



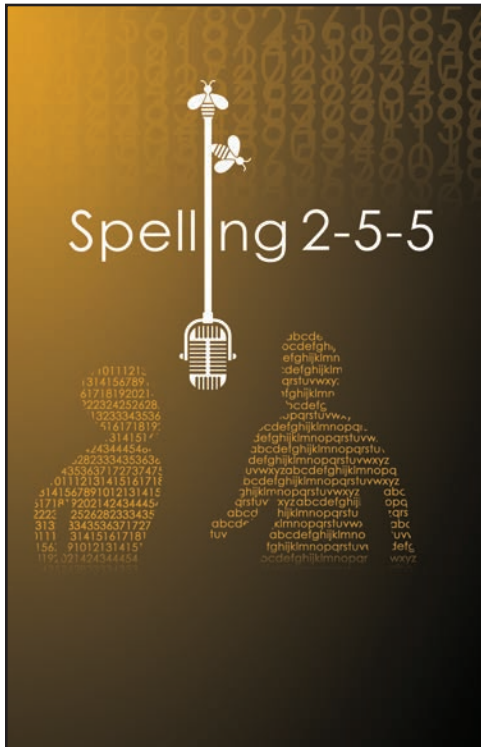
Resource Guide | for Educators and Audiences

We include information about our production along with creative activities to make connections both before and after the show. For educators, all activities are aligned to the Common Core Standards and North Carolina Essential Standards. Look for the symbol below throughout the guide.



NCES-TheaArts.(3-5).TA.A.1: Analyze literary texts and performances. NCES-TheaArts.4.TA.A.1.2: Critique choices made about characters, settings, and events as seen, or portrayed in, formal and informal productions.

Touring production grades 3rd – 8th



**A play by
Jennifer Overton**
**Director
Dennis DeLamar**

Themes explored

empathy, sibling relationships,
language arts, bullying and
inclusivity, families with autism

Synopsis

Jake loves reading comic books and drawing pictures ... and his big brother Simon. Jake also has autism spectrum disorder. When the story begins, Simon and Jake are playing as Batman and Robin while their mom gets ready for work. Jake can't find one of his comics and has an episode, but Simon reminds him of his social story and to "take deep breaths." After going through Jake's checklist, the boys go to school.

At school, Simon hears about the new reality TV show, "So, You Think You Can Spell?" Simon is a great speller, and wants to audition for the show. His friend Laurie offers to help him practice for the audition.

The next day, Simon and Laurie see Jake being bullied by Gordon, who has taken his hat. Simon was supposed to meet Jake after school, but forgot because he was practicing with Laurie. Simon tries to intervene, but is pushed to the ground. Gordon takes Jake's comics, and then snaps a photo of the both of them, and exits laughing. That night, their mom is mad at Simon for not being there, and Simon is frustrated that he always needs to watch out for his brother.

Later, Laurie gives Jake a new Superman comic. She discovers that Jake is also a great speller substituting numbers for the letters. L-O-I-S is 12, 15, 9, 19. No one else in Jake's family knows about his talent.

Simon continues practicing for the audition, and Laurie tries to tell him and his mom about Jake's talent. They're skeptical until Jake shows them. Laurie wonders if Jake could audition as well, but Simon gets upset. This was something that made him feel special, and wonders, "Why does everything have to be about Jake?!" Jake gets upset because of Simon's outburst, and their mom grounds Simon. She still allows him and Jake to go to the audition.

At the audition, Simon does well and is "just what they're looking for." Then Jake auditions. He gets nervous, and the producers start to yell at him. Simon speaks up for his brother because the producers don't seem to care about what Jake "needs to do his best." Neither of them make it onto the show.

Simon sends some of Jake's drawings to a gallery in D.C., and Jake wins their young artist competition. In the end, Simon comes to appreciate Jake for the unique and talented individual he is, and becomes a proud advocate for him.

Children's Theatre of Charlotte is proud to partner with Bank of America as the exclusive corporate sponsor of the Resident Touring Company.



Before the RTC arrives

Audience expectations

You may wish to have a discussion with your students about their role as audience members. Live theatre only exists when an audience is present, and your students' energy and response directly affects the actors on stage.

