

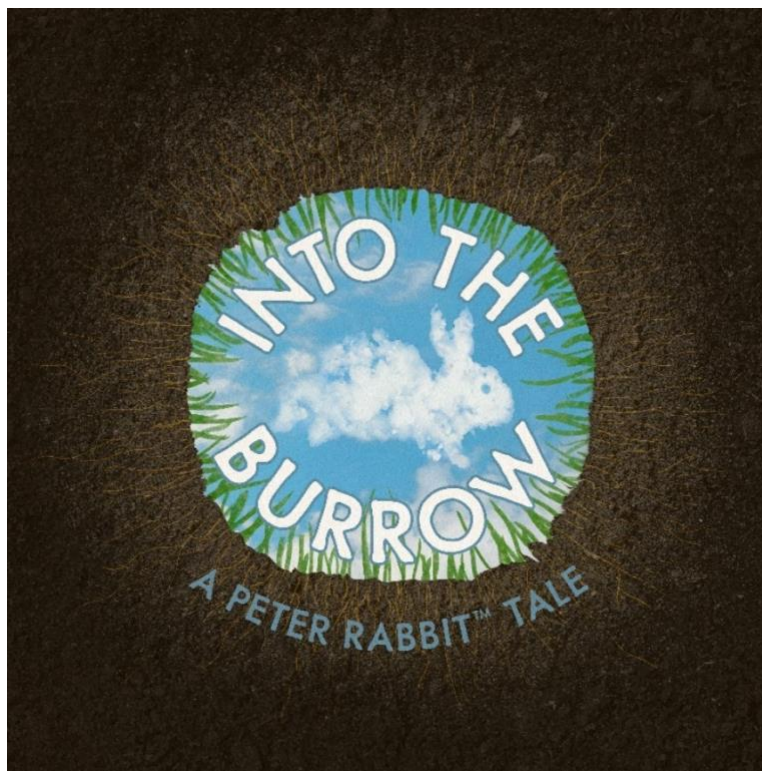
# Alliance Theatre

*institute*

Study Guide

*Into the Burrow: A Peter Rabbit™ Tale*

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Written and Directed by Mark Valdez  
Inspired by the Stories of Beatrix Potter

October 14 – December 23, 2023  
Hertz Stage

Presented by Special Arrangement with Penguin Ventures and Officially Licensed on Behalf of Brand Owner Frederick Warne & Co. LTD



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Source: The World of Peter Rabbit™ Beatrix Potter™ Tool Kit

## Georgia Standards of Excellence

Elementary School: Grades K-5

### English Language Arts:

- ELAGSE1RL2 – Retell stories, including key details, and demonstrate understanding of their central message or lesson.
- ELAGSE1RL3 – Describe characters, settings, and major events in a story, using key details.
- ELAGSE1RL7 – Use... details in a story to describe its characters, setting, or events.
- ELAGSE2RL3 – Describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges.
- ELAGSE2RL6 – Acknowledge differences in the points of view of characters.
- ELAGSE3RL2 - Recount stories, including fables, folktales, and myths from diverse cultures; determine the central message, lesson, or moral and explain how it is conveyed through key details in the text
- ELAGSE3RL3 – Describe characters in a story (e.g. their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.
- ELAGSE3RL6 - Distinguish their own point of view from that of the narrator or those of the characters.
- ELAGSE3RL9 - Compare and contrast the themes, settings, and plots of stories written by the same author about the same or similar characters (e.g., in books from a series).

### Science:

- S1L1. Obtain, evaluate, and communicate information about the basic needs of plants and animals.
- S2E3. Obtain, evaluate, and communicate information about how weather, plants, animals, and humans cause changes to the environment.

### Theatre:

- TARE.1 – Engage actively and appropriately as an audience member.
- TARE.2 – Critique various aspects of theatre and other media using appropriate supporting evidence.
- TACN.1 – Explore how theatre connects to life experience, careers, and other content.
- TACN.2 – Examine the role of theatre in a societal, cultural, and historical context.



Source: The World of Peter Rabbit™ Beatrix Potter™ Tool Kit

## Synopsis

Journey down the rabbit hole for a delightful musical adventure. All the neighborly forest animals have gathered in the rabbit's den (under Mr. McGregor's garden) to throw a surprise party for Peter. And the biggest surprise of all – for the first time ever, they've invited you to join them! But the animals soon realize Mr. McGregor has terrible plans for the land around Peter's burrow. Peter must face his fears and, together with his friends, gather a community to help save his home. Featuring beloved characters from the classic Beatrix Potter tales, and a variety of original songs, this new tale encourages us to acknowledge our fears and work together to overcome challenges.

Before the play, create “sitting statues” for each part of the story. Remember that strong statues have interesting body shapes, facial expressions, and levels (high, middle, low).

1. In the beginning, it's Peter's birthday, but he's sad. His father died exactly a year ago, and he misses him.  
*Create a frozen sitting statue of Peter who is sad and lonely because he misses his father.*
2. Second, the other characters throw Peter a birthday party and realize that humans are in the burrow with them!  
*Freeze as if you are an animal in the burrow and are surprised to see HUMANS with you!*
3. Then, Mr. McGregor cuts milkweed bushes that were home to butterflies and cuts down Squirrel Nutkin's tree.  
*Pretend you are Squirrel Nutkin. Show how you'd feel if Mr. McGregor cut down your tree.*
4. Next, Mr. McGregor pours water from his hose into the burrow, but the animals sing about how much they love the water.  
*Create a frozen statue of the characters swimming and singing in the water.*
5. After that, the animals decide that they are going to “take back the land” and plan a heist to Mr. McGregor's farm.  
*Freeze as if you are being sneaky and planning a heist.*
6. Finally, create a frozen sitting statue of what you think happens at the end of the play!

