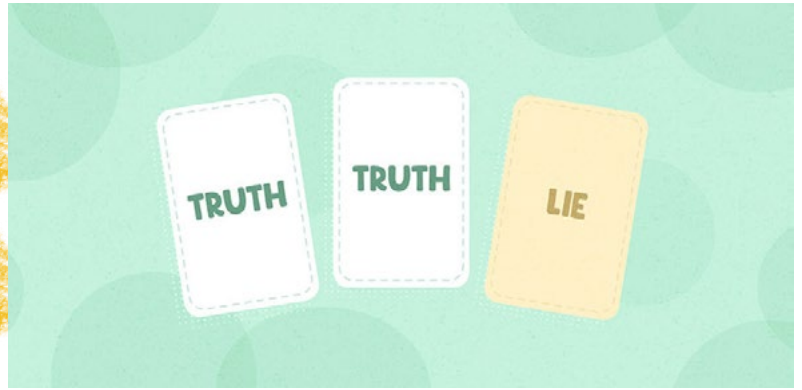
Before **YOU GO**



Photo of Dean Holt, Reed Sigmund, Jay Dolo, Elise Langer, and Victor Zupanc by Dan Norman Photography

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

Two Truths and a Lie



Grades: Grades 2 and up **Time Required:** 10 minutes **Supplies:** None

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

Pinocchio is famous for his nose that grows whenever he tells a lie. Can your students hide the truth? In this activity, students will get to know each other and work on their listening skills.

Instructions:

1. Split the class up into pairs.
2. In their pairs, each student tells their partner three statements about themselves: two that are true and one that is false. The objective is for the lie to go undetected.
3. Have the students guess which statement was the lie.
4. After everyone has had a turn, come back together as a group and reflect. How could they tell which statement was the lie? Their noses may not have grown, but what other tells can people have?



Write Your Own Story

Grades: Grades 3 and up

Time Required: 15-20 minutes

Set-up: This activity can be done at a table or on the floor with a clipboard/writing surface

Supplies: Pencil and paper (or printed copies of the template on this page and the following page)

Pinocchio is based off a novel called *The Adventures of Pinocchio* by Carlo Collodi. It was first published in 1883, making it almost 150 years old! Every story needs **people** (characters), a setting where the story takes **place**, a **problem** to solve, a **plot** to follow, and an **ending**. Using these tools, you can create your own original story. Who knows, maybe someone will put *your* story onstage about 150 years from now!

For younger students, try writing a story together as a class first before having students try individually or in small groups. Use this structure as a jumping off point to create written scripts for a play.

Step One: Start by choosing your **people** and where your story takes **place**. Here are some options that you might find in a fantasy tale like *Pinocchio*:

People	Place
Trolls	A castle
Fairies	An enchanted forest
Witches/Wizards	A cave
Giants	A mountain
Royals (Kings, Queens, etc.)	A hut in the woods

Step Two: Brainstorm some **problems** the people could have, a **plot** to solve the problem, and a **peaceful ending**. Circle which ones you'd like to include in your story.

Problem ideas:

- _____
- _____

Plot ideas:

- _____
- _____

Peaceful ending ideas:

- _____
- _____

Write Your Own Story Continued

Step Three: Follow the sentence structure below to create your story:

1. Introduce your people and place.
2. Tell us what the problem is.
3. What is the first thing the people do to solve the problem?
4. What is the second thing the people do to solve the problem?
5. How does your story end peacefully?



Title: _____

1) Once upon a time,

2) There was just one problem...

3) First,

4) Then,

5) Finally,

The End!

Cricket's Riddles



In the play, Cricket challenges Pinocchio by speaking in riddles. See if you can solve his riddles below before you see the play and listen for the answers when you're watching! Answers can also be found on page 27.

