

Twelve Kinds of Ice

Educator Guide

Twelve Kinds of Ice a musical



children's
theatre
company

2026

2027

Table of Contents

Behind the Scenes.....p.3

The Show, Art Forms, and Prior Knowledge

Before You Go.....p.5

Activity: Exploring Text Through Movement

Activity: Actor's Tools

Craft: Ice Nature Art

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

Before You Go—At Home.....p.10

Resources for Families

Activity: Family Object Interview

Heading to CTC.....p.13

Trip Guide

CTC Theatre Etiquette

Field Trip Logistics

Accessibility

Content Advisories

Social Story

After the Show.....p.18

Springboard for Critical Thinking

Activity: Memoir Maps

Activity: This Scene Needs

Further Resources.....p.22



Behind the **SCENES**

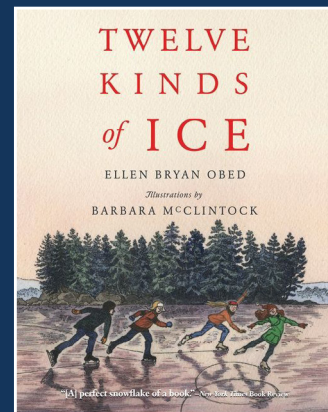


Photo of Katherine Fried and John-Michael Zuerlein by Kaitlin Randolph

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

What is this show about?

Glide through the ever-shifting magic of winter as Ellen recalls childhood memories of icy adventures with her loving father. In this world premiere musical, cold temperatures and warm hearts unite to tell a tender story that takes us from spotting the first glaze of ice to building an ice rink and hosting skating shows, hockey games, and moonlit solos. Watch in awe as ice freezes before your very eyes, then melts your heart.



From Page to Stage

Children's Theatre Company's production of *Twelve Kinds of Ice* is based on the book by Ellen Bryan Obed. Ellen Bryan Obed is the author of nine books for children. Poetry, prose, fantasy, and science, her books revel in nature and the northern seasons. They have received several awards including two Canadian Children's Book Center Our Choice Awards, the Maine Chapbook Award, and A Junior Library Guild Selection.



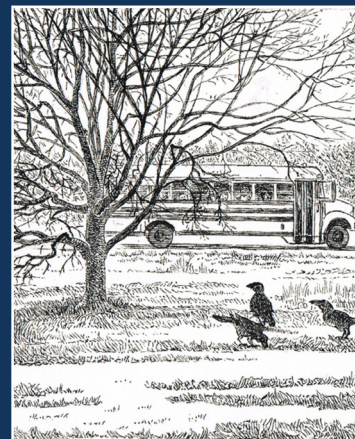
Ellen Bryan Obed

An Ode to Winter

Twelve Kinds of Ice celebrates winter and winter activities. With your class, discuss what winter activities are their favorite. What do they look forward to year after year? Do they have favorite memories from winters past? Share some of Barbara McClintock's illustrations from the original book. Are these images similar to or different from your students' descriptions of winter?



Illustrations by Barbara McClintock



Before **YOU GO**



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

Exploring Text Through Movement

Grades: Grades 4 and up **Time Required:** 15-30 minutes

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

Supplies: Printed copies of the lines below cut into strips



This activity allows students to explore lines from the script and create a kinesthetic anchor to remember the meaning of the line.

Instructions:

1. Cut up the lines below into strips. There should be enough strips for each student, and each line should have 3-5 copies.
2. Pass out the lines so that each student has one. Students should group themselves by line so that everyone with the same line is working together. Groups should work together to create a tableau or frozen image that illustrates the meaning of their line.
3. When students are finished, allow each group to showcase their tableau and say their line as a group.

That blank page is as white as snow. And as cold. And your brain is frozen like ice.

It's delicate, but soon it will be strong. It doesn't know how strong it's going to be. And in that way, this ice is just like you, dear.

Ice froze upon our day, and at school we could not think clearly—math and geography and reading were frozen solid.

We sped to silver speeds at which lungs and legs, clouds and sun, wind and cold, raced together.

Everything that counts, all the things that last, are things that someone waited for, not things that happened fast.

But Bryan Gardens had the sky, and to us, that was the best roof of all.

Everybody has to learn to let things change and grow. Or let them go.

Actor's Tools

Grades: Grades 4 and up **Time Required:** 10 minutes **Supplies:** None

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

Actors use many tools to help them tell a story; the 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 "Twelve Kinds of Ice" as a group.
2. Brainstorm together different emotions that actors might need to portray (happy, sad, mad, afraid, etc.) Try saying the following lines from the show with different emotions:
 - "Why won't the snow come?"
 - "Careful on the stairs!"
 - "It won't break!"
3. Encourage students to use their body as well as their voice to portray the emotions as they say the lines from the show. Allow a few students to showcase their work as a solo.
4. Ask students to reflect on what their favorite emotion was to portray. Why? What emotion was the most challenging?