## Character Analysis

Name	Character Traits	Facts about Animal
Peter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Adventurous by nature</li> <li>○ Mischievous</li> <li>○ Brave and resilient</li> <li>○ Loving and kind</li> </ul>	<b>Rabbits:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Do not eat carrots but eat grass and weeds</li> <li>○ Can be up to 20 pounds in weight</li> <li>○ Live underground and dig burrows</li> <li>○ Can be aggressive</li> <li>○ Mark territories with dung hills</li> </ul>
Benjamin Bunny	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Adventurous</li> <li>○ Spirited and energetic</li> <li>○ Fears nothing</li> </ul>	
Flopsy, Mopsy, Cotton-tail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Peter's siblings</li> <li>○ Inseparable</li> <li>○ Musical</li> </ul>	
Jeremy Fisher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Loves playing in the water and getting wet</li> <li>○ Favorite food is a butterfly sandwich</li> </ul>	<b>Frogs:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Amphibians, meaning they live on land and in water</li> <li>○ Strong back legs for leaping and swimming</li> <li>○ Some eat insects and worms; other eat small rodents and reptiles.</li> </ul>
Mr. Alderman Ptolemy Tortoise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Slow and probably quite old</li> <li>○ Wise</li> <li>○ Kind and supportive</li> <li>○ Carries a string bag with him wherever he goes; it's filled with found items and lettuce for snacking</li> </ul>	<b>Tortoises:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Reptiles</li> <li>○ Shielded from predators by a shell</li> <li>○ Can live to be more than 200 years old!</li> </ul>
Mrs. Tiggy-winkle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Works as a laundress</li> <li>○ Useful and resourceful</li> <li>○ Loves to dance</li> </ul>	<b>Hedgehogs:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Have prickly spines called quills</li> <li>○ Mostly nocturnal (active at night)</li> </ul>
Squirrel Nutkin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Loves riddles (asking and solving)</li> <li>○ Missing half their tail (but don't bring it up)</li> <li>○ A talented acrobat</li> <li>○ Really fast and energetic</li> </ul>	<b>Squirrels:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Most active in Spring and Summer</li> <li>○ Eat nuts</li> <li>○ Have bushy tails</li> <li>○ Have a great sense of smell, sight, and hearing</li> <li>○ Defend and protect territories</li> </ul>
Mr. McGregor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Human; farmer; lives aboveground</li> <li>○ Protective of his garden</li> <li>○ Menacing; regularly threatens the animals</li> </ul>	

Sources:

<https://www.twinkl.com/homework-help/science-homework-help/amphibians-facts-for-kids/frog-facts-for-kids>

<https://kids.kiddle.co/Tortoise>

<https://www.natgeokids.com/uk/discover/animals/general-animals/hedgehog-facts/>



## Setting Study

As the audience enters the Hertz Stage, they walk into a Beatrix Potter landscape of pastels and charming cottages in the distance. There are trees, painted and real. One tree leads into an underground lair. This is the world that Ms. Potter's animals inhabit.

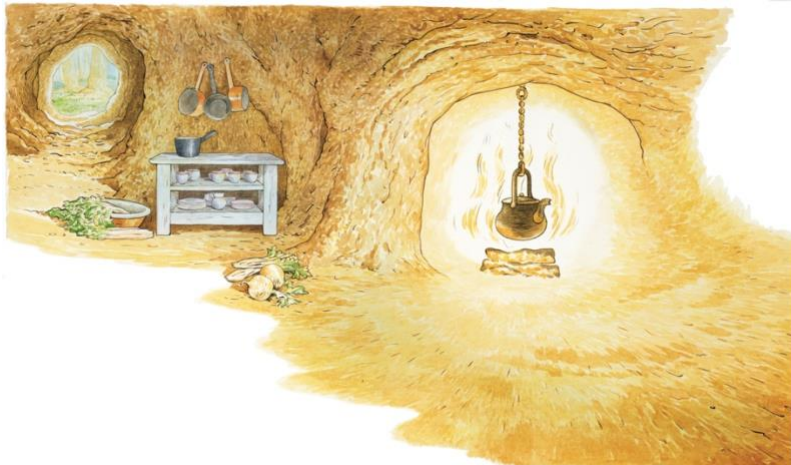
Once we walk "into the burrow," we are in Peter's house, which he shares with his siblings, Mopsy, Flopsy, and Cotton-tail. The audience stays in the burrow throughout the whole play, but the animal characters leave the burrow to visit Mr. McGregor's farm.

Beatrix Potter, the creator of Peter Rabbit, lived in England in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, but this play takes place in present-day.

### Underground:

Peter and the other rabbits in the story live in the burrow, the main setting for our story. A burrow is a hole dug underground where rabbits can eat and sleep. Peter's burrow is bright and bold in color and is a place where he can socialize with his dearest friends.

Audience members are invited into the burrow to celebrate Peter's birthday. How do you think the animals will react to seeing humans in the burrow?



Source:

<https://www.discoverwildlife.com/how-to/identify-wildlife/how-to-identify-animal-holes/>

<https://www.trap-anything.com/rabbit-burrow.html>

The World of Peter Rabbit™ Beatrix Potter™ Tool Kit

Aboveground:

Mr. McGregor's garden is directly above the burrow. It is full of delicious vegetables the animals like to eat!



