Theaterworks USA presents
Dragons Love Tacos and Other Stories
Study Guide
For Teacher Classroom Use
Performance: February 1, 2018 at 10am and 12:15pm,

This program is made possible through the support of Advocate Medical Group,
the Foglia Family Foundation, NICOR and ComEd

This program in conjunction with this study guide supports the following Common Core Standards:
RL.K-5.2, RL.K-5.3, RL.K-5.5, RL.K-5.6, RL.K-5.7, RL.K-5.9
RI.K-5.2, RI.K-5.3
W.K-5.3, W.K-5.7
SL.K-5.2, SL.K-5.4
Welcome to Theatreworks USA and our production of Dragons Love Tacos & Other Stories! This guide was created to help both you and your students learn about the play, as well as provide opportunities for classroom enrichment and curriculum connections. A trip to the theatre is always an exciting one— one that can create life-lasting memories, like the ones we hope you and your students will leave with after seeing our show! You may want to review some basic theatre etiquette with your students, as this might be many of their first theatre experiences. Talking or being disruptive during the performance is distracting to the actors and fellow audience members. However, we highly encourage clapping, laughing, and cheering at the parts they enjoy. Feel free to use this guide as a starting point for you and your students to explore the play. (And don’t forget, it’s okay for you to have just as much fun as your students do!). Sit back, relax, and enjoy the show!

Dear Teachers,

Welcome to the Theatreworks USA production of Dragons Love Tacos & Other Stories! This guide was created to help both you and your students learn about the play, as well as provide opportunities for classroom enrichment and curriculum connections. A trip to the theatre is always an exciting one—one that can create life-lasting memories, like the ones we hope you and your students will leave with after seeing our show! You may want to review some basic theatre etiquette with your students, as this might be many of their first theatre experiences. Talking or being disruptive during the performance is distracting to the actors and fellow audience members. However, we highly encourage clapping, laughing, and cheering at the parts they enjoy. Feel free to use this guide as a starting point for you and your students to explore the play. (And don’t forget, it’s okay for you to have just as much fun as your students do!). Sit back, relax, and enjoy the show!

Dear Students,

Welcome to the theatre! We are very excited for you to join us for Theatreworks USA’s production of Dragons Love Tacos & Other Stories! What makes theatre different from other activities is that there are live actors on stage with no wall between you and them, which means you play a part in the show. You may get really excited during a show and want to clap or cheer and make a lot of noise! We want you to have as much fun as possible so feel free to do these things after a song or laugh when something is funny, but save talking to your friends until after the show! A good audience member also makes sure that their cell phone and anything that makes noise is turned off. Make sure the grown up sitting near you does the same! Most of all, we want you to have fun! The theatre is a magical place where anything can happen as long as you believe it can. So, sit back, relax, and enjoy the show!

- Your friends at Theatreworks USA

From the Page to the Stage: A Look at Adaptation

Dragons Love Tacos & Other Stories is a musical based on several favorite children’s books: Interrupting Chicken, Dragons Love Tacos, Cowgirl Kate and Cocoa: School Days, Mercy Watson Goes for a Ride, and The Dot.

In an adaptation, a playwright and songwriter take the themes, characters, and major plot points of a book and finds a new way to tell the story. When adapting all of these books, each writing team turned their book into a mini-musical. Interrupting Chicken connects all of the stories together. As you’ll see in the show, Chicken reads and interrupts famous fairy tales, so Papa Chicken decides to read her new books that she doesn’t know yet.

Some Famous Adaptations:

Harry Potter movies are based on the books by J.K. Rowling

The Wizard of Oz film is based on the books by L. Frank Baum

Disney’s’ The Little Mermaid is based on an original story by Hans Christian Anderson
**Interrupting Chicken**
Based on the book by [David Ezra Stein](#)
Adapted by [Brian Lowdermilk & Marcus Stevens](#)

**What is the story about?** It’s bedtime for Chicken. Papa Chicken is going to read her a story, but Chicken can’t help interrupting. Will Chicken ever get to sleep?

