



# The Cat in the Hat and Other Tales

Script  
by  
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Based on books written by Dr. Seuss

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## Classroom Guide Grades 4 - 5

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## How to Use This Guide

This classroom guide for *The Cat in the Hat and Other Tales* is designed for Texas students in Grades 4 and 5. It offers activities to help you integrate a performance of *Cat in the Hat* into English language arts (ELA), mathematics, science, social studies, music, art, and theatre curricula.

All activities in this guide are linked to Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) content standards.

For students outside Texas, this guide’s ELA and math activities also are linked to Common Core standards. At the back of this guide, you will find a list of the guide activities and their related Texas and Common Core standards.

## Table of Contents

### Theatre

1: Discussion Questions . . . . . 3

### English Language Arts

2: Magik Must-Reads . . . . . 4

3: Write and Illustrate Your Own Story . . . . . 5

### Mathematics

4: 225 Words? . . . . . 6

### Science

5: Physical Characteristics: Design Your Own Seussian Creature . . . . . 7

### Social Studies

6: Write a Biography of Dr. Seuss . . . . . 8

### Art

7: Create a Diorama . . . . . 9

### Music

8: Exploring Music: Calm to Chaos and Back Again . . . . . 10

### Appendix

Activity Content Standards . . . . . 11

### **1: Discussion Questions**

#### ***Before the Performance***

*The Cat in the Hat and Other Tales* is a stage play. What is a stage play?

- How is a play similar to a TV show or movie?
- How is it different?

Who performs the parts (roles) in a play?

- What kinds of skills do you think performers need to have to perform in plays?
- Who else works on plays? (Remember: you may not see them on stage!)

The play is based on the book *The Cat in the Hat*, and other books, written by Dr. Seuss.

- Have you read *The Cat in the Hat* as a class or by yourself?
  - Based on what you read, what do you think may happen in the play?

#### ***During the Performance***

When you watch a play, you are a member of the audience. What kinds of things should you do as an audience member? Examples:

- Pay attention
- Laugh when something funny happens
- Clap if you enjoy something

What kinds of things should you *not* do as an audience member? Examples:

- Talk to your neighbor
- Use a cell phone during the performance
- Yell at the actors (unless they ask you to!)

#### ***After the Performance***

What did you think of the play?

- If you read *The Cat in the Hat* beforehand, how was the play similar to the book?
- How was it different?

Describe the performers in the play.

- What did they do to make their characters special (different from the other characters)?
- How did they use their bodies to play their characters (using voice, movement, etc)?
- Did you see anyone else who worked on the play besides the performers on stage?

Describe the characters' costumes.

- What did each character's costume tell you about that character?
- Did any of the performers change costumes?
  - If so, why do you think they needed to change costumes?

Describe the set of the play.

- Did it have a lot of locations?
- Did it look like a place you've been to before?
- How did different lighting change how the set looked for different scenes?

Did the play have music in it?

- If so, was it only in the background, or did it help tell the story?
- What instruments did you hear in the music?

If you were going to direct *The Cat in the Hat*, how would your production be different than the play you saw by Magik?

## **2: Magik Must-Reads**

For each of our mainstage productions at The Magik Theatre, we choose a theme related to the show. Then we create a list of Magik Must-Reads on that theme.

The reading theme for *The Cat in the Hat* is **Poetry & Verse**.

The Magik Must-Reads (Grades 4 - 5) for *The Cat in the Hat* are:

*Brains for Lunch: A Zombie Novel in Haiku* by K. A. Holt (\*Texas Author\*), Gahan Wilson (Illus)

*Inside Out and Back Again* by Thanhha Lai

*Love That Dog* by Sharon Creech

*May B.* by Caroline Starr Rose

Read them as a class or let students choose two or more to read. Then use these questions for discussion or book reports:

### **Theme**

How did the theme of **Poetry & Verse** show in each book? Explain.

### **Setting**

Describe the settings of each book.