Source: The World of Peter Rabbit™ Beatrix Potter™ Tool Kit

Mr. McGregor's farm is home to milkweed bushes. When the leaves of a milkweed are damaged, they ooze sticky, white sap. Milkweed is the only plant that serves as a host for a monarch butterfly egg. As a result, without milkweed, there are no monarch butterflies.

In the middle of the play, the characters are upset that the milkweed bushes and the butterfly cocoons are destroyed. Without the milkweed bushes, how would Jeremy Fisher eat a butterfly sandwich?



Source:

<https://www.gardendesign.com/plants/milkweed.html>

<https://gardenforwildlife.com/products/orange-butterfly-milkweed-plant-sets-ii>



## Theme

A **theme** is an important idea that is woven throughout a story or a literary work. A theme often links the main idea into actions that can be seen throughout the play. As you watch *Into the Burrow*, see if you can find the following themes throughout the play.

Theme	Context in the Play
<i>Take care of your friends</i> <i>Take care of the land</i> <i>Share the food</i> <i>And give a helping hand</i> <i>And remember, you're never alone.</i>	In the play, Peter and his friends must take care of each other in order to survive, and to escape Mr. McGregor's wrath. They rely on the land for their food and nourishment, so they make sure to take good care of it. They are a team, and they respect and care for each other deeply.
<i>Humans vs. Nature</i>	Mr. McGregor is constantly trying to outsmart the animals who eat his crops by setting traps, threatening them, and chasing them. The animals (Peter and his friends) see Mr. McGregor's garden as their food source. This conflict of man (Mr. McGregor) vs. nature (Peter and his friends) is the main dilemma of the story.
<i>The dangers of the world</i>	The burrow is Peter's safe place, where he can hide away from the dangers of the outside world. Aboveground, in Mr. McGregor's garden, Peter feels vulnerable and under attack. He is scared to face the world after losing his father, but his friends help him find the courage to face his fears.
<i>Tomorrow</i>	In the play, Peter and his friends wonder what new challenges tomorrow will bring. "Tomorrow" represents the future. "Tomorrow" is unknown. The characters in the play are hopeful that "tomorrow" will be a good day!



Source: The World of Peter Rabbit™ Beatrix Potter™ Tool Kit



## Interview with Director: Mark Valdez



### 1. Were you a fan of Beatrix Potter before working on this play?

I didn't grow up with the Peter Rabbit stories. I knew the name but not the stories. Through the process of making this show, I've grown into a big fan. First, her illustrations are so good! There's detail - the fur, the color, the eyes; she's a master artist. And what I appreciate about her stories is that they are not sentimental - quite the opposite, really. They are often very matter-of-fact. They can be sweet, but they're never treacly. And when bad things happen, the animals find ways of moving forward, which I really like.

### 2. What does a day in rehearsal usually look like?

Rehearsals involve a lot of working and a lot of laughing. Depending on where we are in the process, we may be at a table, doing a lot of talking to make sure we are all on the same page, understanding how the story is unfolding and how the characters are changing. Then, when we start staging, we're up on our feet, making sure that movement can help tell the story, which is everything from the way characters walk and move to the pictures we create with all the bodies on the set.

By the time we add lights and costumes, we're making sure that all the dots are connected. By that point, we are refining and polishing our work.

The thing that remains consistent, though, is the sense of fun. I try very hard to make space for the actors to be playful, to manifest joy, especially in a story like this that's about friendship and community.

### 3. What message would you like audiences to take away from this production?

I hope we can make clear the message of community - that we all need each other. This plays out in multiple ways - that humans and animals need to share the land to live together. Also, we need our friends to help us get through the difficult times in our lives.

Throughout the play we repeat this saying: "Take care of your friends; take care of the land. Share your food and lend a helping hand." If everyone can remember that, if they can carry that message in their hearts, then, I think we can make a truly wonderful world for everyone.

## Who was Beatrix Potter?



**Beatrix Potter** was born on July 28, 1866 in South Kensington, England. She lived with her mother, Helen, her father, Rupert, and her younger brother, Bertram. Rupert was a passionate artist and photographer, and as a young child, Beatrix showed signs of having inherited his artistic talent. She was frequently treated to trips to the art gallery, as well as long holidays in Scotland or the English Lake District, which inspired her love of animals and stimulated her imaginative watercolor drawings. Beatrix frequently returned from holiday with animals such as mice, rabbits, newts, caterpillars, and birds, which formed a menagerie in the schoolroom. Her fascination for painting and drawing took up most of her spare time, and she loved to sketch plants and animals. This interest would later become the inspiration for her stories.

When Beatrix was 27 years old, she sent an illustrated animal story to a sick child of a former governess about four bunnies named Flopsy, Mopsy, Cotton-tail, and Peter. The illustrated letter was so well received that she decided to privately publish it as *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* in 1901. In 1902, it was published commercially with great success by Frederick Warne & Company, which in the next 20 years brought out 22 additional books, beginning with *The Tailor of Gloucester* (1903), *The Tale of Squirrel Nutkin* (1903), and *The Tale of Benjamin Bunny* (1904). The tiny books, which she designed so that even the smallest children could hold them, combined a deceptively simple prose, concealing dry North Country humor, with illustrations in the best English watercolor tradition.

In 1905, Beatrix became engaged to Norman Warne, the son of her publisher, but after his sudden death a few months later, she spent much of her time alone at Hill Top, a small farm in the village of Sawrey, England. Beatrix's lifelong fascination with animals saw her turn to farming as she settled into life in the Lake District. In 1913, she married William Heelis and spent the last 30 years of her life extending her farm property and breeding Herdwick sheep, which were her pride and joy. She bequeathed her land to the National Trust, which maintains the Hill Top farmhouse as it was when she lived in it.