Young audiences should know watching live theatre isn't like watching more familiar forms of entertainment: they can't pause or rewind it like a DVD, there are no commercials for bathroom breaks, nor can they increase the volume to hear if someone else is talking. Encourage your students to listen and watch the play intently, so they may laugh and cheer for their favorite characters when it is appropriate.

At the end of the play, applause is an opportunity for students to thank the actors, while the actors are thanking you for your role as an audience member. Here are some other guidelines to remember while you're watching the performance:

- Respect others during the performance. Stay seated and keep your hands to yourself.
- Please turn off cell phones and other electronic devices during the performance.
- Photography and video of the performance is prohibited by copyright law.



NCES-TheaArts.(3-5).TA.CU.2: Understand the traditions, roles, and conventions of theatre as an art form. NCES-TheaArts.3.TA.CU.2.1: Illustrate theatre etiquette appropriate to the performance situation.



Theatre 360 extends the experience for classrooms to interact with with

Children's Theatre of Charlotte productions.

Online engagement Check out our collection of online games, websites and articles to deepen the connections of elements from the show. [Click here](#) to access.

Workshops and residencies Contact our Education Programs Coordinator, Tommy Prudenti, at tommyp@ctcharlotte.org to book yours today!

Meet the Resident Touring Company



ALEX AGUILAR is a recent graduate of UNC Charlotte where he earned his Bachelor of Arts degrees in Dance and Biology. After graduation, he became a teaching artist for Children's Theatre of Charlotte and is excited to continue his journey with CTC as a member of the Resident Touring Company. While this is his first time touring, he has performed in Charlotte for 14 years in both dance and theater. He's been a soloist in dance works by Kim Jones and David Gwizman. Previous theater credits include: *Disney's Aladdin Jr.* (Aladdin), *Shrek: The Musical* (Donkey) and *The Secret Garden* (Fakir).



WILL BURTON-EDWARDS is delighted to make his professional debut with the Children's Theatre of Charlotte's Resident Touring Company. He is a recent graduate of the University of the South, double majoring in Physics and Theater Arts. With ten years of experience, notable performances include: *Shrek: The Musical* (Shrek), *When You Comin' Back*, *Red Ryder?* (Teddy), *The Crucible* (John Proctor) and *Hamlet* (Polonius). Beyond the stage, Will has seven years of experience working as a camp counselor. In his free time he enjoys going on hikes and singing in choirs. He hopes you enjoy the show!



MARGARET DALTON is delighted to return to Children's Theatre of Charlotte! Past CTC credits include: *Go, Dog. Go!* (Blue Dog), *Grace for President* (Mrs. Barrington), *The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane* (The Woman), *Ella's Big Chance* (Ella Cinders), and *The Cat in the Hat* (Sally). Other select professional credits include: five tours with the National Theatre for Children, a national tour of *The Toffetas* (Cheryl), a regional tour of *Miss Nelson is Missing!* (Miss Nelson/Viola Swamp), *Hatfields & McCoy's* (Nancy McCoy), *Jesus Christ Superstar* (Mary Magdalene) and *High School Musical* (Gabiella). She received her Bachelor's degree in vocal performance from Elon University.



RASHEEDA MOORE is delighted to return to her hometown of Charlotte after living in Chicago. She worked for The Second City, and was the co-artistic director of The pH Comedy Theatre. She performed sketch comedy (*Pew Pew Pew— A science fiction show*, *Fake Believe* and *Barackalypse Now*) and improvisation (*Family the Musical* and *Party— Improvised Dungeons and Dragons*). She earned her BA from Greensboro College, and her MFA from The University of Southern Mississippi. She thanks her family and friends for their support, and hopes you enjoy the show!

Before the show

Vocabulary enrichment

turbines *n.* a machine for producing continuous power in which a wheel or rotor is made to revolve by a fast-moving flow of water, steam, gas, air, or other fluid

tectonic plates *n.* the layer of the earth's crust (lithosphere) that moves, floats and sometimes fractures causing continental drift, earthquakes, volcanoes, etc.