**What runs but
has no legs?**

**What's easy to
get into but hard
to get out of?**

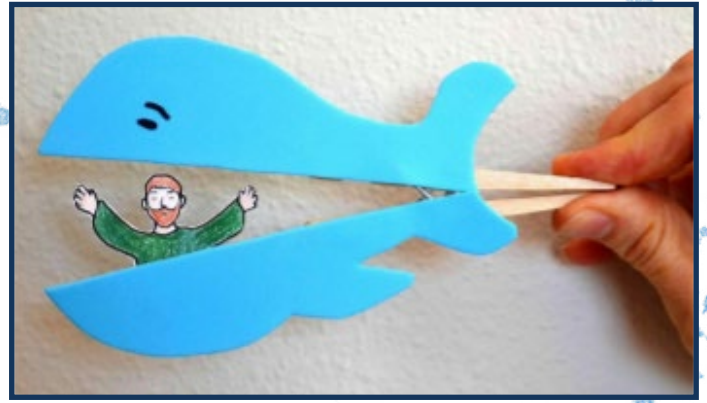
**What goes up
and down but
never moves?**

**Why did the
bumblebee put
honey under
his pillow?**

**How many letters
in the alphabet?**



Geppetto and the Whale



Materials you will need

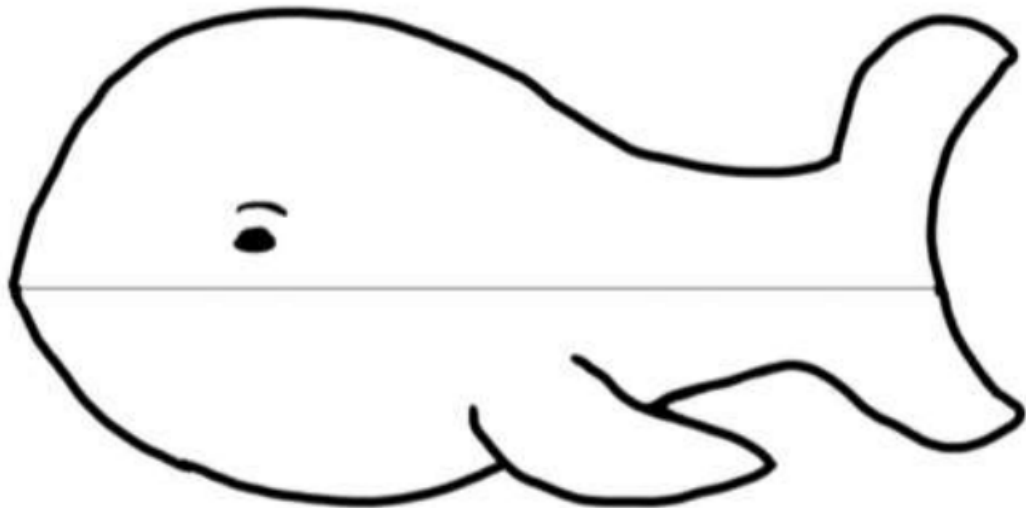
In *Pinocchio*, Geppetto gets swallowed by a whale, and Pinocchio goes in after him to save him. Make your own whale puppet to act out this part of the story!

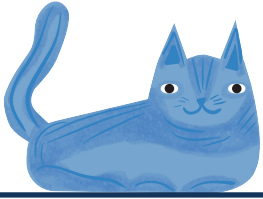
- Clothespins
- Crayons, markers, or colored pencils
- Glue or glue stick
- Scissors
- Printed whale and Geppetto templates

Instructions:

1. Color the whale and Geppetto templates.
2. Cut out the whale and Geppetto.
3. Cut the whale in half following the line.
4. Glue the top half of the whale on the upper part of the clothespin and the bottom half on the lower part of the clothespin. The tail should just cover the metal part of the pin to leave about an inch of the pin still visible.
5. Glue Geppetto to the back of the lower half of the whale.

Geppetto and Whale Template





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. Pinocchio's nose growing. What do they use to make his nose longer?
2. A flying fairy. How do they make the fairy fly?
3. Donkey ears. What do they make the donkey ears out of?



Listen for...

1. Live music being played. What instruments do you recognize?
2. Actors playing multiple characters. Can you hear the differences in their voices between the different characters?
3. A character sneezing. What makes him sneeze?



Think about...

1. Why is it important to Pinocchio that he be a real boy?
2. How does Geppetto show his love for Pinocchio? How does Pinocchio show his love for Geppetto?
3. What advice would you give Pinocchio about being a real kid?



Before You Go— **AT HOME**



Photo of Antonisia Collins by Kaitlin Randolph

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 *Pinocchio* story?
- Why do people lie? Can a lie ever be helpful? What is harmful about lying?
- What about your field trip are you most excited about?

Questions to ask your child AFTER they see the show:

- Pinocchio places his trust in the Fox and Cat, and they betray him. How do you know if you can trust someone?
- Did Pinocchio deserve to become a real boy? Why or why not?
- What was your favorite part of the play? Who was your favorite character?

