

PLAYTIME POPPY IMAGINATION GUIDE



Kennedy High School
NOV 30, DEC 1 & 2
DEC 8 & 9, 2023

SYNOPSIS: The animals of the Pridelands welcome the newborn cub of King Mufasa and Queen Sarabi. As the cub grows, Mufasa explains the circle of life and that Young Simba will one day be king of the Pridelands. But the King's jealous brother, Scar, wants the throne for himself. He enacts a plan that causes Mufasa to be trampled by a herd of wildebeest. Scar blames Young Simba for the king's death and tells him to run away and never return. Scar assumes the throne, uniting lions and hyenas and nearly destroying the Pridelands.

Lost in the desert, Young Simba meets Timon and Pumbaa, who befriend him as he grows in their "worry-free" jungle home. Seeking help for the devastated Pridelands, Nala finds Simba alive in the jungle. Nala urges him to take his rightful place as king. With newfound courage, Simba agrees to return to the Pridelands. Simba confronts his uncle, the truth of Mufasa's murder is revealed and Scar runs away, pursued by angry hyenas. With peace restored in the Pridelands, Simba takes his place as king and the circle of life continues.

For the full synopsis, visit: <http://www.mtishows.com/disneys-the-lion-king-jr>

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ADULTS: This guide is designed to...

- ✓ Assist you to ENGAGE & INSPIRE your students as they prep for attending the performance
- ✓ Provide guidance afterwards to REFLECT on what students saw and heard at the theater
- ✓ Be a MENU of possible lessons/activities to choose from to fit the needs of your students
- ✓ Connect with IOWA CORE standards and expectations across subjects & grades

Enjoy the Learning!

PART 1: KNOW ABOUT THE PLAY

THE STORY

The Lion King was the first Disney animated film that was an original story, but the story was inspired by Shakespeare's play *Hamlet*. Both Simba and Hamlet must find the strength to become royal leaders after their fathers were killed.

The Lion King tells the story of young character that realizes he is part of a larger community. One person's actions ripple out to affect everyone else. He must find his inner strength and courage to do what is best for all.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Rafiki - a mysterious and wise mandrill
Ensemble - the animals of the Pridelands
Mufasa - lion king of the Pridelands, Simba's father
Sarabi - lion queen of the Pridelands, Simba's mother
Zazu - a hornbill, Mufasa's loyal, yet fretful attendant
Scar - Mufasa's jealous brother
Young Simba/Simba - a curious, eager lion
Lionesses - female lions who care for the Pridelands
Young Nala/Nala - a spunky, brave lioness
Sarafina - a lioness, Nala's mother
Banzai - a scruffy hyena who serves Scar
Shenzi - a tough hyena who serves Scar
Ed - a dimwitted hyena who serves Scar
Hyenas - mangy animals who live outside the Pridelands
Timon - a sarcastic meerkat who lives in the jungle
Pumbaa - a gentle warthog, Timon's best friend

THE SCENES

Scene 1 - Pride Rock
Scene 2 - Scar's Cave
Scene 3 - The Pridelands
Scene 4 - Scar's Cave
Scene 5 - The Pridelands
Scene 6 - Elephant Graveyard
Scene 7 - The Pridelands
Scene 8 - The Gorge
Scene 9 - Desert & Jungle
Scene 10 - Scar's Cave
Scene 11 - The Pridelands
Scene 12 - Jungle
Scene 13 - Pride Rock

THE COMPOSER & LYRICIST

The Lion King film featured five songs by Sir Elton John and Sir Tim Rice: "Circle of Life," "I Just Can't Wait to be King," "Be Prepared," "Hakuna Matata," and "Can You Feel The Love Tonight." Before *The Lion King*, Rice worked in partnership with Andrew Lloyd Webber on such shows as *Jesus Christ Superstar* and *Evita*. John wrote pop music hits as "Bennie and the Jets" and "Philadelphia Freedom." Their reputations as celebrated icons in the music industry were once again rewarded when the duo won the Grammy in 1998 for Best Show Album for *The Lion King*.

THE BROADWAY DIRECTOR

Julie Taymor was the stage director who had the exciting job of turning *The Lion King* movie into a stage production. Taymor was determined to emphasize the 'theatrical' in the stage version. In a film, special effects are like secret magic tricks. But Taymor wanted to reveal the HOW, and show the human being behind every character and effect. The ropes, pulleys and wires that create the magic are seen by the audience; the human beings that portray the animal characters are clearly seen beneath the costumes and masks.