Beatrix Potter died on December 22, 1943 in Sawrey, but her legacy lives on in her beloved characters.

Sources:

<https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/discover/history/people/beatrix-potter>

<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Beatrix-Potter>

## Vocabulary

Word (Part of Speech)	Definition	In Context
Acrobat (n.)	A person who performs difficult acts such as balancing on high ropes, especially at a circus	"Nutkin, we need your acrobat skills."
Ancestors (n.)	People in your family who lived a long time ago	"Your ancestors, they're always here with you."
Annihilation (n.)	The act of somebody/something being completely destroyed	"Who would've thought our annihilation would take the form of mass hydration..."
Appeal (n.)	A quality that makes somebody/something attractive or interesting	"I enjoy the appeal."
Burrow (n.)	A hole in the ground made by an animal (such as a rabbit) for shelter and habitation	"Uh...you do know there's people in the burrow, right?"
Capture (v.)	To catch a person or an animal and keep them as a prisoner or shut them in a space that they cannot escape from	"McGregor tried to capture him."
Chemistry (n.)	The relationship between two people or things	"H2O and I have chemistry."
Chow (v.)	Slang for food; eat	"Cause we have got to chow!"
Circumstances (n.)	The conditions and facts that are connected with and affect a situation, an event, or an action	"Though circumstances may seem dire..."
Cocoons (n.)	A cover or case of silk threads that some insects, especially moths, make to protect themselves before they become adults	"There were butterfly cocoons on those milkweed bushes."
Condensation (n.)	Drops of water that form on a cold surface when warm water vapor becomes cool	"What's a little condensation?"
Dangerous (adj.)	Likely to injure or harm somebody, or to damage or destroy something	"But McGregor will just keep putting up more traps, making it more dangerous."
Diagnosis (n.)	The act of discovering or identifying the exact cause of an illness or a problem	"Here's my diagnosis..."
Dilute (v.)	To make a liquid weaker by adding water or another liquid to it	"I'll dilute your expectations..."
Dire (adj.)	Very serious	"And though circumstances may seem dire..."
Doilies (n.)	A small circle of paper or cloth with a pattern of very small holes in it that you put on a plate under a cake or sandwiches	"I brought a nice tablecloth and these lovely doilies. It's going to look so nice!"
Epic (adj.)	Awesome; impressive	"That was epic, y'all."





Evaporate (v.)	If a liquid evaporates or if something evaporates it, it changes into a gas, especially steam	"If only troubles could poof, evaporate!"
Expectations (n.)	The belief that something will happen because it is likely	"I'll dilute your expectations..."
Expertise (n.)	Expert knowledge or skill in a particular subject, activity, or job	"Let me share my expertise..."
Extraction (n.)	The act or process of removing or obtaining something from something else	"For a vegetable extraction..."
Feast (n.)	A large or special meal, especially for a lot of people and to celebrate something	"Take care of each other and get ready for the biggest feast you've ever had!"
Fertilize (v.)	To add a substance to soil to make plants grow more successfully	"Maybe we can tell McGregor that rabbit poop will help to fertilize his garden?"
H <sub>2</sub> O (n.)	The chemical symbol for water	"H <sub>2</sub> O and I have chemistry..."
Hedges (n.)	A row of bushes or small trees planted close together, usually along the edge of a field, garden, or road	"Instead of building fences, plant some hedges."
Heist (n.)	An act of stealing something valuable	"We pulled off the heist!"
Hydration (n.)	The process of making something/somebody take in and hold water	"Who would've thought our annihilation would take the form of mass hydration..."
Hydrophobic (adj.)	Having an extreme fear of water	"Don't tell me you're a little hydrophobic now?"
Invasive (adj.)	Spreading very quickly and difficult to stop	"Rabbits also eat invasive weeds."
Kale (n.)	A vegetable that is a type of cabbage with dark green or purple leaves	"There are carrots and cabbages, cucumbers, kale...all that a rabbit could want!"
Milkweed (n.)	A North American plant that produces a white juice like milk	"There were butterfly cocoons on those milkweed bushes. Those are the last milkweeds on the land."
Molasses (n.)	A thick black sweet sticky liquid produced when sugar is refined	"What's slower than molasses, that everybody passes?"
Muggy (adj.)	(of weather) Warm and slightly wet in an unpleasant way	"And it's muggy and hot..."
Murky (adj.)	(of a liquid) Not clear; dark or dirty with mud or another substance	"A pail full of dark, murky water that makes you feel sick."
Ordeal (n.)	A difficult or unpleasant experience	"Why make such a fuss of a lovely ordeal..."
Osmosis (n.)	The slow steady passing of a liquid through a membrane (a thin layer of material) because of different amounts	"We're grooving through osmosis..."