- What details can you remember?
- Were the settings similar to a place you know or a place you've visited?

How were the settings similar to each other? How were they different?

How were the settings related to the theme of **Poetry & Verse**? Explain.

### **Characters**

Who were the main characters of each book?

Did any characters show up in more than one book?

Were the characters of one book similar another book's characters in any other ways?

### **Plot**

What did the main characters of the books want most?

Did anyone or anything stand between the main characters and their goals?

Did the main characters get what they wanted? How?

How were the plots of the books similar? How were they different?

### **3: Write Your Own Story**

In *The Cat in the Hat*, a playful talking cat drops into the lives of two children, turning their world upside down. Using the worksheet below, plan a story about a character who gets an unexpected and disruptive visitor. On a separate sheet of paper, write a first draft of your story. After sharing your story with your class and your teacher, gather feedback and use it to revise your story. When you finish, share your final story with your class again. How are your classmates' stories similar? How are they different?

#### **CHARACTERS**

Protagonist (main character):

Age:

Male or female?:

Physical description:

Personality:

Antagonist (visitor):

Age:

Male or female?:

Physical description:

Personality:

Other characters:

#### **SETTING**

Where:

When:

#### **PLOT**

How does your story begin?

How does your main character meet the antagonist?

What is the main conflict between your protagonist and antagonist?

What is the climax of your story?

How does your story resolve? (What happens after the climax?)

#### 4: 225 Words?

In the 1950s, a friend of Theodor Geisel (Dr. Seuss) challenged him to write a book that used just 225 different words. Mr. Geisel accepted the challenge and wrote *The Cat in the Hat*. The book actually had a few more than 225 distinct words, but became a classic anyway!

As a class, make a master list of the words used in *The Cat in the Hat*. Treat these words as your data for the following questions.

How many distinct words are on your list?

What are the shortest words in the book?

- The longest word(s)?

How many groups of rhyming words are there?

How many words have one syllable?

- Two syllables?
- Three syllables?

>>> Graph these results twice, using a bar graph and a pie graph. How do the two graphs give you different views of your data?

How many words are nouns?

- Verbs?
- Adjectives?
- Adverbs?
- Another part of speech?

>>> Graph these results twice, using a bar graph and a pie graph.

How many words begin with each letter of the alphabet?