<http://media.disneyonbroadway.com/pdf/TheLionKingStudyGuide.pdf>

SHOW VOCABULARY

Allied - Joined together in agreement
Aroma - smell
Bleak - depressing or dreary
Carrion - the meat from a dead animal
Impeccable - flawless or perfect
Majordomo - a butler who makes arrangements for other people
Mandrill - a monkey with a red and blue face, and a yellow beard
Meticulous - very detailed and exact
Outcast - a person who is rejected from their community
Stooge - a foolish assistant
Trespasser - an intruder who is not where she is supposed to be

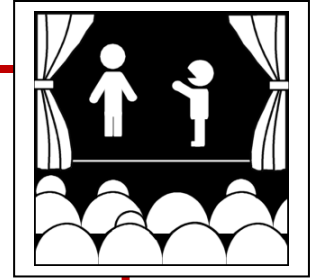
THEATRE ETIQUETTE

*The performers have worked hard to prepare this play.
Audience members can show respect by demonstrating the following:*

1. Arrive at the theatre on time.
2. Visit the restroom before the performance begins.
3. Silence cell phones to minimize disruptions to the actors and other audience members.
4. Applaud! It's welcomed and encouraged at appropriate times to show your appreciation of the performers' hard work.
5. Participate (sing, speak, move etc.) when the performers invite you to do so.
6. Be a good listener and keep your focus on the performance.
You won't want to miss any of it!

**You can practice your audience skills before attending the performance...*

*Divide up into small groups. Each group creates a short skit, practices, and then performs it.
When watching the groups perform you can practice being a good audience member!*



BASIC THEATRE VOCABULARY

Acting - the process by which an individual interprets and performs the role of an imagined character

Adlib - to improvise or make up parts of dialogue

Articulation - speaking clearly so that every word is understandable

Backstage - the space behind the acting area, unseen by the audience

Blocking - the actor's movement from place to place and action on stage

Character - the role played by an actor as she or he develops and portrays another by creating a different voice, body and personality

Choreography - the art of creating and arranging dances on the stage

Costume - carefully selected or specially designed clothing worn by the actors

Cue - a signal (dialogue or action) that indicates something else is to happen

Dialogue - the stage conversation between characters

Diction - the clarity with which words are pronounced

Director - the person who oversees the entire process of staging a production

Downstage - the part of the stage closest to the audience

Ensemble - a cast of actors working together to present a performance

Green Room - a room near stage where actors await to go on stage

Make-up - cosmetics and hairstyles that actors wear on stage to emphasize characterizations

Narrator - a character who tells the story of the play directly to the audience

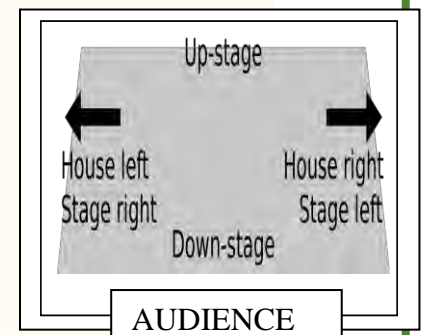
Projection - speaking loudly so your voice can be heard in the back of the theater space

Props - all the stage furnishings, including furniture that are used by the actors

Set - all the scenery that makes up the physical environment of the world of the play

Strike - dismantling the pieces (sets, costumes, props, etc.) at end of the run of a show

Upstage - the area of the stage farthest away from the audience and nearest the back wall



PART 2: LEARNING ACTIVITIES

“Pre-Show Prep” Before You Go You Can...

Literacy Skills:

➤ **Animal Stories and Sayings (RL.4.3)**

- People have been telling stories that feature animal characters for centuries. List all the stories you can think of that feature animal characters. How do the animals portray human emotions or actions?
- Choose a favorite animal, then write a short story about it based on what you know about that animal. For instance, owls are nocturnal and thought to be wise. Write a description of an owl character who makes a plan to protect his forest from enemies at night.
- Create a list of animal-themed sayings, such as "He outfoxed me!" "Your room is a pigsty!" etc. What does each phrase mean? Why do you think each animal was chosen to represent each idea?