**Themes** Learning by Repetition, Manners, Storytelling

**Post-show Questions** Have you ever interrupted somebody? Have you ever been interrupted? If so, how did that make you feel? Why is it important to be polite?

**Curriculum Connections & Activities**

**LITERACY**
Have each student tell a familiar story (like a fairy tale or fable) out loud in class and have the other students take turns interrupting them.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.2.4

**COUNTING**
Read Interrupting Chicken out loud and have students count the number of times Chicken interrupts Papa.

CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.K.CC.B.4.C

**LIST-MAKING**
Chicken tells Papa all of the things she did to prepare to go to bed. Make a list of the things you need to do before you go to bed. Curriculum Connections & Activities

**STORYTELLING**
Chicken interrupts the stories she loves to change the ending to. How would you change the ending to some other famous stories like Hansel & Gretel and Little Red Riding Hood?

**Chicken Fact!** Chickens cluck after they lay an egg.

---

**Dragons Love Tacos**
Based on the book by [Adam Rubin](#)
Illustrated by [Daniel Salmieri](#)
Adapted by [Joe Kinosian & Marcus Stevens](#)

**What is the story about?** Dragons Love all sorts of tacos – except spicy ones! When a boy throws his new dragon friends a spicy salsa taco party, red-hot trouble ensures.

**Themes** Listening, Teamwork, Brothers & Sisters

**Post-show Questions** Have you ever done something even though someone told you it wasn’t a good idea? Why doesn’t Billy listen to Sophia? What did Billy learns after the dragons burnt his house down?

**Curriculum Connections & Activities**

**IF DRAGONS...** Cause and Effect.
Discuss with your students “If Dragons eat tacos, then they...” “If Billy doesn’t listen to his sister Sophia, then...”

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.3.3

**REBUILD**
When the dragons burn down the house they have to rebuild it! Have your students use shapes to draw your own “blueprints” for a house. Blueprints are the drawings that a worker uses to build things.

CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.1.G.A.2

**RECIPE FOLLOWING**
In the classroom or at home, use the recipe on the following page to create your own salsa for your classroom taco party!

**Let’s Taco ‘bout it!** Dragons are mythological creatures found in artwork, stories and legends.
NOT-TOO-SPICY SALSA RECIPE*

*Perfect for Dragon Taco Parties

INGREDIENTS
- 10-11 Medium tomatoes
- ½ Large white onion
- 1 Bushel fresh cilantro
- ½ teaspoon ground red pepper
- ¾ teaspoon sea salt
- ½ cup lime juice

INSTRUCTIONS
1. Cut the tomatoes in half
2. Remove the seeds
3. Cut the tomatoes into very small cubes
4. Cut the onion and cilantro into very small cubes
5. Add all of the above together in a large bowl with a tight lid
6. Add salt red pepper and lime juice
7. Mix well
8. Place all ingredients in a bowl with a tight lid and place in refrigerator for 2 hours
9. Serve and enjoy!

Students: This activity is for you to do with your parents or teachers!

Cowgirl Kate & Cocoa: School Days
Based on the book by Erica Silverman
Painted by Betsy Lewin
Adapted by Mark Sonnenblick & Ben Wexler

What is the story about? Kate and her horse Cocoa do everything together – But when it’s time for Kate to go back to school, Cocoa is worried she’ll forget about him.

Themes Friendship, Listening, School

Post-show Questions Why doesn’t Cocoa hear Kate telling him that she’s going to school? Who does Cocoa think kidnapped Kate? Do you have friends that you do some activities with, but not others? Is it nice to leave out some friends when you hang out with others?