"diabolical hoax" *n. expression:* an outrageously wicked plan intended to deceive

routine *n.* a sequence of actions regularly followed; a fixed program

alliterative *adj.* having the quality of alliteration; the repetition of initial consonant sounds in two or more neighboring words or syllables (such as Lois Lane)

magnanimous *adj.* very generous or forgiving, especially toward a rival or someone less powerful than oneself

intervene *v.* to come between so as to prevent or alter a result or course of events

delusions *n. plural:* an idiosyncratic belief that is firmly maintained despite being contradicted by what is generally accepted as reality or rational argument

astounding *adj.* surprisingly impressive or notable

advocate *v.* to publicly recommend or support

"grave reservations" *n. expression:* a limiting condition; agreed but with doubt about a serious or urgent matter

dapper *adj.* (typically of a man) neat and trim in dress, appearance or bearing

integrity *n.* the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles

reformed *v. past tense:* make changes in order to improve it

paradise *n.* an ideal or perfect place



CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.(3-5).4: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases.

neurodiversity *n.* range of differences in individual brain function and behavioral traits, regarded as part of normal variation in the human population (especially in the context of autistic spectrum disorders)

The BIG questions before the show

1. Think about getting up in the morning. What steps do you take to get ready for the day? Do you follow patterns in the morning, where you have a morning routine? Now think about a time when those routines were disrupted. How did you feel? Where in your body did you feel that feeling? For how long did you feel the effects of the disruption?
2. Have you ever judged a person based on your first impression or meeting? Explain. Later, did you change your mind?



CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.(3-5).2: Ask and answer questions about key details in a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media. NCES-HealthEd.4.ICR.1.1: Explain the importance of showing respect for self and respect and empathy for others.

From the Playwright

"If Autism is something wrong with my brain, why can't they operate and fix my brain?"

My son, Nicholas, asked me this recently. I tried to explain there's nothing wrong with his brain; that his brain works a little differently than most other peoples' brains, but that's not wrong; that's not bad. That's unique. That's what makes him special.

I wrote this play because there is a thirst for knowledge about autism. I want teachers, students, families, individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and policy makers to gain a further understanding of ASD. I want them to understand the need for supports for schools and families. I want to spark conversations about bullying, inclusion, compassion, and what it means to be differently-abled. I want to salute parents. I want to send a special shout out to siblings. But most of all I want a world where it's safe to be different and kids like Nicholas never have to feel that their brain is wrong.

- Jennifer Overton,
playwright *Spelling 2-5-5*

Before the show

Your role in the story

Jake endures Gordon's bullying behavior throughout most of *Spelling 2-5-5*. Jake's brother, Simon, always defends his brother against bullies. Each of them play a role in what is called the "Triangle of Oppression." It's important to teach young people the vocabulary in order to name and identify oppressive or intolerant behavior when they witness it. These activities are based on the *Teaching Tolerance: A Project of the Southern Poverty Law Center* curriculum. Find out more at tolerance.org.

Perpetrator: Someone who commits an act of oppression.

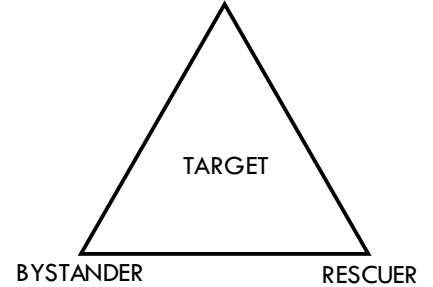
Collaborator: Someone who sees the act of oppression and chooses to make the situation worse. This can be something as simple as laughing at what the Perpetrator says or does.

Target: Someone who is oppressed by the Perpetrator.

Bystander: Someone who sees the act of oppression and chooses to do nothing.

Rescuer: Someone who sees the act of oppression and chooses to make the situation better through direct action.

PERPETRATOR (AND COLLABORATOR)



In small groups, encourage students to create a frozen image or tableau of an example of oppression they've seen at their school. Instruct students to assume the roles of Perpetrator, Target, Bystander and Collaborator. Remind them to keep it realistic and based on what they have witnessed. Share the images and discuss them.

Encourage the students to write a letter to the Bystander in their frozen image and give them three different action strategies they could use to make the situation better for the Target. Help them become a Rescuer!



CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.(3-5).3: Write narratives to develop real and imagined experiences or events using effective techniques, descriptive details, and clear event sequences. NCES-HealthEd.4.ICR.1.5: Exemplify how to seek assistance for bullying.

What is Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)?

Autism, or autism spectrum disorder, refers to a range of conditions characterized by challenges with social skills, repetitive behaviors, speech and nonverbal communication, as well as by unique strengths and differences. We now know that there is not one autism but many types, caused by different combinations of genetic and environmental influences. The term "spectrum" reflects the wide variation in challenges and strengths possessed by each person with autism.