➤ **Who Are You? (W.4.3)**

- (From <http://media.disneyonbroadway.com/pdf/TheLionKingStudyGuide.pdf>) In *The Lion King*, Simba must discover who he is before he can take his place in the Circle of Life.
- Write a personal essay or create a collage with the title "Who Am I?" Here are some starting points:
 - Describe your family and friends
 - What inspires you? What do you do to challenge yourself?
 - What makes you happy? What do you do for fun?
 - Do you have life or career goals?
 - What personal qualities do you think will help you most in the future?

➤ **Phrases to Live By (RL.4.2)**

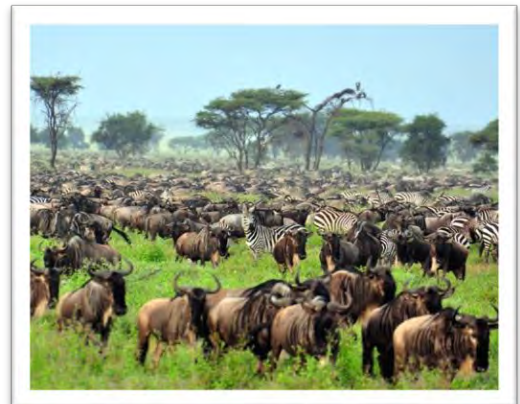
- Timon and Pumbaa live by the motto "Hakuna Matata" - "no worries!"
- Which of these mottos would you like to live by? Can you create your own?
 - "When life gives you lemons, make lemonade!"
 - "Be the change you want to see in the world."
 - "Just Do It"
 - "Try, try again!"



Science:

➤ **Serengeti (3-ESS2-2, 3-LS2-1)**

- The Serengeti is an ecosystem in Tanzania with diverse habitats ranging from forests, swamps, grasslands, and woodlands. It is home to over 70 large mammal species.
- Research the habitats and animals of the Serengeti. Create drawings or collages to show what you discover!
(<https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/explore/secret-life-of-the-serengeti/>)
(<https://www.livescience.com/23310-serengeti.html>)
 - How do the different animals co-exist?
 - Which species live together?
 - Which animals help other animals?
 - Which animals prey on others?



Math Skills:

➤ **Animal Graphs** (3.MD.B.3)

- Take a survey of your classes' favorite animals from *The Lion King*. Graph the results!
- Research the height or weight of different animals from the story (lion, warthog, meerkat, hyena, hornbill, etc.) and graph the results.

➤ **Kente Patterns** (2.G.A.1)

- Kente Cloth is a silk and cotton fabric made of interwoven textile strips, native to the Ashanti region in South Ghana. Known for its bold, multi-colored patterns, it was once a royal fabric worn by kings.
- Look at the example below, then create your own Kente pattern by drawing or with paper shapes.



Social Studies:

➤ **Ripples in a Pond** (SS.2.16)

- (From <http://media.disneyonbroadway.com/pdf/TheLionKingStudyGuide.pdf>) Throw a pebble into a still pond and what happens? Each ripple impacts the next! We all live in many circles, each one connected to the others. Mufasa tells Simba that we all have our place in the Circle of Life.
- Draw three circles that represent ripples in a pond. Write in each circle...
 - YOU (inner-most circle): What makes you, you?
 - US (the middle circle): Who influences and helps you the most? How do you help them?
 - WORLD (the outer-most circle): How are you connected to the world? How do your actions affect the environment, animals?

The Arts:

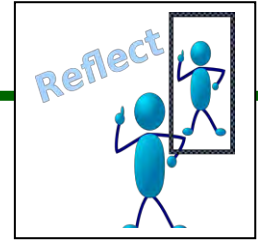
➤ **Emotion in Movements** (RL.4.7)

- (From <http://media.disneyonbroadway.com/pdf/TheLionKingStudyGuide.pdf>) Choose one of the phrases from *The Lion King* below and create a movement phrase which evokes the feelings or ideas. This is not charades! Don't try to act out the words, instead think of how to show the feelings.
 - "It means no worries for the rest of your days!"
 - "You have forgotten me."
 - "I laughed in the face of danger."
 - "I was just trying to be brave, like you."
 - "It is time."

➤ **Emotion in Music** (RL.4.7)

- Many of the songs in *The Lion King* are sung in African languages such as Xhosa, Zulu, or Swahili. Even if you can't understand the words, what clues in the music tell you about the emotion behind the music?
- Create rhythm patterns (with body percussion, instruments or found objects) that express joy, confusion, sorrow, or anger.

“After the Show” Follow-up Fun!



