



OUR AMERICA STUDY GUIDE

Use this Study Guide to enhance the educational experience of this show!

ALL ABOUT A.C.T. For Youth

A.C.T For Youth is an acclaimed professional touring theatre company based in Orlando, Florida.

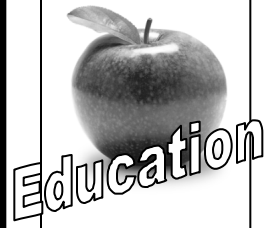
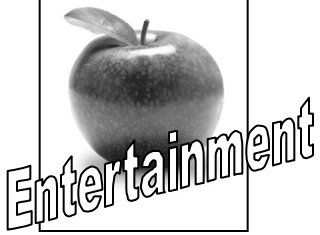
Each year, the Atlantic Coast Theatre performs hundreds of shows for thousands of students across the United States.

ACT For Youth's high-quality educational programming is recognized nationally by theatres, schools, art councils, libraries, and festivals- not to mention the thousands of children & families who see A.C.T. shows each year!



The theatre has been awarded placement on:

- ~Florida State Touring Roster~
- ~Hillsborough County Artist Roster~
- ~SC Arts Commission Roster Of Approved Artists~
- ~Raleigh/Wake County, NC United Arts Roster~



Visit Our Website!

www.atlantic-coast-theatre.com

Vocabulary Words:

You will hear each of the words listed below during the performance of Our America. Become familiar with them ahead of time, so you understand their meaning.

Keelboat A small boat used to carry people and cargo up and down rivers, powered only by the captain pushing his way along with a large wooden oar.

Varmint An old term for an animal that causes trouble

Drinking Gourd A large piece of squash, hollowed out and dried and used to dip water from barrels.

Abolitionist A person who worked to free African American people from slavery.

Courtin' (Courting) An old fashioned way of saying "dating", or pursuing a person to try to marry them.

Sombrero A wide brimmed hat used by people in Mexico and the Southwestern United States to keep cool on hot days.

Porcelain A breakable material that tea-cups, plates, and small statues are often made of.

Siesta A short nap taken after the mid-day meal.

Prosper To become successful in life.

