

Once Upon a Tune with Wendy Bennett

Mix a little Dr. Seuss with some Brothers Grimm and a dollop of Maurice Sendak and what do you get? A delicious musical treat to whet the appetites of young readers. Drawing from such classics as *Green Eggs and Ham*, *Little Red Riding Hood* and *Oh, the Things you Can Think*, Wendy creates delightful vocal vignettes with style. She shows students how to use the tools of the actor's trade—voice, gestures, and facial expressions—to “sell” a song and gets students to help create a rainstorm, show puppet pal Johnny how to sing his one note, and sing a book together.



Bio

Wendy Bennett has directed children's choirs, drama troops, and preschool children, and she now delivers highly interactive, curriculum based musical theatre programs to schools. Wendy earned her BFA in Music Education from Miami University and is a graduate of the Alliance Theater Acting Intern Program.

She has performed with Young Audiences for the past twenty years. She currently sings with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra for its Symphony Street children's concerts and various other family concerts. Wendy uses her lovely voice, puppets, colorful props, and guitar to bring memorable programs designed to enhance curriculum and make learning fun!

Standards

ELA RL.2.3: Describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges.

ELA RL 2.2: Recount stories and determine their central message, lesson or moral.

TAES2.1: Analyzing and constructing meaning from theatrical experiences, dramatic and literature.

Assess the Learning

- What is the job of a playwright? Composer? Author? Illustrator?
- What is the difference between a play and a musical?
- What did you like about seeing these stories sung and performed rather than just read from a book?
- What was your favorite part of the performance? Why?

| Key Vocabulary | Objectives |
|---|---|
| <p>Playwright: the person who writes the spoken words of the play. Sometimes plays are based on books!</p> <p>Composer: the musician who writes the music for a musical</p> <p>Author: someone who writes a book</p> <p>Illustrator: someone who creates the pictures in a book</p> <p>Play: a story brought to life with actors speaking</p> <p>Musical: a play where the actors sing some, talk some, sing some and talk some more</p> <p>Actor: someone who pretends to be someone else</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will use music, acting, costumes, props and puppets to tell a musical story • Students will interpret the meaning of stories through acting and song • Students will dramatize musical stories by applying theater techniques to become different characters |

Extend the Learning

- Organize a “Storybook Character Day” and ask students to dress as their favorite character in a story. Direct students to create a monologue for their character expressing how he/ she felt during a particular moment in the story.
- Acting warm-up for students, direct students to use their faces to create different facial expressions to express how they are feeling. Use feeling words to prompt students: guilty, lucky, excited, jealous, blue. Direct students by saying “3-2-1-Freeze”.
- Consider producing a classroom musical with your class or even with your grade level.

Additional Resources

Classroom Musical Resources:

- <http://www.shawneepress.com/search/search.do?menuid=11244&subsiteid=204>
- <http://www.jwpepper.com/sheet-music/classroom-music.jsp>
- <http://www.mtishows.com/>

Children Acting Activities:

- <http://www.musical-theater-kids.com/kids-theater-dictionary.html>
- <http://www.improv4kids.com/ImprovGames.html>
- <http://www.childdrama.com/lessons.html>
- <http://www.childdrama.com/mainframe.html>