



# Charlotte's Web

by Joseph Robinette

Based on the book *Charlotte's Web* by E. B. White

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## Classroom Guide Grades 4 - 5

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## How to Use This Guide

This classroom guide for *Charlotte's Web* is designed for Texas students in 4 and 5 Grade. It offers activities to help you integrate a performance of *Charlotte's Web* 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.

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## 1: Discussion Questions

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

*Charlotte's Web* 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 a book: *Charlotte's Web* written by E.B. White

- Have you read *Charlotte's Web* 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 *Charlotte's Web* 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 *Charlotte's Web*, how would your production be different than the play you saw by Magik?

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

For each of our main stage 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 Charlotte’s Web is Friendship.  
The Magik Must-Reads (Grade 4 — Grade 5) are:

***The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* by L. Frank Baum**

***The League of Beastly Dreadfuls* by Holly Grant**

***Peter Nimble and His Fantastic Eyes* by Jonathan Auxier**

***Survival Strategies of the Almost Brave* by Jen White**

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 Unlikely Friendships 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 Unlikely Friendships? 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 Charlotte's Web, Wilbur and Charlotte meet in the barn and quickly become friends. When Wilbur finds out what Mr. Zuckerman plans to do with him in the future, Charlotte springs into action and saves his life in many ways. In the end, Wilbur realizes that friendship is worth more than anything. Think about a time when you had a realization about what is important to you in friendship. In the spaces below write a story about that time, then draw a picture to illustrate your story.

#### **CHARACTERS**

Main character:

Age:

Male or female?:

Physical description:

Personality:

Secondary character:

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 guest?

What is the main conflict between your main character and secondary character?

What is the climax of your story?

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

### 3: Write Your Story

**TITLE:** \_\_\_\_\_

[illegible]

**4: Word Problems**

- 1) Zuckerman counted \$1,240 in his wallet. After going on a shopping spree for the farm, he counted \$315 left. How much did he spend?
  
- 2) Fern added 145 corn on the cobs to the feeding trough for Wilbur. She then decided to give Wilbur 93 more corn on the cobs. How many corn on the cobs did Wilbur get in his trough?
  
- 3) At Wilbur's first show, he weighed 76 pounds. At his second show he weighed 152 pounds. How many pounds did he gain?
  
- 4) Charlotte had 1,488 babies in her silk pouch. When they hatched, 572 babies drifted away to start a new life. How many babies does she have left?
  
- 5) There are 12 geese. If each goose lays 6 eggs, how many eggs will there be for the farmer to count?
  
- 6) Templeton stole 70 apple slices on Monday, 130 apple slices on Tuesday, and 212 apple slices on Wednesday. How many total apple slices did he steal?
  
- 7) Avery caught 102 caterpillars, 45 beetles, 304 ladybugs, and 76 grasshoppers. What is the total amount of bugs Avery caught?
  
- 8) Charlotte has 8 legs. If each leg can spin 9 strings of web together, how many total strings of web can Charlotte spin at one time?

## **5: Grow A Plant**

Charlotte's Web took place on a farm. Farmer can grow crops, like corn or wheat, or raise live-stock, like cows or pigs. Growing crops and raising cattle is hard work! Work together in group

to learn about what nutrients plants need to grow healthy and strong.

Materials:

- Flower seeds (any kind, though fast-growing is preferred)
- 4 clear plastic cups
- Tape
- Soil
- Water
- Window with plenty of sun
- Dark room

Before We Begin:

What do you know about the life cycle of a plant?

Talk together as a group about what is needed to plant flowers, fruits, or vegetables.

Can you write out how many steps it takes until you see the first leaf?

What nutrients does a plant need to grow? List them out.

Now, look at the flower seeds.

What do they look like? Have you seen these seeds before?

How were they used? What do they smell like? What do they feel like?

Make a Prediction:

What do you think will happen if we put the seeds in sunlight?

What do you think will happen if we put the seeds in darkness?