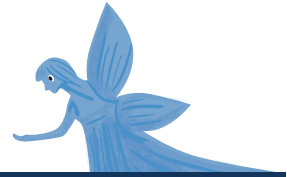
Building Confidence and Creativity— Classes and Camps at CTC

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!

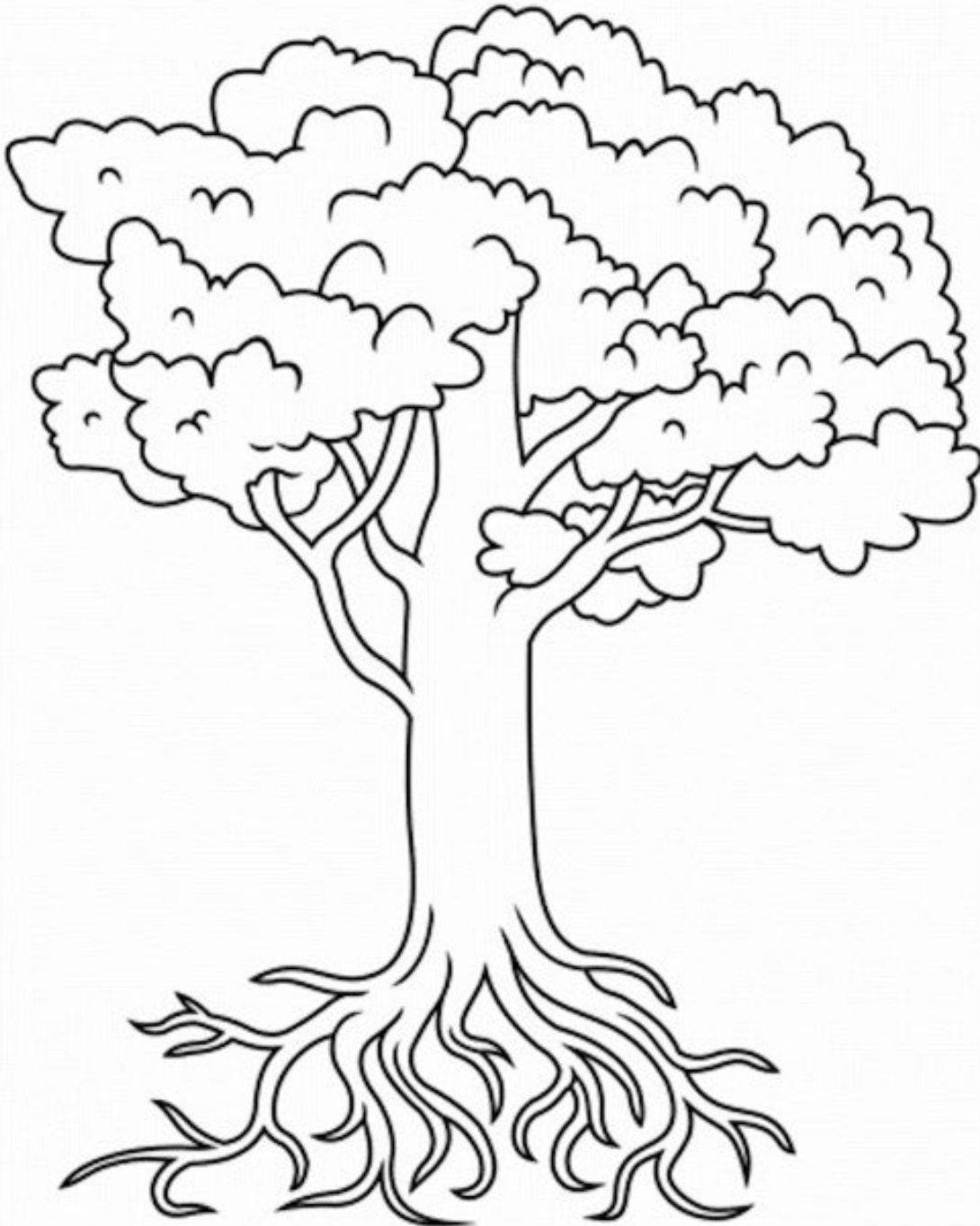
Learn more at childrenstheatre.org/classes



Field of Miracles



Pinocchio dreams of being rich and plants a coin hoping it will become a money tree. What is your dream? Draw or write one of your dreams in the branches of the tree below. Under the roots, draw or write what you need to plant for your dream to come true. When you're finished, share with your family what you drew. Draw a new tree together with a dream for your family.