➤ **Create Your Own Story (W.3.3)**

- Choose one of these writing prompts and create a story of your own!
 - *How did Scar get his Scar?*
 - *What does King Simba tell his own cub?*
 - *How did Timon and Pumbaa become friends?*

➤ **Write a Letter (W.3.1)**

- Write a review of the performance or thank you letter and send it to the Kennedy High School Drama Department, and/or Playtime Poppy Children’s Theatre. Include key details by describing what you saw, heard and thought. What choices did the actors or tech crew make that you liked?

➤ **Do Some Reflecting (SL.3.2)**

- Discuss and take notes on your answers to the following questions after you see the performance:
 - 1) *Who are the main characters? How did the actors use their voice and body to portray each one?*
 - 2) *Where does the story take place? How did the set design create the feeling of that place?*
 - 3) *What conflicts/problems happened? How were the conflicts/problems solved?*
 - 4) *What was your favorite set or prop used in the play?*
 - 5) *How did the music affect the mood of the story?*
 - 6) *Were there any surprises in the play?*
 - 7) *What was the best part of going to the performance?*

➤ **Character Masks (RL.3.3)**

- Choose your favorite character from the play. How did the actor use his/her voice and body to portray the animal characteristics and the human emotional qualities?
- Create your own mask for your favorite character. How can you show the animal traits? How does the mask portray human emotional qualities? How can your mask show African culture?



➤ **Circle of Life Interview (SL.3.3)**

- Some students choose a character from *The Lion King*. Other students or the teacher can be the interviewer and ask that character about the Circle of Life:
 - *What do you think your role is in the Circle of Life?*
 - *Do you think humans in today's world are doing their part in the Circle of Life?*
 - *What other character helped you to change your mind about something?*

➤ **Share Your Experience (RL.3.3)**

- Tell a family member or friend about your visit to the theater!
 - *Watch the Disney movie together and discuss how the play was the same or different.*
 - *Draw a picture of a favorite scene and tell them all about it.*
 - *Create a stage or puppet theater in your house and act out the story together.*
 - *Experience a new culture... attend an African dance or drumming performance!*

PART 3: RESOURCES

WEBSITES:

Playtime Poppy Children's Theatre

<http://www.playtimepoppy.org>

Kennedy High School Drama Department

<http://www.kennedyactivities.com/theatre>

Kids' Drama and Puppet Activities

<http://media.disneyonbroadway.com/pdf/TheLionKingStudyGuide.pdf>

<http://www.kidactivities.net/post/drama-introduction-and-menu.aspx>

<http://www.kinderart.com/drama>

<https://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/educators/how-to/tipsheets/five-easy-drama-games>

<http://kidsactivitiesblog.com/66700/26-puppets-kids>

<http://wonderteacher.com/teaching-with-puppet-power/>

Cultural and Thematic Resources

African-American Museum of Iowa - <https://blackiowa.org/>

<https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/explore/secret-life-of-the-serengeti/>

<https://www.livescience.com/23310-serengeti.html>

<https://www.kids-world-travel-guide.com/africa-facts.html>



BOOKS

Africa for Kids: Exploring a Vibrant Continent, 19 Activities

By Harvey Croze (2007)

Animals of the Serengeti | Wildlife of East Africa | Encyclopedias for Children

By Baby Professor (2017)

The Lion King: Pride Rock on Broadway

By Julie Taymor with Alexis Greene (1997)

How Does the Show Go On: An Introduction to the Theatre

by Thomas Schumacher & Jeff Kurtti (2007)

Backstage Cat

by Harriet Ziefert & illustrated by Jenni Desmond (2013)

SPECIAL THANKS TO:

Kennedy High School Drama Department

Directors: Nick Hayes and Steven Tolly

Student Cast & Crew

2023-2024 PRODUCTION SPONSORS



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**Don't forget to learn the
Playtime Poppy Song!**

*"I love to sing
and dance and
play..."*

-Playtime Poppy

For the lyrics and music go to:

<https://www.playtimepoppy.org/history>

Since 1951, Playtime Poppy Children's Theatre has presented educational theatre programming for children and families in our community. From its inception, dedicated and enthusiastic volunteers have provided the creative energy and supportive crew needed to bring each season of Playtime Poppy to life. In partnership with Jefferson, Kennedy, and Washington High Schools, Playtime Poppy presents three children's productions annually. Throughout the year, Playtime Poppy offers engaging educational theatre experiences through special matinee performances, Operation Backstage!, One Great Line, and the Summer Theatre Adventure.