	of dissolved substances on either side of the membrane	
Outclasses (v.)	To be much better than somebody you are competing against	"Who he clearly outclasses."
Perspire (v.)	To produce sweat on your body	"No need to perspire..."
Pollen (n.)	Fine powder, usually yellow, that is formed in flowers and carried to other flowers of the same kind by the wind or by insects, to make those flowers produce seeds	"From the bees that spread the pollen..."
Quills (n.)	One of the long sharp stiff spines on a porcupine	"You see we have air pockets because of our quills..."
Rancid (adj.)	Food that tastes or smells unpleasant because it is no longer fresh	"With the cats and the bugs and the rat's rancid hugs..."
Regret (v.)	To feel sorry about something you have done or about something that you have not been able to do	"Won't regret it..."
Riddle (n.)	A question that is difficult to understand, and that has a surprising answer, that you ask somebody as a game	"Hey! It's my riddle!"
Roam (v.)	To walk or travel around an area without any definite aim or direction	"We have to roam free."
Scheme (n.)	A plan or system for doing or organizing something	"Remember you're never alone in the grand scheme."
Shrubs (n.)	A large plant that is smaller than a tree and that has several stems of wood coming from the ground	"I'm cutting down trees, ripping up shrubs, and draining the pond."
Survival (n.)	The state of continuing to live or exist, often despite difficulty or danger	"We gotta rival now, for our survival..."
Threat (n.)	The possibility of trouble, danger, or disaster	"The terror of a torturous new threat..."
Torturous (adj.)	Not simple and direct; long, complicated, and difficult	"The terror of a torturous new threat..."
Unfortunate (adj.)	Unfavorable, regrettable. If you say that a situation is unfortunate, you wish it had not happened.	"Such an unfortunate situation..."

Source: [Oxford Online Dictionary](#)

## Allusions:

Allusion	Definition	In Context
Ptolemy (pronounced "TALL-uh-MEE") 	Ptolemy was a Greek mathematician, astronomer, and geographer who lived in the Egyptian city of Alexandria while under the rule of the Roman Empire, 100-170 AD. He was known by some as "Ptolemy the Wise."	In the play, Ptolemy is a very old tortoise, full of wisdom and information.
<i>Singin' In the Rain</i> 	<i>Singin' in the Rain</i> is an American musical comedy film from 1952 starring Gene Kelly. The movie is considered by many to be the greatest Hollywood musical ever made. One of the most famous scenes from the film features Gene Kelly dancing and singing in a downpour!	In the play, Jeremy the Frog sings a song about how much he loves water! In the song, he mentions the title <i>Singin' in the Rain</i> : "Stick your toe in, take a dip, but don't slip. Won't regret it, don't forget it. I'm singin' in the rain, get it?"

## Shadow Puppetry



Shadow puppetry is a form of theatrical performance that originated in China and on the Indonesian islands of Java and Bali. This type of puppetry uses the shadow of puppets cast onto a screen to tell a story. Flat images are manipulated by the puppeteers between a bright light and a translucent screen, on the other side of which sits the audience. The contrast and movement between light and shadow bring the puppet characters to life. Shadow puppetry often also includes music, singing, and storytelling.

Peter and his friends go on a heist at the end of the play to visit Mr. McGregor's Garden. The play uses shadow puppetry to show what is happening to the characters outside of the burrow.

Sources:

<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Ptolemy>

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Singin-in-the-Rain-film-1952>

[www.britannica.com/art/shadow-play](http://www.britannica.com/art/shadow-play)

[maxwellmuseum.unm.edu/sites/default/files/public/Shadow%20Puppets%20and%20storytelling.pdf](http://maxwellmuseum.unm.edu/sites/default/files/public/Shadow%20Puppets%20and%20storytelling.pdf)

<https://studycli.org/chinese-culture/chinese-traditional-shadow-plays/>



## Musical Moments

Songs help tell the story of *Into the Burrow*, by advancing the plot or by introducing us to characters and the problems they face. Many different **elements of music** can be identified in each song and contribute to the storytelling.

### Elements of Music:

- *Dynamics* – loud vs. soft
- *Pitch* – high vs. low
- *Timbre* – the quality or color of the sound
- *Form* – the order and arrangement of the parts of the music
- *Rhythm* – how long or short a sound is

By looking at the names of the song titles below, can you make a prediction about what each song might be about? Consider the **elements of music**. Can you guess what dynamics, pitch, etc. will be used in each?

Song Title	Prediction – What is This Song About?	How Might the Elements of Music Be Used in This Song?
TODAY'S THE DAY		
A LITTLE WET NEVER HURT ANYONE		
FOR THE BUTTERFLIES		
YOU DON'T KNOW		

## Talking About Grief

A year before the play takes place, Peter's father was killed by Mr. McGregor and baked into a pie. See below for an excerpt from the play that introduces this information to the audience.

*As the show begins, the lights come up on a bunny. He's alone, sitting on the floor. This is Peter Rabbit. He's talking to his Dad, who was killed one year ago today...which is also Peter's birthday. He is holding in his hands a small birthday card. All he has left of his Dad is this card.*

### **"Today's The Day!"** **(From INTO THE BURROW)**

**PETER**

**HEY DAD, TODAY'S THE DAY  
IT'S BEEN A YEAR NOW  
CAN YOU IMAGINE?  
DAD, HOW CAN I SAY THE WAY I MISS YOU  
SO MUCH HAS HAPPENED**

**I'M TRYING TO BE STRONG  
TRYING TO HANG ON  
BUT DAD NOW THAT YOU'RE GONE  
I'M JUST A LITTLE RABBIT  
SCARED THAT EVERY CHOICE HE MAKES IS WRONG**

**IF YOU HEAR ME, PLEASE  
I'M BEGGING ON MY KNEES  
GIVE ME A SIGN  
SHOW ME  
I'M DOING FINE  
LIKE YOU KNEW ALL ALONG**

**TAKE A BREATH, PETER RABBIT  
YOU KNOW WHAT HE'D SAY**

**TAKE CARE OF YOUR FRIENDS  
TAKE CARE OF THE LAND  
SHARE ALL YOUR FOOD  
AND LEND A HELPING HAND  
REMEMBER YOU'RE NEVER ALONE IN THE GRAND SCHEME  
OF ALL OF NATURE'S BLESSINGS  
THAT'S HOW WE PROGRESS THINGS  
WE LEARN FROM THIS WORLD'S LESSONS**

**AND WE'LL BE OKAY  
TODAY'S THE DAY**

**Wish me a happy birthday, dad.**

### ***Discussion:***

After they attend a play, there are often questions left unanswered for young people as they try to make personal meaning of what they have witnessed. Consider the following conversation starters for after the show:

*Listen:* Start by posing a simple question: “How does it make you feel when you think about \_\_\_\_\_?” Use active listening to validate their concerns. As the students share their feelings, repeat them aloud to check for your own understanding. Be aware of what your body language might be broadcasting. Take your cues from your students’ responses.

