Dr. Seuss's How the Grinch Stole Christmas!
Educator Guide



children's theatre company

2026 2027

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Behind the SCENES



Photo of *Dr. Seuss's How the Grinch Stole Christmas!* Cast by Glen Stubbe Photography

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



What is this show about?

A miserly and miserable, ever-so-cantankerous Grinch has observed the despicable Christmas joy of the Whos with disdain, from a distance, for decades. Enough! In this CTC holiday favorite, filled with music and Seussian rhymes, he plots the greatest heist imaginable stealing the very thing they love the most! Until, that is, the smallest of the Whos, tiny Cindy Lou, extends a hand. Through the combination of kindness and community, we witness not only a change in the course of Who-History, but the size and capacity of the old green guy's heart.

About Dr. Seuss

Born in Massachusetts on March 2, 1904, Theodor Geisel published his first children's book in 1937. Seuss is a Bavarian name and was his mother's maiden name. Theodor Seuss Geisel began signing his work under the mock-scholarly title of "Dr. Theophrastus Seuss" in 1927 when he was working as a magazine cartoonist. He shortened the name to "Dr. Seuss" in 1928.

Seuss worked in advertising, in the animation and film department for the US Army, and as a political cartoonist. After World War II, he started focusing on writing children's books, eventually writing and illustrating more than 60! Through the art and poetry of his books, Seuss encouraged his readers to think creatively, participate in society, and work to make the world a better place.

About *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*



How the Grinch Stole Christmas was first published in 1957. Dr. Seuss claimed that he was the inspiration for The Grinch. He was feeling grouchy about the over-commercialization of Christmas and dismayed with his wife's ongoing health issues. He looked in the mirror and remarked that he looked "very Grinch-ish." He wrote the book quickly afterwards and was mostly finished within a few weeks.

"I was brushing my teeth on the morning of the 26th of last December when I noticed a very Grinch-ish countenance in the mirror... So, I wrote about my sour friend, the Grinch, to see if I could rediscover something about Christmas that obviously I'd lost." -Dr. Seuss, 1957

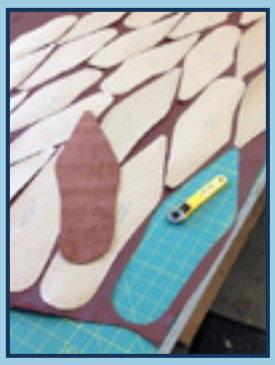
Since then, the picture book has been translated into multiple languages and topped multiple 'best of' lists. It has also been adapted to animated film, live-action film, stage plays and musicals, and even a horror film!



Building the Who Shoes

Since the world premiere production at CTC in 1994, elements of the show often need to be refreshed, including costume parts which were originally designed by Costume Designer David Kay Mickelsen. For example, the elf-like trademark Seussian feet often need some new shoes!





To make the shoes, all of the actors' feet are measured and traced. The leather soles are hand-drawn into pointed-toe shapes and cut out.

The shoes need to be durable enough to be danced in for 9-10 shows per week, so the soles get sent out for dance rubber to be glued on.

Once the soles are ready, the rest of the shoe can be crafted. The shoe has two layers of fabric (canvas inside and a variety of fabrics for the outside depending on the costume). The outer fabric is dyed to match the costumes.





Once the outside of the shoes are built, a dance shoe fit to each actor is glued inside for stability. The Grinch's shoes need even more support, so slip-on Keds are glued inside!

Final touches are added, including paint to imitate the Seussian illustration style. Then the shoes are ready for the stage!



This picture shows all of the different fabrics and colors of the different characters' shoes. Over time, the colors of the costumes and shoes can sometimes fade. Stage lighting can fade fabrics just as much as sunlight!