As a class, click on the link below to watch a video produced by The National Autism Society. Warning: this film is intended to simulate sensory overload and so features loud, repetitive noises. For students on the Autism Spectrum this video may be triggering.

Autism and Sensory Sensitivity

After watching this video, have students free write for two minutes about the experience of watching the video. How did it change your mood? Your body? Did you feel overwhelmed? After writing those experiences as an individual, share those thoughts as a class. Ask students to imagine what it's like feeling that way all the time. Additional internet resources:

autismspeaks.org/what-autism

autism-society.org

nationalautismassociation.org



CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.(3-5).1: Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information. NCES-HealthEd.4.ICR.1.2: Exemplify empathy toward those affected by disease and disability

Worksheet key for before the show (Wordfind)

S	N	Z	H	N	N	B	C	X	C	Z	J	V	C	J
W	C	P	G	D	P	Y	Q	A	V	G	J	S	Y	
A	F	O	H	E	Z	P	O	W	L	J	M	L	Y	K
N	C	W	K	M	W	S	P	J	C	W	Y	E	U	N
R	C	A	T	P	M	M	R	L	L	F	W	B	C	F
A	O	S	M	X	G	A	B	R	O	T	H	E	R	S
M	N	D	M	T	W	T	U	L	D	M	J	C	L	O
Z	M	T	H	H	T	G	Y	D	A	Y	C	B	X	D
D	A	A	G	Y	D	O	L	J	I	A	A	Z	H	K
B	H	G	F	W	Y	M	Y	V	V	T	V	O	E	A
M	S	G	S	P	E	L	L	I	N	G	I	X	P	U
R	B	Q	Q	O	L	R	P	C	S	Q	O	Q	A	T
T	C	G	H	J	H	F	P	O	V	M	F	B	N	I
Y	T	Z	B	F	D	G	Z	S	S	Y	O	O	J	S
G	O	P	Y	A	R	C	H	I	T	E	C	T	J	M

Worksheet key for before the show (Article)

1. The five senses. Sight, sound, smell, taste and touch.
2. It may be painful.
3. Show compassion as they experience a disconnect from their environment.

Worksheet for before the show

NAME _____

COPY PAGE

Can you find and circle all the words used in *Spelling 2-5-5*? Do you know what all of the words mean? What do you think the show could be about? After the show is over, check back and see if you were correct!

architect

audition

autism

Batman

brothers

bully

comics

empathy

spelling

S N Z H N N B C X C Z J V C J
W C P G D P Y Q A V O G J S Y
A F O H E Z P O W L J M L Y K
N C W K M W S P J C W Y I U N
R C A T P N M R L L F W B C F
A O S M A G A B R O T H E R S
M N D M T W T U L D M J C L O
Z M T H H T G Y D A Y C B X D
D A A G Y D O L J I A A Z H K
B H G F W Y M Y V V T V O E A
M S G S P E L L I N G I X P U
R B Q Q O L R P C S Q O O A T
T C G H U H F P O V M F B N I
Y T Z B F D G Z S S Y O O J S
G O P Y A R C H I T E C T J M

Worksheet for before the show

NAME _____

COPY PAGE

Read the excerpt from [My Answer to the Question “What Does Autism Feel Like?”](#) by Lori Sealy provided by [themighty.com](#), and then answer the questions below. Click on the title above to read the full article.

The Frayed Wire

I often explain the neurological framework of autism (the framework from which autistic behavior flows) by likening the physiological pathways of the autistic body to that of a frayed stereo speaker wire.

Everyone with autism has some form of sensory struggle. Sight, sound, smell, taste and touch (the five senses that all of the experiences of life must pass through) can be absolutely harrowing and horrifying to a person with autism. Everything that enters their body is often accompanied by some semblance of pain or at least by some extremely uncomfortable sensation. Here’s where the analogy of the frayed wire may help you understand autism a bit better.

When you go to your stereo and turn on the tunes and all is working well with the speaker wire, then the sound is sweet, crisp and clear. You hear what the artist and producer intended for you to hear — and it’s a good and pleasant thing. However, if your speaker wire has a short in it, if it’s frazzled by a fray, then things might not go so well, and a clear connection could be lost.