*Answer:* Provide simple and straightforward answers to their questions. Avoid metaphors and euphemisms as they can often be too abstract. And when you don’t have the answer to a question, it is okay to say, “I don’t know.”

*Move:* Sometimes students just need to be kids. Anxiety can manifest in the body causing physical discomfort, headaches, lethargy, and more. Exercise and fresh air are great antidotes to anxiety and confusion. Turn on music and dance it out. Do active things that spark joy in your students.

*Create:* Art helps students process big feelings. Invite them to draw a picture about what they are feeling and wondering. Allow them to describe their art by using the simple prompt, “Tell me about this picture.” This question opens the door for children to share their perspectives about the image without the adult mind projecting their own thoughts onto it. Avoid praise phrases like “great picture!” and “good job!” without using specific language. Rather, ask questions about what you see on the page, removing judgmental responses about their artistry. Art is a powerful tool for self-expression.

*Act:* Discuss ways you as a class can help your community. When children see they can have a positive impact, large or small, they understand they are part of the solution. And as Fred Rogers famously quoted his mother, “Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping.”

By: Olivia Aston Bosworth, Head of Youth and Family Programs, Alliance Theatre



Source: The World of Peter Rabbit™ Beatrix Potter™ Tool Kit



### Pre-Show Discussion Questions

1. What do you know about Beatrix Potter and the Peter Rabbit stories?
2. Make a prediction: Based on the title, *Into the Burrow: A Peter Rabbit™ Tale*, what do you think this play will be about?
3. How do you celebrate birthdays?
4. What do you like best about working as a team?
5. How do you lean on your friends? How do they support you and help you accomplish your goals?
6. What do you love about nature?
7. What is the role of an audience member during a play? How do they show their appreciation for the actors?
8. Review the elements of theater (set, costumes, props, lighting, sound). How do these elements help to share the story on the stage?

### Post-Show Discussion Questions

*Engage in a discussion as a class or use these questions as journal prompts.*

1. In what ways could you relate to Peter?
2. What was the problem that Peter encountered, and how did he solve the problem?
3. How did the characters react when Mr. McGregor said they have to leave their home?
4. How did the characters' actions impact their environment (and habitat)?
5. What is the central message of the play? What did the playwright want audiences to learn? How will you share the central message from the play?
6. What was your favorite moment in the play? Why?
7. Many characters reveal their strengths (i.e. Jeremy Fisher with swimming and Mrs. Tiggy-winkle with tap-dancing). What is a secret skill that you have, and how could it be helpful to your friends?
8. In the play, Peter and his friends sing about the importance of sharing and caring for the land. What does land mean to you? Do you have a favorite park or outdoor space that is meaningful to you?
9. How did the technical elements of the play (costumes, lighting, sound, etc.) help tell the story?
10. The play used music to entertain the audience. What was your favorite song, and why?
11. How did the actors transform into the animal characters? How did they use the Tools of the Actor (body, voice, imagination, concentration)?
12. How did you know when the setting of the play changed? How did the sound or lighting change?
13. Make a prediction: What happens to Peter and his friends on his next birthday?