Before YOU GO



Photo of *Dr. Seuss's How the Grinch Stole Christmas!* Cast by Glen Stubbe Photography

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

Actor's Tools

Grades: Grades K and up **Time Required:** 5-10 minutes
Set-up: This activity can be done with the students standing in a circle or at their desks.
Supplies: None

Actors use many tools to help them tell a story; three we focus on at CTC are **body**, **voice**, and **imagination**. In this activity, students will practice using their actor's tools to convey different emotions and begin to embody different characters.

Instructions:

1. Explain that projecting means using a loud voice and enunciating means speaking clearly. Have students practice projecting and enunciating by saying "How the Grinch Stole Christmas" as a group.

2. Brainstorm together different emotions that actors might need to portray (happy, sad, mad, afraid, etc.). Try saying "How the Grinch Stole Christmas" using those emotions. Encourage students to use their body as well as their voice to portray the emotion as they say the line. Allow a few students to showcase their work as a solo.

3. If your group is familiar with the story, brainstorm some of the characters along with characteristics of each. How would each of those characters say the title? Say the line as a group first, using different characters as inspiration. Then, ask for volunteers to perform the line individually.

Reflection Questions

What was your favorite emotion to portray? Why?
Who was the most challenging character to portray?

Variations and Adjustments

After exploring different characters from the story, challenge students to come up with a line that each character might actually say. Have volunteers share out.

You can use this activity for other stories you've been exploring as a class. Are there any characters from *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* that are similar to other characters your students are reading about?

Seussian Words

Dr. Seuss loved to make up words for animals, places, sounds, feelings, and more. Combine one sound from each list to create your own original word!

Beginning			Middle			End		
goo	nizz	zat	flup	hwuu	twe	wiu	schlop	zum
oon	yek	doof	za	no	ma	bleck	gla	nel
sala	jeeg	lowf	ga	ti	moo	rink	floo	murk

Write your creations below:

1.

2.

3.

Choose your favorite word creation. What does it mean?
Use the space below to draw or write the meaning of the word.



Mime Rhyme

Grades: Grades 4 and up **Time Required:** 15-30 minutes
Set-up: This activity works best in an open space, like the front of a classroom.
Supplies: None



"Then he stuffed all the food up the chimney with glee.
'And NOW!' grinned the Grinch, 'I will stuff up the tree!'"

Dr. Seuss is famous for the rhyming poetry in his books. In this activity, students will utilize **pantomime** to act out rhyming words while attempting to guess a secret word. They may end up puzzling until their puzzler is sore!

Instructions:

1. Tell your students that you are thinking of a secret word and their objective is to guess what the word is. Tell them one word that your secret word rhymes with.
2. Have volunteers take turns to come in front of the class and silently act out, or **pantomime**, their guesses. Encourage students to use their whole body to show what their guess is and be specific with their movements.
3. As students act out their guesses, have the rest of the group raise their hands to guess what word the student is acting out. Continue until they guess the secret word.
4. Repeat the activity by choosing a new secret word.

Example

If your secret word is "sheep," you might tell your class, "I'm thinking of a word that rhymes with 'deep.'" A student guessing might come up and pantomime closing their eyes and resting their head on their hands. The class guesses that the student is acting out the word "sleep." You would then tell them, "No, it's not sleep," and you would pick the next volunteer to act out a word.

Variations and Adjustments

After a secret word or two, have a student volunteer think of a secret word and provide the first rhyming clue.

Whatcha-ma-who—Seussian Gifts!



What will be under the Who Christmas tree this year? A Thing-a-ma-ding or Whatcha-ma-who? Or a brand new invention created by you?! Create an invention or toy that could be a Who-ville holiday gift. Brainstorm possible inventions by answering the questions below. Then, draw a picture of what your invention looks like on the next page.

What problem will your invention solve or what need/want will it fulfill?

_____

_____

_____

What is the name of your invention?

_____

_____

_____

If you were going to build your invention, what materials would you use?

_____

_____

_____

Whatcha-ma-who—Seussian Gifts!



Now that you've brainstormed, draw a picture of your invention in the box below!