Playwriting

An Interesting Fact About
A.C.T. For Youth

~~~~~

We write all of our plays!

## The Steps To Turn A Folk Tale Into A Play

- Read several American Folk Tales.
- Choose your favorite story (or the one that you think will make the best play).
- Decide on the style of your play...Musical, Comedy, or Drama.
- Brainstorm characters for your play.
- Write an outline.
- Put on your creative caps!
- **START WRITING and HAVE FUN!**

You can write a play about ANYTHING!

Write a play about your favorite subject in school, a book that you liked, a story from your family's history, or even something original from your imagination!

## Before The Show Activities

- Discuss as a class the differences between television/movies and a live theatre production. How are you expected to behave at a play? What does it mean to have good theatre manners?
  - Talk with your class about what a "Tall Tale" Character is. Who were some famous "Tall Tale" Characters?
  - Become familiar with the vocabulary words listed in this study guide. You will hear each of the words in the show.
- 

## After The Show Activities

- Folktales are passed down from generation to generation. Think of a story that your family tells over and over again. Present it to the class as a folktale.
- In the play, Sally Ann says "Half the fun in a story is the 'adding to it' part". Folktales are told by many different people, and every new storyteller changes things a little here and there to make it fun and new. The playwright of *Our America* had to retell stories that are hundreds of years old in new ways. Think of a popular story, and write it down in your own new way, maybe even as a play.
- People have come to America from all over the world, for many different reasons. We all have different ancestors and histories, but we're all Americans. Trace back your family's history. Find out where your ancestors were from, and how they got here.
- Americans have a mixture of many different cultures blended together. What cultural activities do your family still practice? Make a list and compare it with your classmates. Which practices are the same? Which are different?

# Be A Set Designer Activity

**SCENIC ARTIST**- a person who creates visual art for theatre performances. The set you saw today was designed & painted by a scenic artist.

## Multiple Places In One Set

Often, a scenic artist has the challenge of designing the scenery for a play that happens in many different places. Sometimes the scenery can be moved, but sometimes a “UNIT SET” (Scenery that stays in place for the entire show) is used. Pick an American Folk-Tale that you like that happens in multiple locations. Design a non-moving “UNIT SET” for the stage version of the story you chose. Can you find a way to represent all the locations in one set?



# All About The Actors

*Noel Holland & Don Gruel*

You will be seeing professional actors!  
That means they act for their jobs!

An interesting fact about the actors:  
They started acting when they were YOUR age!



**NOEL HOLLAND**— I cannot remember a time when I was not singing. As a child, I would sing to anyone who would listen— if nobody was there to hear, I would sing to myself! I started acting and dancing because I loved performing on stage. My sister and I would put on plays for our parents in the living room! When I was in middle school and high school, I decided that I wanted to be a performer. After I graduated college with a degree in music, I became a professional actor- working for theatres all over the country. Now, I have my dream job— owning a theatre. I am so proud to be a part of the Atlantic Coast Theatre For Youth. It gives me all kinds of opportunities to sing, act, write songs, and use my imagination. I so enjoy creating shows that children love because I loved theatre and music so much when I was a child!



Noel & her little sister, Meredith, putting on a play for family.



Don as the Easter Bunny in his 3rd Grade School Play

**DON GRUEL**— I grew up in Beaufort, South Carolina. When I was little, I would make up plays using my “Star Wars” Action Figures as the actors. I started doing school plays when I was in Kindergarten, but my first play outside of school I was in the musical OKLAHOMA when I was 10 years old. I really liked the feeling of being able to pretend to become other people in other places. I kept doing plays throughout Middle School & High School and decided to study Theatre in college. I graduated from the University Of South Carolina in 1993 and have worked in professional theatre ever since. I have always loved using my imagination. As an actor, I get to be creative every single day.

You can try acting too!

Get involved in a play at school or in your community!

# Write A Letter To The Actors Activity

A.C.T. For Youth loves to receive letters from our audience!



You will write letters all of your life!

You will write letters in school, to correspond with friends and family, and for your job one day! It is very important to know how to write a good letter.

Your teachers may want you to write your letter in a proper letter-writing style or format. Here is an example of one style!