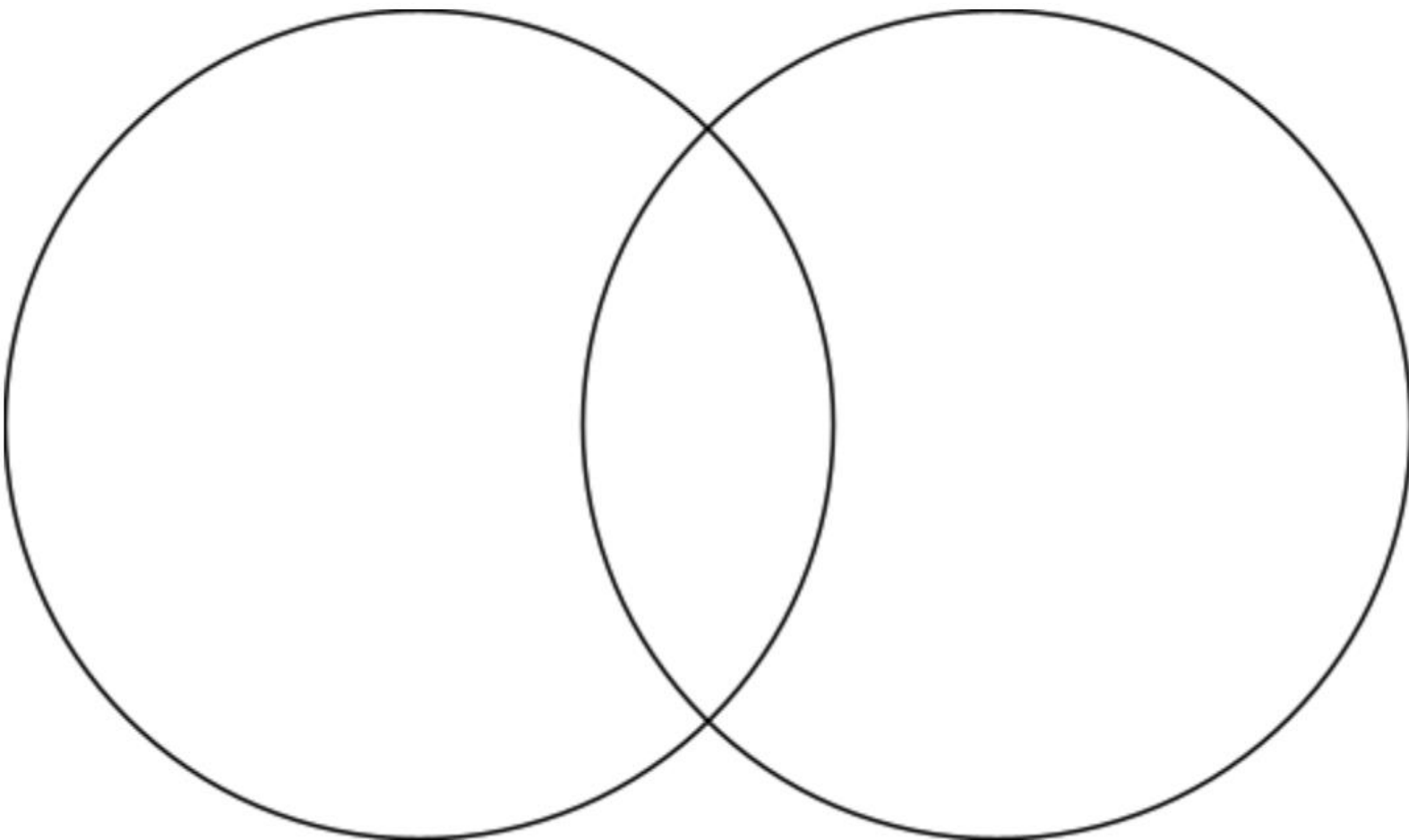
## Post-Show Extension Activities

### Venn Diagram

In what ways were the play (*Into the Burrow*) and Beatrix Potter books similar? How were they different?