My Who-ville invention is called:

Create a commercial presenting your invention in front of the class. Don't forget to include the name of the product, how it is used, and what it costs.

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. An antler. What character wears an antler during the show?
2. A roast beast. Does it remind you of any real food you've tried?
3. Elastic red ribbon. How many times do they stretch it across the stage?





Listen for...

1. Actors singing songs. Do you recognize any of the songs?
2. Characters speaking in rhyme. Do you recognize any of the lines from the book?
3. Seussian made up words. What words do you hear?

Think about...

1. How did Cindy Lou try to make the Grinch feel welcome?
2. When have you felt like a Grinch?
3. Who changes the most during the play—the Grinch or the Whos?



Before You Go—
AT HOME



Photo of *Dr. Seuss's How the Grinch Stole Christmas!* Cast by Glen Stubbe Photography

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:

- The Grinch feels overwhelmed when the Whos make too much noise. What makes you feel overwhelmed? What helps you feel calm?
- The Whos love Christmas. What's your favorite time of the year?
- What about your field trip are you most excited about?

Questions to ask your child AFTER they see the show:

- What do you think caused The Grinch's heart to grow three sizes? What makes your heart grow?
- What can you do to welcome others like Cindy Lou did?
- What was your favorite part of the play?

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**

children's theatre company

Gift Giving



There are many types of gifts. Gifts can be things you buy, things you do to help others (baking them cookies or taking out their trash), or experiencing something together (taking a walk or going to the theatre). With your student, brainstorm different types of gifts you could give to your friends and family.

Buy	Help	Experience



Photo of *Dr. Seuss's How the Grinch Stole Christmas!* Cast by Glen Stubbe Photography

Heading to CTC



Photo of *Dr. Seuss's How the Grinch Stole Christmas!* Cast by Glen Stubbe 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 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 three 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 three 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.

Dr. Seuss's How the Grinch Stole Christmas! Content Advisories



Language: 0 out of 5 stars ☆☆☆☆☆

Silly and made-up language in the style of Dr. Seuss. The Grinch tells his dog, Max, to "shut up."

Themes and Situations: 1 out of 5 stars ★☆☆☆☆

The Grinch is rejected by the Whos and lives alone on an isolated mountain cliff with only his dog Max for company.

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

The Grinch can be intimidating and scary. He steals everything right before Christmas morning. Max (the dog) is pushed around by The Grinch and gets dragged by his tail.

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

There will be flashing lights and musical numbers and sound effects may be loud and jarring. Fog, dry ice, and haze will be used. The Grinch comes into the audience.

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

Actors interact with audience members, and The Grinch comes into the audience. The Grinch is mean to the Whos. Max (the dog) is pushed and dragged by The Grinch.

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—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



Photo of Dr. Seuss's How the Grinch Stole Christmas Cast by Glen Stubbe Photography

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

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

Who do you think changed the most, the Grinch or the Whos?

Character Interview



Grades: Grades 2 and up **Time Required:** 15-30 minutes

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

Supplies: None

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 Grinch.
2. The rest of the students will play the role of news reporters who are interviewing The Grinch for the local newspaper. The student playing The Grinch should respond as the character. It may be helpful to model asking The Grinch 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 Grinch, not to yell at him or scold him.
3. After interviewing The Grinch, do the same activity for other characters in the story such as Cindy Lou, Max the Dog, Mayor Who, or Grandma Who.

Sample questions:

- Why did you take all of the Who's holiday decorations?
- What were you feeling when you decided to take them?
- How do you think the Whos felt when they saw their decorations had been taken?

Variations and Adjustments

If time allows, give multiple students the opportunity to play The Grinch and other characters.

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

Story Sequence



Grades: Grades 3 and up **Time Required:** 15-30 minutes
Set-up: This activity works best in an open space, like the front of a classroom.
Supplies: Pre-cut lines of text from the following page

This activity allows students to tackle story sequencing and structure while practicing their **projection** and **enunciation** skills.