## YOU CAN SEND US

**~A DRAWING~  
~WHAT YOU LEARNED~  
~YOUR FAVORITE PART~**

**Your Opinions Count!  
They Help Us When  
We Write  
New Shows!**

A.C.T. For Youth  
8297 Champions Gate Blvd. #188  
Champions Gate, FL 33896

Dear Audience:

The Atlantic Coast Theatre For Youth would like to thank all of you for showing us such fantastic audience manners during the show! Everyone was so respectful during the performance. You laughed when things were funny, but you were also able to quiet back down so that everyone could hear. I don't think that we heard anyone talking while the actors were on stage. That was great! You made our job so much fun.

Thanks so much! You were wonderful!

Sincerely,

*Don Gruel & Noel Holland*

Send your letters to:

**Atlantic Coast Theatre For Youth  
8297 Champions Gate Blvd. #188  
Champions Gate, FL 33896**

# NATIONAL EDUCATION STANDARDS

&

## NEXT GENERATION FLORIDA SUNSHINE STATE STANDARDS

The following standards can be supported by:

- Watching the production
- Participating in the activities listed in the study guide
- Classroom discussion after the show



## National Standards: Kindergarten – 4<sup>th</sup> Grade

### **NA-T.K-4.6**

#### **COMPARING AND CONNECTING ART FORMS BY DESCRIBING THEATRE, DRAMATIC MEDIA, AND OTHER ART FORMS**

Students describe visual, aural, oral, and kinetic elements in theatre, dramatic media, dance, music, and visual arts

Students compare how ideas and emotions are expressed in theatre, dramatic media, dance, music, and visual arts

Students select movement, music, or visual elements to enhance the mood of a classroom dramatization

### **NA-T.K-4.7**

#### **ANALYZING AND EXPLAINING PERSONAL PREFERENCES AND CONSTRUCTING MEANINGS FROM CLASSROOM DRAMATIZATIONS AND FROM THEATRE, FILM, TELEVISION, AND ELECTRONIC MEDIA PRODUCTIONS**

Students identify and describe the visual, aural, oral, and kinetic elements of classroom dramatizations and dramatic performances

Students explain how the wants and needs of characters are similar to and different from their own

Students articulate emotional responses to and explain personal preferences about the whole as well as the parts of dramatic performances

### **NA-T.K-4.8**

#### **UNDERSTANDING CONTEXT BY RECOGNIZING THE ROLE OF THEATRE, FILM, TELEVISION, AND ELECTRONIC MEDIA IN DAILY LIFE**

Students identify and compare similar characters and situations in stories and dramas from and about various cultures, illustrate with classroom dramatizations, and discuss how theatre reflects life

Students identify and compare the various settings and reasons for creating dramas and attending theatre, film, television, and electronic media productions

### **NA-M.K-4.9**

#### **UNDERSTANDING MUSIC IN RELATION TO HISTORY AND CULTURE**

Students demonstrate audience behavior appropriate for the context and style of music performed

## National Standards: 5<sup>th</sup> Grade

### **NA-T.5-8.6**

#### **COMPARING AND CONNECTING ART FORMS BY DESCRIBING THEATRE, DRAMATIC MEDIA, AND OTHER ART FORMS**

Students describe characteristics and compare the presentation of characters, environments, and actions in theatre, musical theatre, dramatic media, dance, and visual arts

Students incorporate elements of dance, music, and visual arts to express ideas and emotions in improvised and scripted scenes

Students express and compare personal reactions to several art forms

Students describe and compare the functions and interaction of performing and visual artists and audience members in theatre, dramatic media, musical theatre, dance, music, and visual arts

### **NA-T.5-8.7**

#### **ANALYZING AND EXPLAINING PERSONAL PREFERENCES AND CONSTRUCTING MEANINGS FROM CLASSROOM DRAMATIZATIONS AND FROM THEATRE, FILM, TELEVISION, AND ELECTRONIC MEDIA PRODUCTIONS**

Students describe and analyze the effect for publicity, study guides, programs, and physical environments on audience response and appreciation of dramatic performances

### **NA-T.5-8.8**

#### **UNDERSTANDING CONTEXT BY RECOGNIZING THE ROLE OF THEATRE, FILM, TELEVISION, AND ELECTRONIC MEDIA IN DAILY LIFE**

Students describe and compare universal characters and situations in dramas from and about various cultures and historical periods, illustrate in improvised and scripted scenes, and discuss how theatre reflects a culture

### **NA-M.5-8.7**

#### **EVALUATING MUSIC AND MUSIC PERFORMANCES**

Students develop criteria for evaluating the quality and effectiveness of music performances and compositions and apply the criteria in their personal listening and performing

# **FL SUNSHINE STATE FINE ARTS STANDARDS**

*(These were the standards used before the Next Generation Standards were adopted)*

(By participating in the Study Guide activities, watching the performance, and encouraging classroom discussion of the play, your students' artistic experience can support several standards)

## **Florida Sunshine State Standards: Pre-K-2<sup>nd</sup> Grades**

### **THEATRE**

#### **TH.A.1.1**

**The student acts by developing, communicating, and sustaining characters in improvisation and formal or informal productions**

Creates imagined characters, relationships, and environments using basic acting skills