Grow a Flower:

1. Gather your materials.
2. Put soil in your plastic cups, about a thumb deep.
3. Place 2 flower seeds into the soil, about half way down.
4. Pour some water on the seeds.
5. Place the other plastic cups upside-down on top of the current plastic cups and tape the two together.
6. Put one cup in front of a window where there is plenty of sunlight.
7. Repeat steps 1 – 5. Place this cup in a dark room, like a closet.
8. Everyday two days, check on the beans to see if a plant begins to grow. Make sure both plants get the same amount of water. Use the chart on the following page to write down your findings.



## **6: County Fair**

Did you know a County Fair a fair usually held annually at a set location in a county especially to exhibit local agricultural products and livestock? Wilbur was know for being “some pig” at his County Fair. You can make your own county fair with your classmates.

### **Have a Fair**

Have students draw pictures of pets, or pictures of their pets. Help the students fill out information forms on breed, care, etc. Let other classes come in to view the pets and ask questions. Allow those students without pets to be judges, and let them award ribbons for special categories like “most furry” etc.

### ***County Fair Animal Information Card***

**NAME OF ANIMAL:** \_\_\_\_\_

**KIND OF ANIMAL:** \_\_\_\_\_

**BREED:** \_\_\_\_\_

**AGE OF ANIMAL:** \_\_\_\_\_

**COLORS OF ANIMAL:** \_\_\_\_\_

**WHAT DOES IT EAT?** \_\_\_\_\_

**WHAT ACTIVITIES DOES IT DO?** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## 7: Spider Web

In *Charlotte's Web*, it is clear that Charlotte's web is a huge symbol referenced throughout the book (and play)! In this activity the students will create their very own unique spider web.

Materials:

- Popsicle Sticks (2 per student)
- Yarn; any color- get creative! (About 180 in. or 15 ft. per child)
- Glue
- Scissors
- Safety Pins (1 per child)
- Pencil

Instructions\*:

1. Glue three craft sticks together to form a "cross" (+) shape.
2. Label the four sides "1," "2," "3," and "4," with a pencil, starting at the top going COUNTER-clockwise.
3. Tie the end of a piece of colorful yarn around the center of the + shape.
4. Wrap a loop of yarn around the top stick, then extend it to the left stick and wrap another loop. Continue this wrapping onto the bottom stick, then on the right stick. A completed example is included here for you.
5. Continue wrapping the yarn around the sticks, moving in a COUNTER-clockwise direction. Every time you complete a loop around all four sticks, the diamond pattern of the web will grow a little larger. To change colors, simply cut the yarn at any point, tie the end onto a new yarn color and hide the knot toward the back. Alternatively, you can tie the new color right on to the stick.
6. Tie the yarn onto the stick once the web has reached the desired size. Leave a loop at the end for the safety pin. Apply a drop of glue over the knot, and cut off the excess yarn, once the glue has dried.
7. If at first you don't succeed, simply unwrap and try, try again!



## **8: Exploring Music**

In the play *Charlotte's Web* music is used to help tell the story of Wilbur and Charlotte's friendship.

As an exploration exercise, play samples of several different musical pieces for your students. Encourage children to add dance/movement to their listening experience. Make sure students have room to move around. Point out different tempos and rhythms to encourage change in dance/movement. Help students find the beat of a piece by clapping, marching in place, snapping your fingers, etc.

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 with a mood (happy, creepy, sneaky, etc)

*\*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.2
3	ELA 110.15.b.15-16
4	Math 111.16.b.3-4
5	Science 112.15.b.10
6	Soc Studies 113.15.b.6-7
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.2
3	ELA 110.16.b.15-16
4	Math 111.17.b.3
5	Science 112.16.b.10
6	Soc Studies 113.16.b.6-9
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 L.4.5
3	ELA W.4.3, 5
4	Math 4.OA.3

**Grade 5**

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Standard(s)</u>
2	ELA L.5.5
3	ELA W.5.3, 5
4	Math 5.OA.1-2