Ice Nature Art

Grades: Grades 4 and up **Time Required:** 15 minutes

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

Supplies: Shallow dishes or jar lids; yarn; nature items such as sticks, leaves, berries, etc.; water

It may be a bit early in the season for your students to see ice forming outside, but you can make it together in the classroom!

Instructions:

1. In preparation for the activity, ask your students to bring in bits of nature from where they live or their favorite outdoor spot near their home. These should be lightweight and small such as leaves, grass, small sticks, berries, etc. Alternatively, you can take your students outside at school to gather things.
2. In the classroom, fill the shallow dishes and jar lids with water.
3. Add a long piece of yarn, making sure it is properly submerged.
4. Have the students place their nature items in the water. Don't worry too much about placement as they will naturally float around.
5. If it will be cold enough overnight, place the dishes outside to freeze. If not, you can place them in a freezer overnight.
6. Once they are frozen, go outside as a class and hang them outside the school. Check back on them to see how quickly they melt.



Illustration by Barbara McClintock, photo of John-Michael Zuerlein and Katherine Fried by Kaitlin Randolph



3 Things

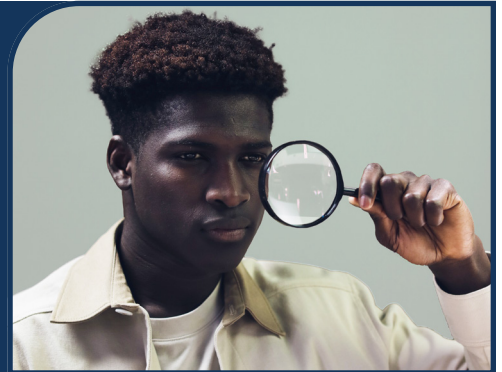
In the day or so before your field trip, share the following prompts with your students. You can read them aloud to your class or give each student a copy. When you return from the performance, review the list again. What do they remember noticing or thinking about during the performance?

During the performance:



Look for...

1. Theatrical lighting that helps to tell the story.
2. Thin panes of ice that break when touched.
3. Ellen plays herself as an adult and a child.
How can you tell the difference between the two ages?



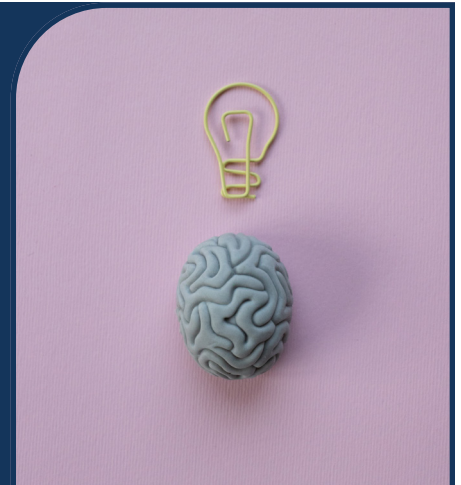
Listen for...

1. Live music. How does the music affect the mood of the story?
2. Twelve kinds of ice. Can you name all twelve after seeing the show?
3. How many days of skating they were able to have in one year.



Think about...

1. Ellen is scared imagining a monster in the black ice, but her dad makes her feel safe. Who makes you feel safe when you're scared?
2. Ellen has to wait and be patient for the perfect skating ice to come. What is something that you're looking forward to?
3. Does your neighborhood have anything similar to Bryan Gardens? A place where everyone gathers?



Before You Go— **AT HOME**



Photo of Katherine Fried and John-Michael Zuerlein 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 enjoy most about winter? What are some of your favorite stories set in the winter?
- What are some of your favorite childhood memories? Share your favorite memories as well!
- What about your field trip are you most excited about?

Questions to ask your child AFTER they see the show:

- What does Dream Ice mean for Ellen and the memory of her dad?
- What did Ellen discover about her father throughout the show? Did he always have the answers for everything?
- 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



Family Object Interview

Twelve Kinds of Ice tells the story of Ellen's childhood memories of icy adventures with her father. Ice and ice skates unlock these memories for Ellen. What objects do you have that hold a lot of memory?



Have your student select an object that they've had for a long time that represents a specific time in their life or holds family meaning. Do the same for yourself. Come back together and interview each other about your objects:

- What is the oldest memory you have attached to this item?
- If this object could talk, what secret would it tell?
- How is your life today different from when this object was new?

Make sure to switch roles so both of you spend time as the interviewer and the storyteller. If you have more people in your family, share with them one surprising or funny thing that you learned from each other. If you have extended family nearby, do this activity with them too!



Heading to **CTC**



Photo of Katherine Fried and John-Michael Zuerlein by Kaitlin Randolph

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 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 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 Red 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 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.



Twelve Kinds of Ice Content Advisories

Language: 1 out of 5 stars ★☆☆☆☆

In a moment of frustration, Ellen asks her dad, “did [the rules] fall out of your butt?”

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

Ellen’s dad has just died, and she’s telling this story as she’s reminiscing about her childhood with him.