Curriculum Connections & Activities
SHOW AND TELL
Kate talks about all the fun things she did on her summer break with her horse, Cocoa. Each student should bring in something from their summer break and talk about it.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.2.1.A, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.2.4

RESEARCH
Kate does a project about her horse, Cocoa. Students can use their research and computer skills to create their own short presentation about their pets or favorite animals.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.3.5

Horse Fact! Horses can sleep both lying down and standing up!
Mercy Watson Goes for a Ride

Based on the book by Kate DiCamillo
Illustrated by Chris Van Dusen
Adapted by Janet Allard & Brendan Milburn

What is the story about? Mercy Watson, a beloved pig, desperately wants to drive a car. When she finally gets behind the wheel – chaos ensues!

Themes Following your dreams, Importance of rules

Post-show Questions Why do you think Mr. Watson didn’t want Mercy driving? Have you ever really wanted to do something even though you weren’t quite ready or supposed to do it? Even though Mercy didn’t get into too much trouble from the police officer, do you think she learned her lesson?

Curriculum Connections & Activities
WHEN PIGS FLY
Pigs don’t really drive cars. Make a list of pig facts that you know and another list of what makes Mercy different from a real pig.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.2.1

Pig Fact! Mr. Watson calls Mercy a “Porcine Wonder.” Porcine means anything that looks like a pig!

The Dot

Based on the book by Peter H. Reynolds
Adapted by Sam Salmond

What is the story about? Vashti can’t draw. Or so she thinks. An entire world of possibilities opens up after she simply draws a dot.

Themes Art, Creativity, Facing your fears

Post-show Questions Has there ever been something you didn’t think you were good at? Did someone help you get better? Did you try? Did you practice? How does it feel when you’re able to succeed at something you didn’t think you could do? Vashti was scared to draw because she didn’t think her drawing would be any good. How do you think she felt after she tried?

Curriculum Connections & Activities
DOTS & SHAPES
Vashti paints dots, which are her version of circles. Have your class come up with other shapes. How can you split those shapes up if you wanted to share them with one, two, or three more people? Ask the students to draw shapes on the board and then draw lines within them in order to divide them up.
CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.2.G.A.3

FRAME YOUR ART
On the next page, have your students use a ruler to measure each side of the gold frame. How long is each side? When they’re done, grab a pen and everyone can make their own dot!
CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.2.MD.A.1

Make Your Mark! Visit thedotclub.com to learn about ways to celebrate creativity in your classroom!
MAKE YOUR MARK!
What Do You Remember?

1. Dragons can’t eat spicy salsa because _______.
   a. it tastes funny.
   b. they can’t eat red things.
   c. it gives them tummy troubles.
   d. the chef didn’t wash his hands.

2. Cocoa doesn’t hear Kate tell him she’s going to school because he sees _______.
   a. a rabbit
   b. an apple
   c. a bus
   d. a cowgirl

3. After Mercy gets to drive the car, she wants to be the first pig to _______.
   a. fly a hot air balloon
   b. bake a cake
   c. run for mayor
   d. build a castle

4. Vashti discovers that blue combined with yellow makes _______.
   a. brown
   b. purple
   c. green
   d. a mess
Pre-Show Questions

1. Compare it! Before the performance, read the stories in the show. After the performance, compare and contrast the characters, settings, and events in each version. What parts of the different stories are important to remember?

2. What are other adaptations you can think of besides what is listed in the study guide? Do you have a favorite book that you’d like to see come to life on stage? Which one?

3. Discuss the different characters after you read the book. Describe how each may speak, move or look.

4. Have the students seen any shows that were based on books or stories before? What about movies? How do they expect this show to be different from what they have seen in the past? How do they expect the show to be different from the books?

5. Have the students draw or write predictions on what they think they will see based on what they read in the study guide, pictures, and history. After the show, look at the predictions and see who was correct.

6. Have the students research storytelling in other countries or history. How is it different or similar to American folktales and fables? This can be a research paper, project or just a homework assignment. Have them present what they found to the class.

7. Since the main theme of the play changes with each show, have a class discussion on the topic of each. Have the students think of a moral or a lesson that they would want to teach someone and write their own fable. Have them go a step further and illustrate the story. Have them present to the class explaining why they told the story in the way they did. Discuss the other themes in the book – actions and consequences and responsibility. Have they ever felt like any of the main characters have? How did they react?