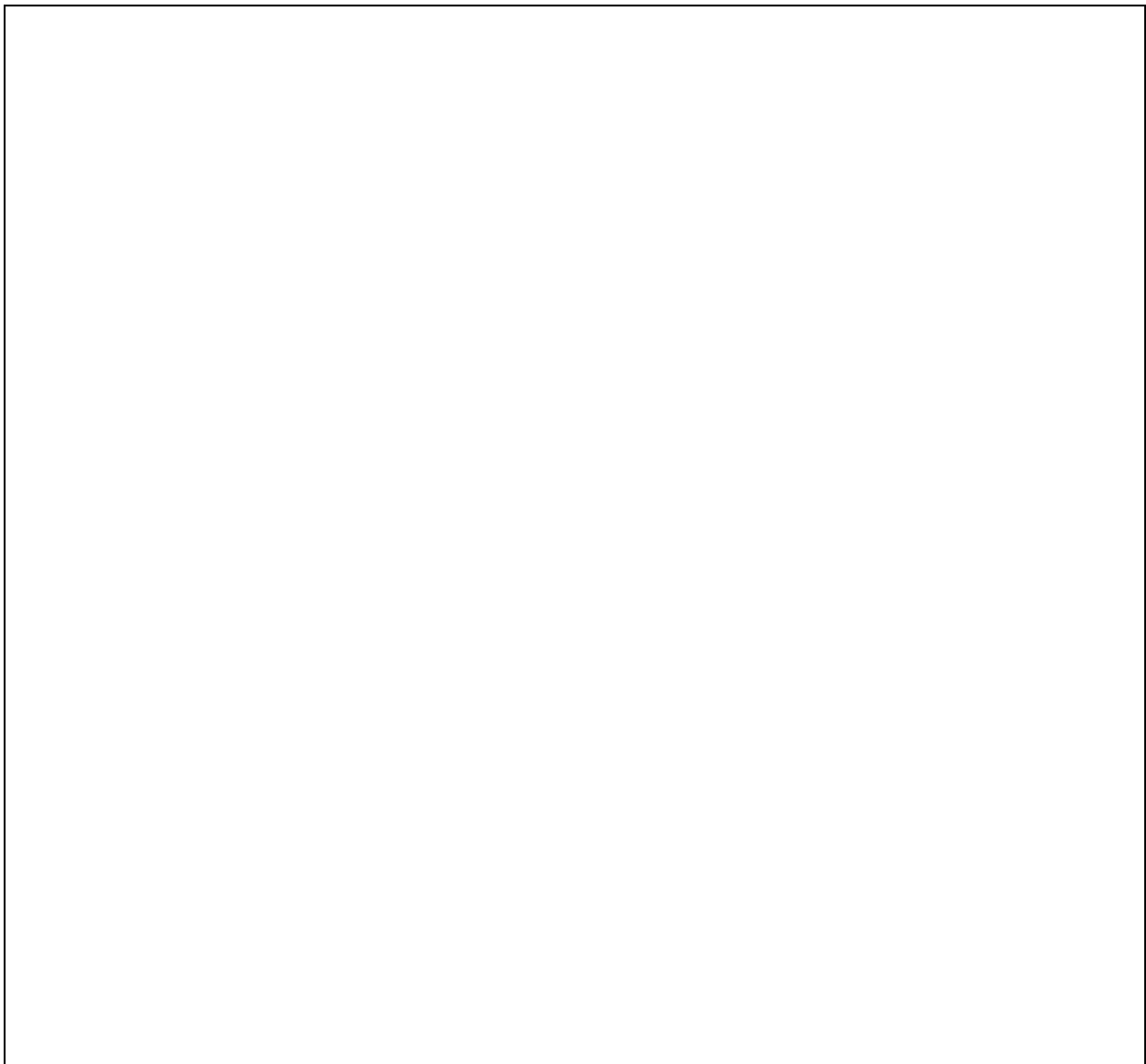
>>> Graph these results twice, using a bar graph and a pie graph.

**5: Physical Characteristics: Design Your Own Seussian Creature**

Physical characteristics are the features of a plant or animal that help it survive in its ecosystem, such as gills for life underwater, or feathers to help flight.

Many of Dr. Seuss’s characters are animals we recognize -- think: Horton the Elephant. But other Seuss characters seem like entirely new animals because they have physical characteristics we don’t usually see together, such as the wings on the Elephant-Bird that Horton hatches, or the mustache on the otherwise furry Lorax.

In the space below, design a Seussian character that has an unusual combination of physical traits. Share your design with your class. Discuss your creature’s characteristics (such as feathers, fins, beak, hands, fur, number of eyes, etc) and how they relate to where your creature lives, what it eats, and how it spends its time.



## **6: Write a Biography of Dr. Seuss**

A biography tells the story of a person’s life. Biographies can help us learn about interesting people, as well as the times and places they lived in. When a person writes his or her own biography, we call it an autobiography.

People who write biographies are called biographers. Biographers use many sources to find information about their subject. Primary sources are documents that were written during the time the subject lived and were often written by the subject. Primary sources can include newspaper articles, letters, journals, and government records. Secondary sources include documents written after the lifetime of the subject, like books, histories, and other biographies.

Dr. Seuss was one of the most influential children’s authors in the world. Many writers have already written biographies about Dr. Seuss. But every writer can bring something new! In this activity, you’ll write a new biography of Dr. Seuss.

As a class, talk about what you already know about Dr. Seuss.

Next, talk about what sources you’ll use to write your biography.