Heading to **CTC**



Photo of Reed Sigmund by Dan Norman Photography

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.

Dismissal

At the end of the show, CTC staff will dismiss groups from the theatre once their buses have arrived at the circle driveway on 3rd Ave. S. Please remain seated until your group has been dismissed by the CTC staff member on stage.

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 right and up a flight of 28 stairs to get to the lobby. Those wishing to use the elevator will find it to the LEFT of the entrance doors. 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.



Pinocchio Content Advisories



Language: 1 out of 5 stars ★☆☆☆☆

Fox says he doesn't care if Pinocchio freezes to death. The Playland Coachman says if donkey Pinocchio doesn't work, he will cut him up for meat and use his skin as a drum.

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

Pinocchio kicks Geppetto in the bum. Pinocchio gets locked in a cage and cries for his papa. Pinocchio gets tied to a tree and left to die in the snow. Geppetto's boat is lost, and the painters sing about how Pinocchio's papa has passed away. A couple of kids tease Pinocchio on his first day of school.

Violence and Scariness: 2 out of 5 stars ★★☆☆☆

Pinocchio and other boys turn into donkeys after going to Playland. Pinocchio gets swallowed by a whale.

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

A metal grinder is used to make sparks fly out of the fairy's wand/paintbrush. Loud cymbals are used for the sounds of waves. There are several moments in the show where the audience is encouraged to repeat words or sounds. Some audiences can get quite loud.

Potentially Anxious Moments: 1 out of 5 stars ★☆☆☆☆

The policeman uses a whistle when Pinocchio first runs out of the house. Characters may enter the audience. During the puppet show, Punch and Judy throw a fake baby. Characters climb scaffolding and use pulleys to hoist some characters in the air. While it might be nerve-racking, they are trained professionals.

Please contact 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.



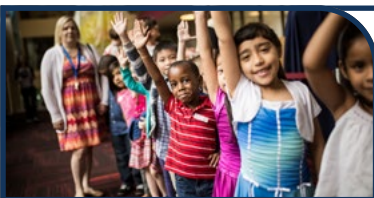
Bus—I will ride on the **bus** from my school to the theatre.



Lobby Greeting—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 in the lobby.



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.



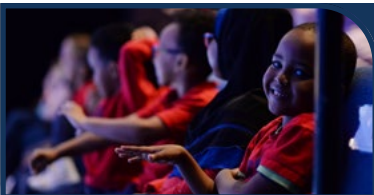
Enter the Theatre—When it's time to **enter the theatre**, there may be a line at the door. I will wait in line for my turn to go through the door.



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**



Photo of Antonisia Collins by Kaitlin Randolph

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

Freeze Frames of *Pinocchio*

Grades: Grades 2 and up **Time Required:** 20-30 minutes **Supplies:** None

Set-up: This activity can be done in a circle or area with space for movement

In this activity, students will work together to identify the essential plot points of *Pinocchio* and retell the story physically.

Instructions:

1. As a group, talk through what they remember from *Pinocchio* and identify the 3-5 essential plot points of the story.
2. Next, divide the students into 3-5 small groups and assign each group a different plot point. Encourage them to use facial expressions and physicality to create a **tableau** (a frozen picture that tells a story) of their assigned plot point.
3. After each group has had time to prepare, have them share one at a time in sequence in front of the other groups. Invite the students to share their reactions to each group's tableau.
4. While each group is holding a still image, circulate around the group, inviting each student in turn to speak the thoughts of their character out loud (what that character is thinking or saying in that moment). Alternatively, the audience may speak out loud for the character.
5. After sharing out each individual tableau, ask the groups to find a way to flow or transition from one image to the next and perform them in sequence.

Variations and Adjustments

Have the small groups do tableaus of the full story to share with the class rather than just one assigned plot point. Discuss the similarities and differences between the groups' retellings.



It Is What It Isn't

Grades: Grades 1 and up **Time Required:** 10 minutes

Set-up: This activity can be done with the students seated in a circle.