Violence and Scariness: 0 out of 5 stars ☆☆☆☆☆

Ellen gets a little scared on the black ice and sings about a monster being under the ice.

Sensory Advisories: 0 out of 5 stars ☆☆☆☆☆

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

Audience interaction is encouraged. Ellen’s dad yells at her when she is determined to remain upset despite him trying to cheer her up. Towards the end of the play, Ellen reveals that her dad has died.

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**



Illustration by Barbara McClintock

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

Memoir Maps

Grades: Grades 6 and up

Time Required: 20-40 minutes; options to extend to multiple class sessions

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

Supplies: Paper and coloring supplies



Twelve Kinds of Ice is a memoir-style play that is a reflective retelling focusing on a specific time period in Ellen's life. In this activity, students will create maps to help gather ideas for their own memoirs. Once this map-making activity has been completed, have your students write down their stories.

Instructions:

1. As a class, talk about what you remember from the play and discuss how it falls into the memoir category.
2. Ask students to think about an important memory from their childhoods that taught them an important truth about life, growing up, or the world in general.
3. Thinking about where they may have experienced that memory, have them draw a map of a special place in their childhoods: their house, a neighborhood, a grandparents' house, etc. The map should be as detailed as possible. Tell them to include hiding places, areas they were forbidden to go, and their favorite spots in the location. The point of the map is to help jog their memory about time spent in that place.
4. If students finish their maps quickly while others are still drawing, have them start writing about the memory that they've landed on.
5. Have students share out their maps or take a gallery walk around the room.

Variations and Adjustments

In a future class session, have students orally tell their memoir stories or have them work on writing them.

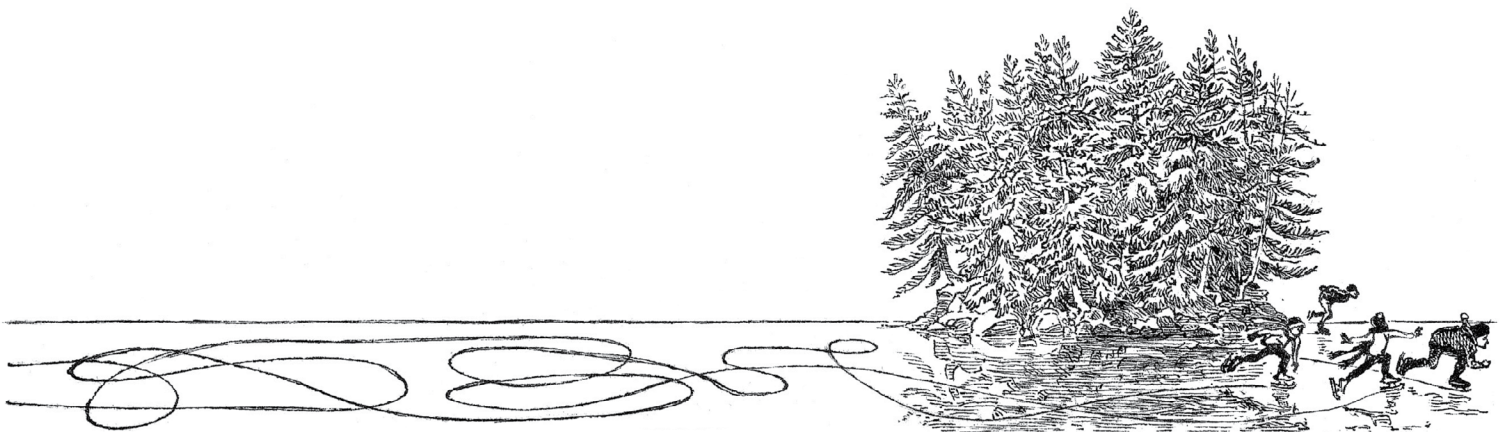
This Scene Needs

Grades: Grades 4 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 this activity, students will physicalize important moments from the play and gain more perspective on the characters from *Twelve Kinds of Ice*.

Instructions:

1. With your class, brainstorm important moments from the play. Choose a specific moment to build a tableau or frozen image of. For younger students, it can be helpful to brainstorm the people and objects that might be found in the tableau.
2. Choose five students to be the actors. Have the first student come to the front of the class and say, "This scene needs a (BLANK)." For example, if the scene is The Thaw, the first student might say, "This scene needs an umbrella." Then the student will use their body to become that character or object.
3. The remaining four students add into the scene, one at a time, until all five students are working together to become different characters and/or objects in the same scene.
4. Once all students are frozen in the scene, allow each one to say an emotion their character/object is feeling or a line of dialogue their character/object would say.
5. Repeat with a different scene and different actors.



Further Resources



The art (and science) of making outdoor ice rinks in Minnesota—[Article](#)



Why is Ice Slippery?
[Video](#)



Read more about the book's author Ellen Bryan Obed—[Link](#)



Photo of John-Michael Zuerlein by Kaitlin Randolph

Questions? Email:
schools@childrenstheatre.org

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