Instructions:

1. Cut out the lines of *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* from the following page. Mix up the slips of paper and pass out one slip to each student.
2. One at a time, have students read their line aloud.
3. Next, challenge the students to order themselves at the front of the classroom so their lines create a sequenced story from left to right. Students can use context clues, rhyming scheme, and storyline to put themselves in order.
4. Once the students think they are in order, have them read the lines aloud from left to right. Does it make sense? If it doesn't, what changes need to be made? Allow students to make any necessary edits before reading it again.

Variations and Adjustments

Once the students are in the correct order, challenge them to read the lines using different **volumes** (quiet/loud) and/or **emotions**.

For younger students, you can number the slips of paper to work on number sequencing. For pre-reading students, give them a set of 4 or more illustrations from the book and challenge them to put those in order. Once they have put them in order, ask them to tell you the story of the images.

Story Sequence Activity Text

Every Who down in Who-ville liked Christmas a lot...

But the Grinch, who lived just north of Who-ville, did NOT

The Grinch hated Christmas! The whole Christmas season!

Now, please don't ask why. No one quite knows the reason.

It could be his head wasn't screwed on just right.

It could be, perhaps, that his shoes were too tight.

But I think that the most likely reason of all

May have been that his heart was two sizes too small.

But, whatever the reason, his heart or his shoes,

He stood there on Christmas Eve, hating the Whos,

Staring down from his cave with a sour, Grinchy frown

At the warm lighted windows below in their town.

For he knew every Who down in Who-ville beneath

Was busy now, hanging a mistletoe wreath.

"And they're hanging their stockings!" he snarled with a sneer.

"Tomorrow is Christmas! It's practically here!"

Then he growled, with his Grinch fingers nervously drumming,

"I MUST find some way to stop Christmas from coming!"

Story Creation



Grades: Grades 5 and up **Time Required:** 15-30 minutes

Set-up: This is an independent activity for students to work at their desks with extensions for acting out in front of the classroom

Supplies: Writing supplies

This activity challenges students to remember different story elements from the play and create connections with a plot of their own making.

Instructions:

1. With your class, create a list of three characters, three characteristics or traits, and three settings from *Dr. Seuss's How the Grinch Stole Christmas!*
2. Write the lists on the board or a large piece of paper (example below).

Characters	Traits	Settings
Grinch	Grumpy	Mount Crumpit
Cindy Lou	Friendly	Who House
Max	Nervous	Whoville Square

3. Give your students time to write their own original story using ALL of the words on your lists.
4. If time allows, have a couple of students share their stories with the class.

Variations and Adjustments

After the students are finished writing, split up into small groups and have them act out each other's stories.

Discuss what is similar and different between your original stories and the play. How do the stories differ or resemble each other?

Grinch Grams



Grades: Grades K and up **Time Required:** 15-30 minutes
Set-up: This is an independent activity for students to work at their desks.
Supplies: Pre-cut-out hearts (template below) or paper for students to make their own; any additional art supplies desired