8. Have the students read another book or watch a movie. What are some common themes of the story? What is the main theme of the story? Are there other stories they can think of that have the same theme? Consider using other folk tales and fables to illustrate this point: Greek mythology, fables, American folk tales, etc. What are some other famous stories? Was the lesson the same in each story?

9. Have the students research other stories. How are the stories similar to the story in this show (themes, characters, setting, etc.)? How are they different? Even if they haven’t read the stories, is there anything that they can tell from the description or even pictures that are similar to the story in the show?

10. When the students attend the performance, listen to the music throughout the show. Did all of the music you heard have lyrics to it? Did you sometimes hear music when the actors were talking but not singing? Did the music and lyrics help tell the story? Did the music help convey different emotions?

11. In the play, actors have to act like the characters they are playing. Have your students pick an animal to research and then portray through physical action. Each student will learn about a particular animal’s behavior and traits through research in books or online. The students can then create a poster with their research facts and a picture of the animal. Without revealing their subject, have the students take turns acting as their animal while the class tries to guess what it is.
Post-Show Discussion
(Some of these are good to discuss with your students while you wait for your bus to arrive at the theatre after the show!)

1. Have each student come up with one or two of their favorite parts of the show. What was their least favorite part?

2. Compare the show they just saw with other theatre shows or movies they’ve seen. How are they different? How are they similar?

3. What is the difference between a book and the play they’ve just seen? Are there similar aspects in each or are they completely different?

4. Do the students think they could write a play based on their lives? Have the students write a story that could be turned into a play. Maybe include their favorite day, vacation they’ve taken, school or friend adventures. To expand on this activity, have the students write a scene of their play. Go to the library and look at the format of a play including stage directions, dialogue and scene description. Have the students perform their scene for the class. If they can’t come up with something on their own lives, have them write something for another story.

5. Write a journal entry about the play. Include favorite or least favorite parts. Scenes or times in the show that students related to in some way. Have they ever felt like any of the characters in the stories? Were there things they would do differently if they were in that character’s shoes?

6. Have the students pretend you are a reporter for a newspaper and write a review of the play they have just seen.

7. Have the students read the synopsis and background information. What are the common themes? What is the main theme of the play? After the show, have the students recall what they read about the story before they came to the show. Does their idea of the theme change after seeing the show? How is what they saw different/similar to what they read? Did the play use specific words or descriptions to add to the story or create the mood of the story? Use specific examples.

8. Have the students pick out their favorite part of the story and describe it in detail from the perspective of the main character in the scene. Have them rewrite the story from another character’s perspective (i.e. from Mercy’s to Mr. Watson’s). Did that change the story at all? How? How is each story told—first person or third person perspective? Have the students rewrite it one more time from their own perspective as an audience member.

9. How does each character become a hero in each story? Explain the idea of cause and effect and actions and consequences using the actions of the characters in the story.

10. Have the students choose their favorite character in the play. How are they important to the story? What are they like?

11. An important aspect of the show is the music chosen. How is music used in setting the mood? What kind of music is played for the happy parts? The sad parts? Tell the students to listen for music that sets the mood the next time they see a movie or a television show. Do you think the songs are intentionally chosen or just because the director liked the songs?

12. Review the moral of the story and discuss what happened to the characters to show the moral (what bad thing happened that made them learn the lesson). How might you apply this lesson to your life?

13. Are there other ways the students can think of to tell the stories? Play, storyboards, etc. Have them try telling a story using that medium.

14. There are many poems that are written from stories and fables. Present poems on the fables to the class and have a discussion on the difference between a poem, a play and a story.

15. How did the play make the children feel? Talk about how the actors assume different roles (characters) and how a play is different from a movie. Ask the children what they think happened in the lives of the characters after the action of the play.

16. Have the students choose their favorite character in the play. How are they important to the story? What are they like? Do the mannerisms or actions coincide with the character they were?