- What primary sources can you use?
- What secondary sources might you find?

Research Dr. Seuss, gathering interesting facts about his life and work.

Working individually or in small teams, work together to use the facts you found to create the story of Dr. Seuss’s life.

- What format will your biography have (what will it look and sound like)?
- What features would help your biography reflect Dr. Seuss’s work (e.g., verse, illustration, invented words)?

Read and discuss your biography.

- What did you learn about Dr. Seuss during your research?
- What did you learn about doing research?
- What did your biography look and sound like?
  - Why did you choose that format?

If you could write a biography about any person, who would you write about? Why?



### 7: Create a Diorama

*Teacher: For this exercise, provide modeling materials with a variety of colors and textures, as well as structural materials, such as cardboard and glue. Equalize student access to materials by making this an in-class exercise, rather than an at-home exercise.*

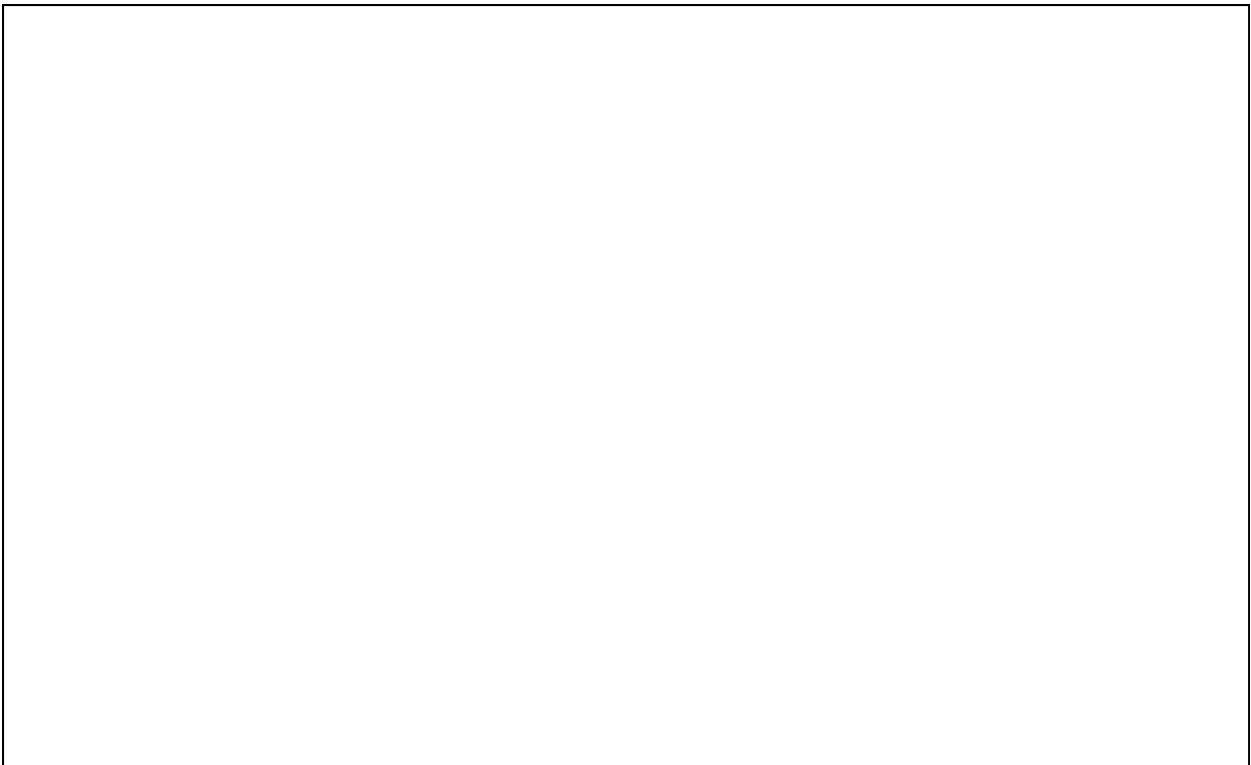
A diorama is a three-dimensional (“3-D”) scene. A diorama tells a story: it includes a setting, at least one character, and some kind of action.