*Peter Rabbit stories*

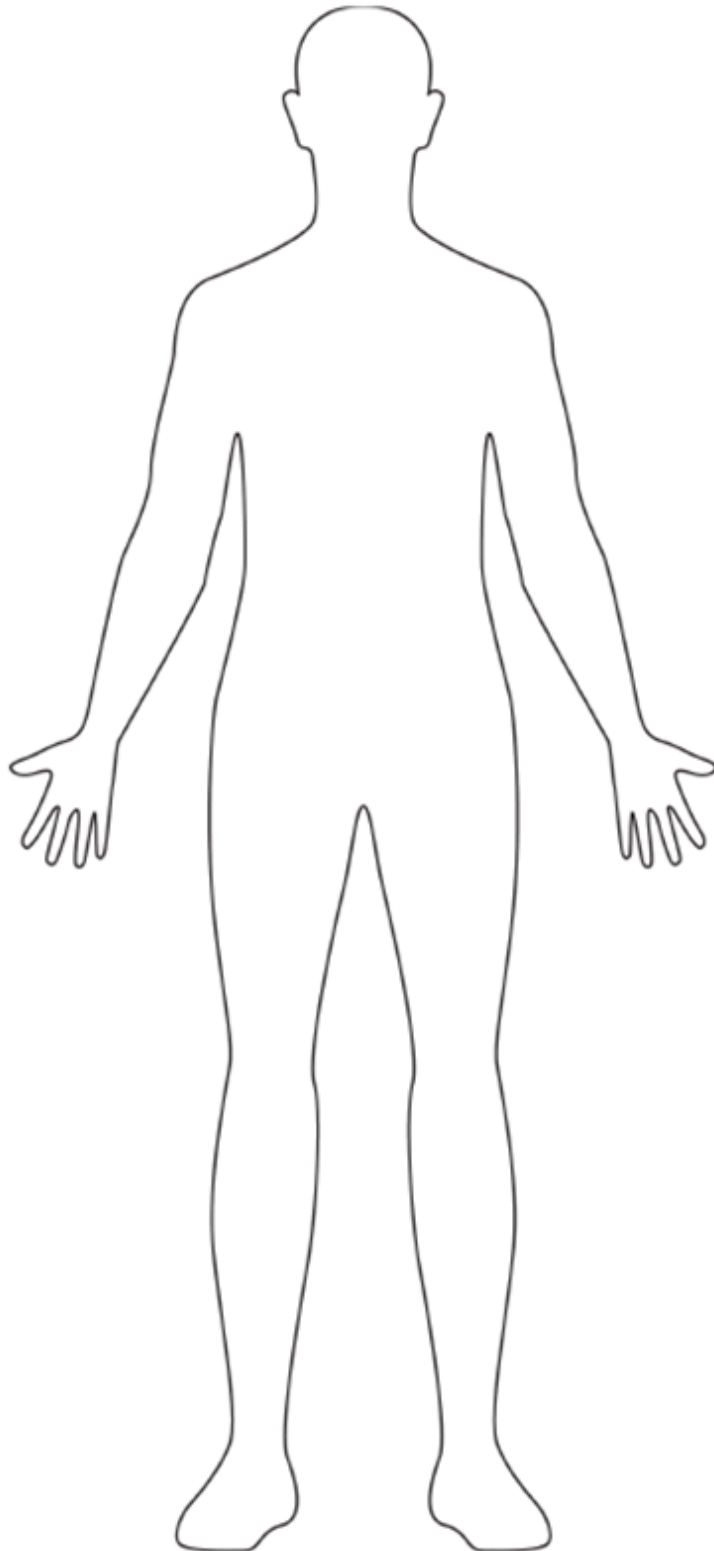
*Into the Burrow play*



### Costume Design

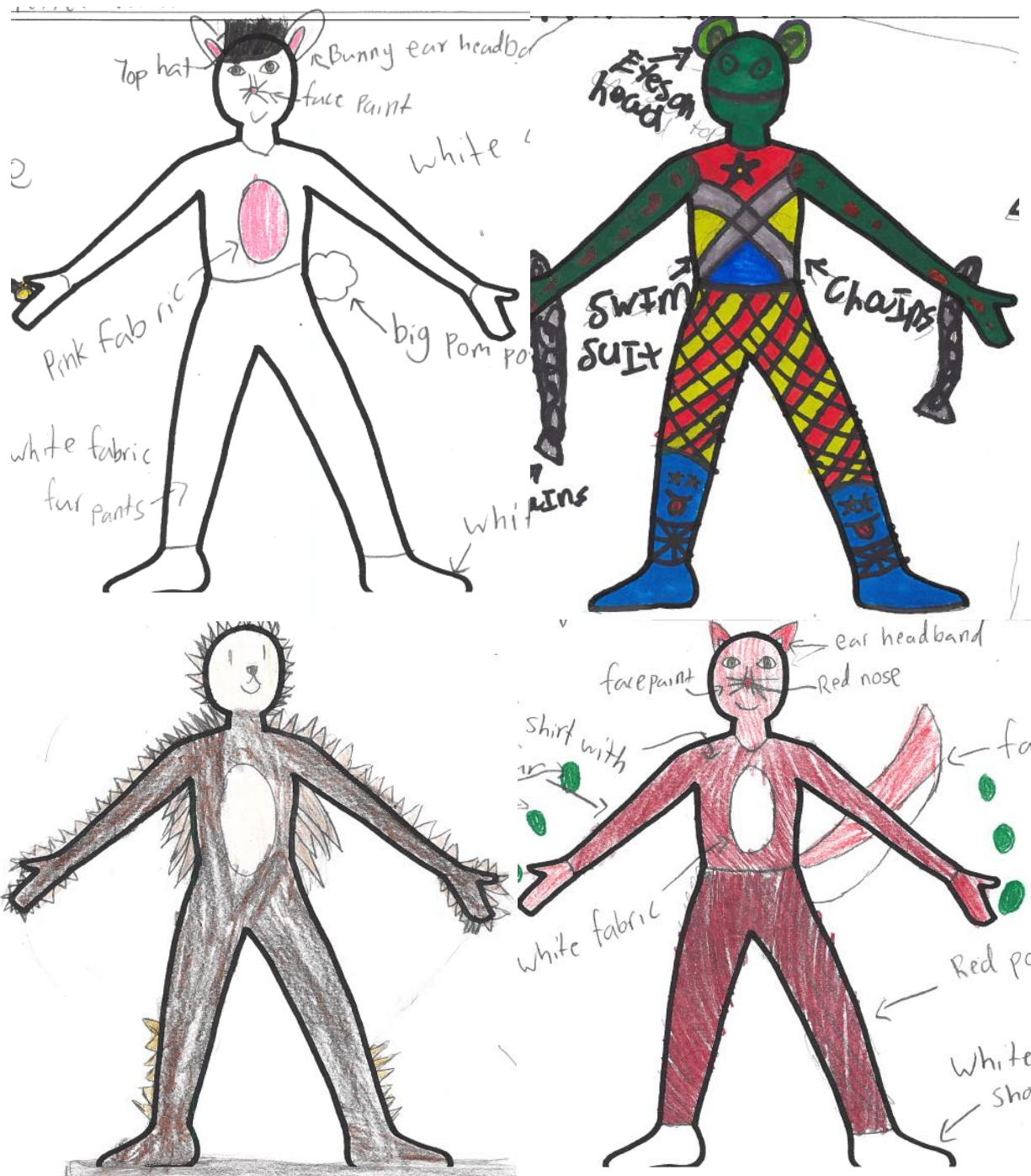
Create a costume rendering for the main characters: Peter, Benny, Flopsy/Mopsy/Cottontail, Jeremy Fisher, Mr. Alderman Ptolemy Tortoise, Mrs. Tiggy-winkle, Squirrel Nutkin.

*A costume rendering is a fully-colored drawing of each character's costume throughout the play.*



Check out these costume renderings from the Junior Dramaturgs!

Clockwise from top left: Peter Rabbit, Jeremy Fisher, Squirrel Nutkins, Mrs. Tiggy-winkle



Here are the real costume renderings for *Into the Burrow* from costume designer [Garry Lennon](#).

*How similar are the renderings to the costumes you saw on the stage?*

Clockwise from top left: Peter Rabbit, Benjamin Bunny, Squirrel Nutkin, Alderman Ptolemy Tortoise, Mrs. Tiggy-winkle, Jeremy Fisher





### Persuasive Writing

Using the template below, write a persuasive letter to Mr. McGregor, convincing him to share the land with Peter and his friends.

Dear Mr. McGregor,

My name is \_\_\_\_\_ (name), and I am a \_\_\_\_\_ (age) year-old student  
at \_\_\_\_\_ (school name). I am writing to you because I believe you should  
share the land around your farm with the animals who live there. I feel this way because...

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Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_ (your name)

**Sources:**

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