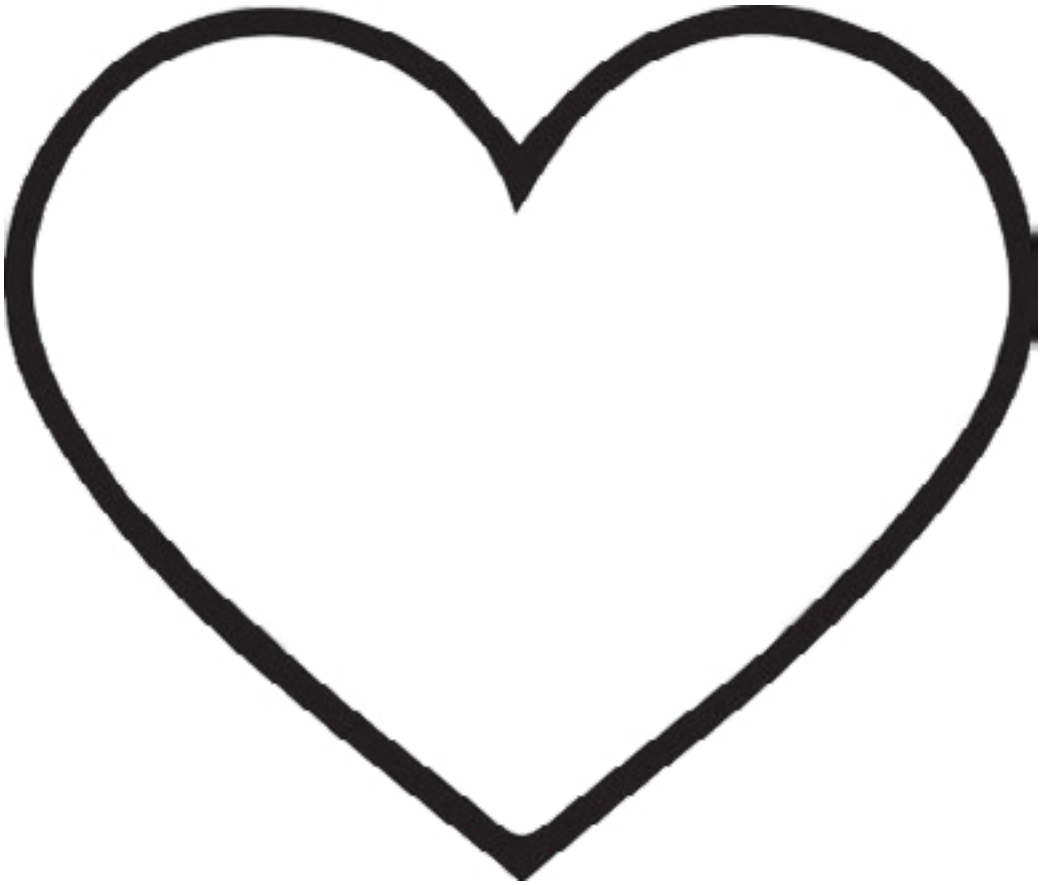
This activity helps students understand that words have the power to make hearts grow—just like the Grinch!

Instructions:

1. **Randomly assign each student another student's name and have the students keep their assigned person a secret.**
2. **Give each student a pre-cut-out heart or have them cut out their own.**
3. **Ask students to think about the person they were assigned and write one positive comment about that person on the heart. Students can decorate the heart or layer hearts of different sizes to symbolize a heart growing just like the Grinch's.**
4. **When everyone is finished, hang the hearts on a bulletin board for the room to see or pass them out to the intended students.**

Variations and Adjustments

Challenge students to think of someone outside of the class to give a Grinch Gram. Use the Grinch Grams to decorate lockers or cubbies.



More About *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*



How to Walk Like a Who



Kids' Questions Answered by The Grinch and CTC Staff



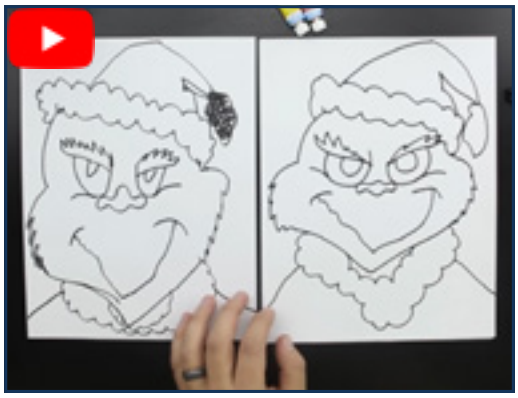
Grinch Reader's Theatre Script



More Post-show Activities

Questions? Email:
schools@childrenstheatre.org

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



How to Draw The Grinch – Directed Drawing