Using materials provided by your teacher, make a diorama that shows a scene from *The Cat in the Hat and Other Tales*. Think about what your setting should look like, who you want to be in the scene, and what you want them to do.

When you finish, share your diorama with the class. Answer these questions:

- Where does your diorama take place?
- Who is in your diorama?
- What are they doing?
- Why did you choose this scene to depict?
- What materials did you use to make your diorama? How did you build it?
- Did any of your classmates make the same scene as yours?
  - How are your dioramas similar?
  - How are they different?
- Did any of your classmates make the scene right before or after yours? Can you tell the whole story with your class’s dioramas?

Use the space below to make a planning sketch of your diorama.



## 8: Exploring Music: Calm to Chaos and Back Again

In *The Cat in the Hat*, a playful talking cat drops into the lives of two children, turning their world upside down. At the end of the book, the children manage to get their house back in order before their mother comes home. This story arc from calm to chaos and back to calm can be illustrated using music!

Using a variety of musical instruments or everyday objects\*, lead students through a discussion of musical qualities:

- Demonstrate musical qualities
  - loud vs. soft sounds
  - high-pitched notes vs. low-pitched notes
  - fast rhythms vs. slow rhythms
- Ask students to emulate your examples using instruments, their voices, or their bodies (e.g., clapping their hands, snapping their fingers, clicking their tongues)
- Ask students to sort instruments
  - sort single-pitch instruments from low-pitched to high-pitched
  - sort single-pitch instruments separately from multi-pitch instruments
- Create a simple rhythmic pattern
  - ask students to repeat it
  - ask students to create and repeat their own simple rhythmic patterns
- Create a simple melody
  - ask students to repeat it
  - ask students to create and play their own simple melodies

As a class, create a composition that illustrates the calm-to-chaos-to-calm story arc of *The Cat in the Hat*. Establish hand signals beforehand so that you will be able to direct students even when the composition gets crazy!

Discuss your class composition:

- How did your composition reflect the story of *The Cat in the Hat*?
- Did you use certain instruments to represent particular characters?
- What about your piece were calm?
  - What about it was chaotic?
- Do you think you could play the very same composition again (or was it more improvised)?

*\*Including: cardboard oatmeal can (with lid), rubber band, chopsticks, metal spoons, plastic bucket, plastic storage bin, pots and pans, pot/pan lids, wooden spoon, plastic cup with lid, filled ¼ full with dry beans or rice, cardboard tubes, glasses with different levels of water*

**TEXAS**  
**Grade 4**

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Standard(s)</u>
1	Fine Arts 117.16.b.5
2	ELA 110.15.b.3
3	ELA 110.15.b.15-16
4	Math 111.16.b.2, 13
5	Science 112.15.b.9-10
6	Soc Studies 113.15.b.21-22; ELA 110.15.b.15, 18
7	Fine Arts 117.14.b.1-2, 4
8	Fine Arts 117.15.b.1-2, 4

**Grade 5**

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Standard(s)</u>
1	Fine Arts 117.19.b.5
2	ELA 110.16.b.3
3	ELA 110.16.b.15-16
4	Math 111.17.b.2, 13
5	Science 112.16.b.9-10
6	Soc Studies 113.16.b.21, 24-25; ELA 110.16.b.15, 18
7	Fine Arts 117.17.b.1-2, 4
8	Fine Arts 117.18.b.1-2, 4

**COMMON CORE**

**Grade 4**

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Standard(s)</u>
2	ELA RL.4.1-3, 9
3	ELA W.4.3, 5
4	Math 4.MD.2

**Grade 5**

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Standard(s)</u>
2	ELA RL.5.1-3, 9
3	ELA W.5.3, 5
4	Math 5.NF.6-7