Creates individually and in groups, animate and inanimate objects through the movement of the human body

#### **TH.C.1.1**

**The student understands context by analyzing the role of theatre, film, television, and electronic media in the past and present**

Expresses remembered ideas, feelings, and concepts of daily activities through dramatic play

Understands how we learn about ourselves, our relationships, and our environment through forms of theatre

Understands characters, situations, and dramatic media from the stories and dramas of various cultures

#### **TH.D.1.1**

**The student analyzes, criticizes, and constructs meaning from formal and informal theatre, film, television, and electronic media**

Portrays imaginary sensory experiences through dramatic play

Gives reasons for personal preferences for formal and informal performances

Understands appropriate audience responses to dramatic presentations

Understands how theater communicates events of everyday life

Understands the similarities and differences between play acting, pretending, and real life

#### **TH.E.1.1**

**The student understands applications of the role of theatre, film, television, and electronic media in everyday life**

Understands the similarities and differences among how emotions are expressed in theatre, dramatic media, music, dance, and visual art

Cooperates with others to create formal and informal theatrical works and to solve the problems inherent in simple scenes

## **Florida Sunshine State Standards: 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> Grades**

### **THEATRE**

#### **TH.A.1.2**

**The student acts by developing, communicating, and sustaining characters in improvisation and formal or informal productions**

Creates imagined characters, relationships, and environments using basic acting skills

#### **TH.C.1.2**

**The student understands context by analyzing the role of theatre, film, television, and electronic media in the past and present**

Understands how theatre is an interpretation of actual events in history and everyday life

Understands how theatre reflects culture through universal characters and dramas from various cultures and historical time periods

#### **TH.D.1.2**

**The student analyzes, criticizes, and constructs meaning from formal and informal theatre, film, television, and electronic media**

Knows how theatre uses visual elements (e.g. set design and costuming), sound (e.g. sound effects and vocal inflection), and movement (e.g. staging and character portrayal) to communicate

Understands the similarities and differences between real life and the theatre's representation of life (e.g. the meaning of the concept, "willing suspension of disbelief")

Articulates emotional responses to the whole, as well as parts of, dramatic performances

#### **TH.E.1.2**

**The student understands applications of the role of theatre, film, television, and electronic media in everyday life**

Understands theatre as a social function and theatre etiquette as the responsibility of the audience

Collaborates in the construction of formal and informal productions

# Florida Next Generation Sunshine State Standards

## NGSSS



| Kindergarten | 1st Grade  | 2nd Grade  | 3rd Grade  | 4th Grade  | 5th Grade  |
|--------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| LA.K.2.1.5   | LA.1.2.1.5 | LA.2.2.1.5 | LA.3.2.1.5 | LA.4.2.1.5 | LA.5.2.1.5 |
| LA.K.5.2.2   | LA.1.5.2.3 | LA.2.5.2.1 | LA.3.5.2.1 | LA.4.5.2.1 | LA.5.5.2.1 |
| TH.K.C       | TH.1.C     | TH.2.C     | TH.3.C     | TH.4.C     | TH.5.C     |
| TH.K.H       | TH.1.H     | TH.2.H     | TH.3.H     | TH.4.H     | TH.5.H     |
| TH.K.F       | TH.1.F     | TH.2.F     | TH.3.F     | TH.4.F     | TH.5.F     |
| TH.K.O       | TH.1.O     | TH.2.O     | TH.3.O     | TH.4.O     | TH.5.O     |
| TH.K.S       | TH.1.S     | TH.2.S     | TH.3.S     | TH.4.S     | TH.5.S     |

### 6th-8th Grades Theatre Standards

TH.68.C  
TH.68.H  
TH.68.F  
TH.68.O  
TH.68.S



# Atlantic Coast Theatre (A.C.T.) For Youth Common Core Standards

The following **College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards** are reinforced by each A.C.T. For Youth Show by watching the production, participating in the activities listed in the study guide, & classroom discussion after the show.

The corresponding Common Core Standards for each grade level can be found at:

<http://www.corestandards.org/the-standards>

- [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.2](#) Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.
- [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.3](#) Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.
- [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.4](#) Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.
- [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.7](#) Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.
- [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.L.3](#) Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.