Supplies: Everyday objects

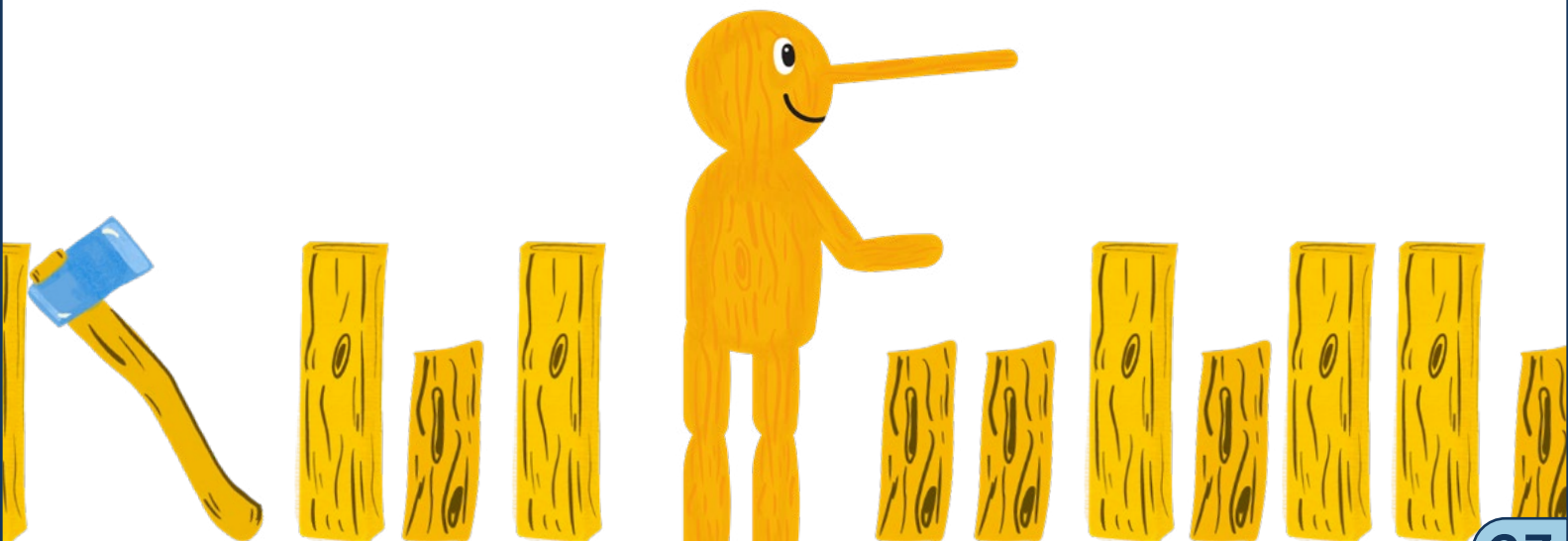
In CTC's production of *Pinocchio*, simple objects become the props, costumes, and more. In this exercise, students will think creatively and engage their imaginations to transform everyday objects into something they are not.

Instructions:

1. Once the class is seated in a circle, reveal an object, such as a wooden spoon. Discuss with the class what the object is used for.
2. Pass the spoon to a student and have them perform an action that involves the spoon; however, the spoon must be used as anything other than a spoon. For example, the spoon could become a microphone, a hairbrush, or a magic wand.
3. Ask the observers to guess what the object is being used as.
4. Pass the object to the next student and repeat.
5. If desired, go around again with a new object.

Variations and Adjustments

After exploring as a large group, have each student find a new object in the classroom to present to the class as something it isn't.



Carving Puppets

Grades: Grades 2 and up **Time Required:** 15-20 minutes **Supplies:** None

Set-up: This activity works best in an open space like the front of the classroom or gym.

In *Pinocchio*, Geppetto carves a piece of wood into a wooden puppet that becomes Pinocchio. In this exercise, students will develop physical control and awareness while practicing touch in a safe way.

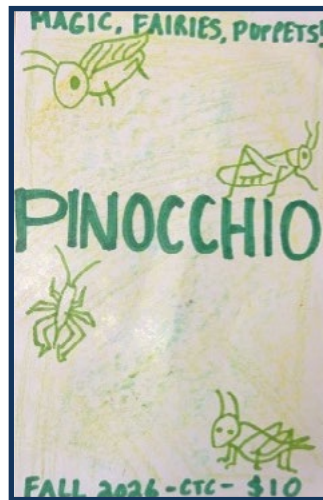
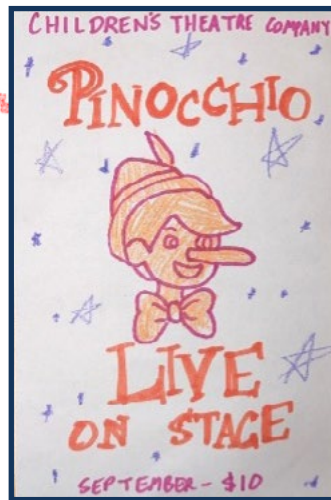
Instructions:

1. Discuss the definition of **tableau**. A **tableau** is a frozen picture of people in motion.
2. Divide students into pairs. One becomes Geppetto and the other becomes the piece of wood. It is the job of Geppetto to use his or her hands to gently move the wood's body into a position that communicates the command that you have given. It is the job of the wood to be willing and open to the movement. For example, if you say to carve the Blue Fairy, then the Geppettos work to sculpt the wood into the shape of the Blue Fairy. For facial expressions, the Geppettos should show their wood what their face should do using their own face, and the student playing the wood should copy their facial expression.
3. When all of the pieces of wood have been sculpted, have the Geppettos walk around and observe the work of the other Geppettos.
4. Ask follow-up questions or have a few Geppettos describe why they chose the body position they chose.
5. Switch roles so the wood becomes Geppetto and the Geppettos become wood.
6. Repeat with a new command. Commands can include other characters from the play, feelings that were present in the play, important plot moments in the story, etc.

Variations and Adjustments

- To do the exercise without touching, the Geppettos can demonstrate what they want their piece of wood to do, and their partner should do their best to mirror that position.
- Have one person be Geppetto and 4-5 people be the wood. Have the Geppetto sculpt a stage picture of a plot point from *Pinocchio*.

Puppet Show Posters



Grades: Grades 1 and up **Time Required:** 15-20 minutes **Supplies:** Paper and coloring supplies

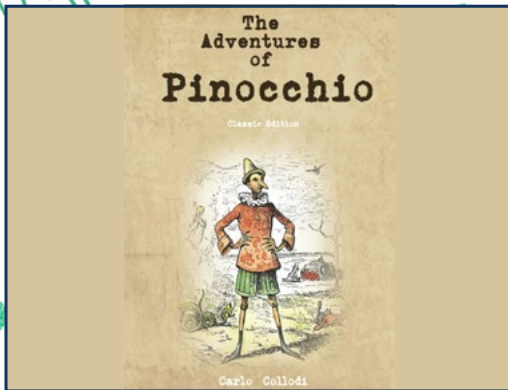
Set-up: This activity can be done at a table or on the floor with a clipboard/writing surface.

On his way to school, Pinocchio gets distracted by music coming from a puppet show. The Ticket Seller tells him to read the poster, and when Pinocchio can't, he tells him it "says in great big letters 'Today! Grand Puppet Show'". In this activity, students will design their own colorful posters to allure potential audience members to see their own version of *Pinocchio*.

Instructions:

1. Share some examples of show posters with your class. These could be puppet show posters or any kind of theatre or movie poster. Looking at the examples, discuss what is enticing about the posters. What makes the students want to see what it's advertising?
2. Next, give students blank paper to create their own show posters for *Pinocchio*. Challenge students to think about what they think is most exciting about the *Pinocchio* story and use that to influence the design of their poster. Remind students to include important information such as the title of the show and how much it costs.
3. Once students are finished, you can have individuals share out or have the class do a gallery walk around the room to look at everyone else's poster.
4. Discuss similarities and differences between students' poster designs.

Further Resources



Full text of
[*The Adventures of Pinocchio*](#)



A short *Pinocchio* play for students to
read aloud from [Scholastic Storyworks](#)



[Watch a video](#) about owning actions—
Taking responsibility for his actions is a key
step in Pinocchio becoming a real boy.



“Like Pinocchio, When You Lie,
Your Nose Gives You Away” from
the [Smithsonian magazine](#)

Questions? Email:

schools@childrenstheatre.org

Mail letters to:

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

**Opening ACT proudly
supported by:**



Cricket's Riddle Answers



What runs but
has no legs?

A nose

What's easy to
get into but hard
to get out of?

Trouble

What goes up
and down but
never moves?

A staircase

Why did the
bumblebee put
honey under
his pillow?

For sweet dreams

How many letters
in the alphabet?

11 (T.H.E. A.L.P.H.A.B.E.T.)