There are moments when that frayed wire may be in the perfectly placed position to still allow really solid sound to pass through. In that moment, the music is coming through loud and clear and you get to enjoy the groove. But then something shifts — even just a little, and suddenly that worn wire produces static (and maybe even sparks). The music’s still there, but with it is another competing noise — a sharp and crepitating noise — a noise that’s taken something pleasant and made it painful.

All of a sudden something shifts again, and everything has gone from simple static to overwhelming and excruciating white noise. In the chaotic cacophony you find yourself reaching for the volume control in order to mute the mess because it hurts.

Then things shift once more and the frayed wire is now in a position where nothing’s getting through. The connection has been lost and all is silent. The stereo itself is still making a melody, but that melody is trapped inside the machine and unknown to anyone on the outside. Welcome to autism!

1. What are “the five senses that all of the experiences of life must pass through”?
2. In someone with autism, how might they feel when experiencing any type of noise or touch?
3. Explain how you might act towards someone who was experiencing “the frayed wire.”

After the show

Worksheet key
for after the show

“Don’t be silly Robin, of course we’re going to make it. Together we’ll outsmart him. Together we can do anything! We’re the dynamic duo!”

Quick Draw



In the play, Jake loves architects and buildings, especially ones in Charlotte. He has an incredible ability to create perfectly detailed drawings of buildings after looking at them for a short time.

First, find a picture of a building, like the Bank of America Corporate Center in Charlotte, NC. Then with a partner, time each other studying the image for 30 seconds.

Then give yourselves one minute to draw a picture of the building. How similar are your drawings? What details did each of you include? Try it again with a new building!

The BIG questions after the show

1. Think about a time you felt special. Was that feeling a result of someone else’s action? What can you do to make others feel special?
2. What words would you use to describe yourself? What words do you think others (friends, family, teachers, etc.) would use to describe you? Are any of your answers the same? Different? If so, then why?



CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.(3-5).2: Ask and answer questions about key details in a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media. NCES-HealthEd.4.MEH.2: Understand the relationship between healthy expression of emotions, mental health, and healthy behavior

What is your goal (objective)?

In *Spelling 2-5-5*, Simon’s goal is to appear on the reality TV show “So, You Think You Can Spell?” In a play, we refer to a character’s goal as their objective or what they want during the story. Sometimes they may encounter obstacles that get in the way of achieving their objective. And sometimes their objective may change during the story. Think about a goal you may have. It could be something like learning to ride a bike or becoming a doctor someday. Answer these questions:

1. What is your goal?
2. Why is this your goal?
3. What obstacles might you encounter trying to accomplish your goal?
4. What are three actions you can do to accomplish your goal?

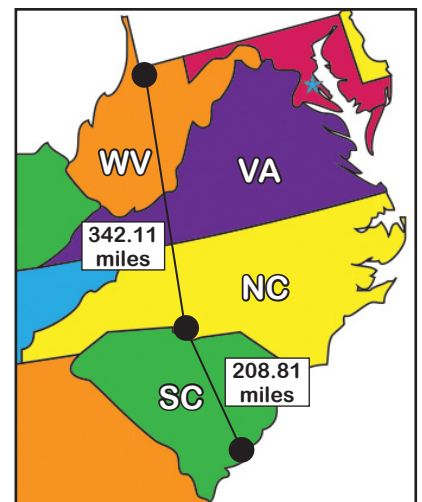


NCES-TheaArts.3.TA.CU.2.2: Understand the role of the actor in relation to performance responsibilities, such as memorization, blocking, and characterization. NCES-HealthEd.4.MEH.2.2: Explain how effective problem solving aids in making healthy choices

Traveling with the tour

The Resident Touring Company (RTC) began in 1972 as the Tarradiddle Players, the vision of theatre educator Constance Welsh. In 1989, the company officially became part of Children’s Theatre of Charlotte.

- If the RTC travels from Charleston, South Carolina, to Parkersburg, West Virginia, how many total miles would that be?
- The RTC van gets 15 miles per gallon of gas. How many gallons would it take to drive from Charlotte, North Carolina, to Parkersburg, West Virginia? If the van holds 20 gallons of gas, calculate the cost of travel based on current gas prices.
- The RTC will perform 400 times during the school year. If they perform five days per week, for about 34 weeks, how many average performances is this per day?



CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.3.OA.D.8: Solve two-step word problems using the four operations. Represent these problems using equations with a letter standing for the unknown quantity. Assess the reasonableness of answers using mental computation and estimation strategies including rounding.

Worksheet for after the show

NAME _____

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In the play, Simon and Jake are both incredible spellers, however, they do not spell using the same language. Jake uses numbers in the same way Simon uses letters. For example:

Simon would spell the name of the play as:

S-P-E-L-L-I-N-G B-E-E

Jake would spell the name of the show as:

19-16-5-12-12-9-14-7 2-5-5

Use the translation guide below to “de-code” the message.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26

“ 4-15-14 ‘ 20 2-5 19-9-12-12-25 18-15-2-9-14, 15-6 3-15-21-18-19-5

23-5 ‘ 18-5 7-15-9-14-7 20-15 13-1-11-5 9-20. 20-15-7-5-20-8-5-18 23-5 ‘ 12-12

15-21-20-19-13-1-18-20 8-9-13. 20-15-7-5-20-8-5-18 20-15-7-5-20-8-5-18 3-1-14

4-15 1-14-25-20-8-9-14-7! 23-5 ‘ 18-5 20-8-5 4-25-14-1-13-9-3 4-21-15!”

Did you think it was easy to de-code the message? If not, what made it frustrating? Can you create another message using the translation guide?

Check out these recommended books at your local library or order them online.

Recommended for elementary

Ian's Walk

by Laurie Lears

A young girl realizes how much she cares for her brother Ian, who has autism, when he gets lost at the park.

Russell's World

by Charles A. Amenta

Russell is a boy with severe autism. Real-life family pictures and stories about living with Russell help readers understand autism and empathize with children who have it.

Everybody is Different

by Fiona Bleach

Intends to answer the many questions of brothers and sisters of young people on the autistic spectrum. Explaining the characteristics of autism, this book features helpful suggestions for making family life more comfortable.

A Boy Called Bat

by Elana K. Arnold

When his veterinarian mom brings home a stray baby skunk that needs rehabilitation, Bat, who has autism, resolves to prove that he is up to the challenge of caring for the skunk permanently.

Recommended for middle school

Anything But Typical

by Nora Raleigh Baskin

For Jason Blake, it's a challenge living with autism in a neurotypical world. But Jason finds a glimmer of understanding when he comes across PhoenixBird, who posts stories to the same online site as he does.

Mockingbird

by Kathryn Erskine

Ten-year-old Caitlin has Asperger's Syndrome. According to her, the world is black and white and anything in between is confusing. Then she comes across the word closure—and she realizes this is what she needs.

Temple Grandin

by Sy Montgomery

An authorized portrait about Grandin's life with autism and her groundbreaking work as a scientist and designer of cruelty-free livestock facilities.

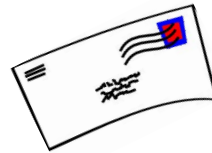
Every play Children's Theatre of Charlotte produces is created by a talented team of designers, technicians, actors and a director. As a class, discuss what you experienced when you saw the performance.

THEATRE CORNER

1. Name three things you noticed about the set. Did the set help tell the story? What sort of set would you have designed?
2. What did you like about the costumes? Did the costumes help tell the story? What sort of costumes would you have designed?
3. Talk about the actors. Were there moments you were so caught up in the story you forgot you were watching a play?
4. Were there any actors who played more than one character? What are some ways you can be the same person but play different characters?



NCES-TheaArts.(3-5).T.A.A.1: Analyze literary texts and performances. NCES-TheaArts.(3-5).T.A.AE.1.2: Understand how costumes [and technical elements] enhance dramatic play.



Write to Us!

Children's Theatre of Charlotte
300 E. Seventh St.
Charlotte, N.C. 28202



CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.(3-5).1: Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

The Kindness Project

With this season, Children's Theatre of Charlotte launches a unique endeavor, The Kindness

Project. We've commissioned three world-premiere plays—two this season, *Last Stop on Market Street* and *A Sick Day for Amos McGee*—that feature kindness as the central theme. We've invested in this project because we recognize the power simple acts of kindness hold.

As The Kindness Project blossoms, grows and spreads far and wide, there will be multiple ways for you to get involved. Visit ctcharlotte.org/kindness to learn more.