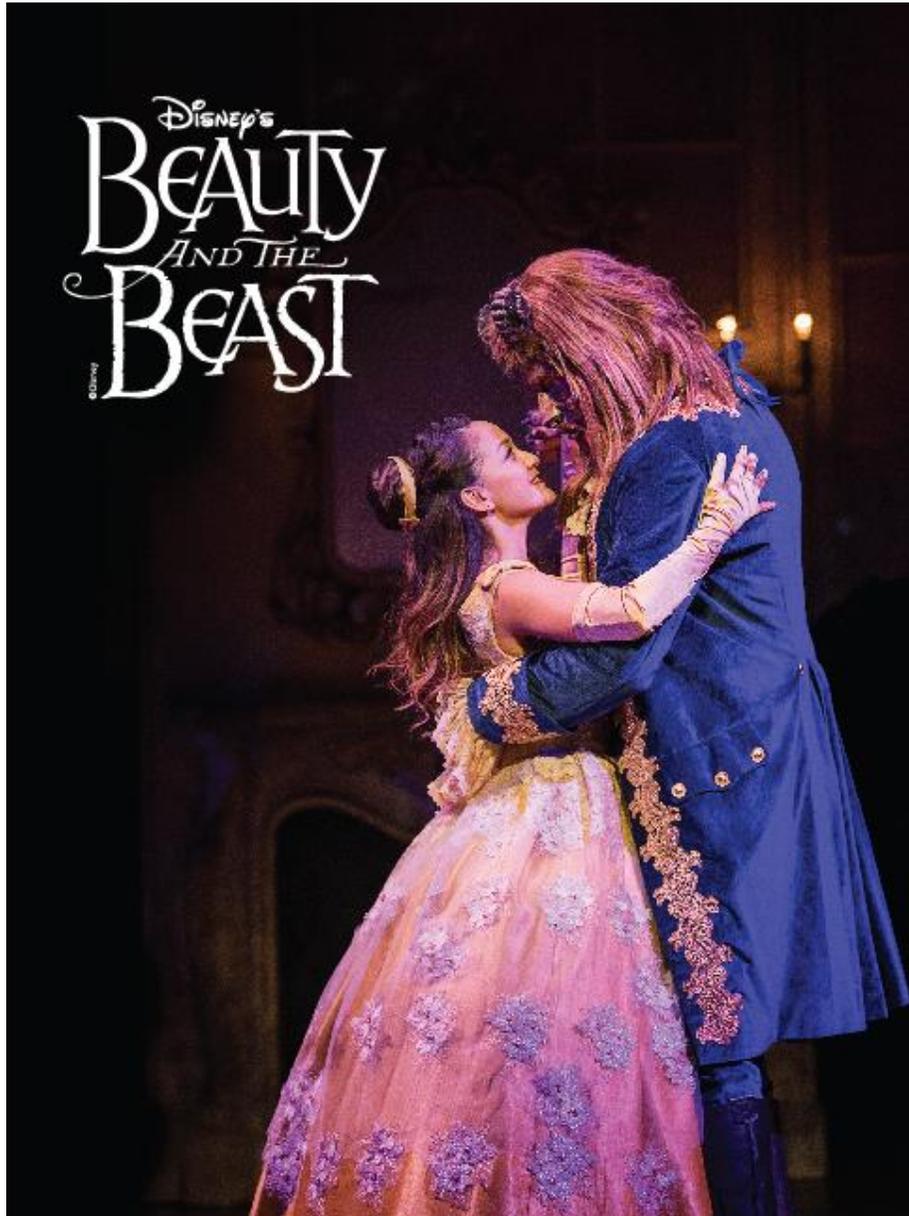


Arts Club Theatre Company

TEACHER RESOURCE GUIDE
Disney's Beauty and the Beast
2018/2019 Season



Stanley Industrial Alliance Stage

DECEMBER 1, 2018 – JANUARY 6, 2019

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Welcome

This guide was created for teachers and students. It contains an overview of the play’s story, as well as informative resources and activities for teachers and students. The guide aims to provide background knowledge and critical perspectives on the play that will yield fruitful discussion and foster an understanding and appreciation of the theatre arts.

If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions for the guide, please contact our group sales representative at 604.687.5315, ext. 253 or groups@artsclub.com.

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Cover photo: Shannon Chan-Kent and Jonathan Winsby in the 2017 production. Photo by Emily Cooper

About the Arts Club Theatre Company

The Arts Club of Vancouver was founded in 1958 as a private club for artists, musicians, and actors. It became the Arts Club Theatre in 1964 when the company opened its first stage in a converted gospel hall at Seymour and Davie Streets.

Now in its 55th season of producing professional live theatre in Vancouver, the Arts Club Theatre Company is a non-profit charitable organization that operates three theatres: the Granville Island Stage, the Stanley Industrial Alliance Stage, and the Goldcorp Stage at the BMO Theatre Centre. Its popular productions range from musicals and contemporary comedies to new works and classics. Learn more about the Arts Club Theatre Company at artsclub.com.

Learning objectives

By viewing *Disney's Beauty and the Beast* and working through the following activities, students will:

- Explore the moral lessons of acceptance and inner beauty through the play
- Learn about, view, and play with the construct of a fairy tale
- Use critical thinking and reflection on the central themes, then use creativity and imagination in their writing to depict them

Connections to New BC Curriculum

Arts Education 6–8

Big Ideas

- “Experiencing art is a means to develop empathy for others’ perspectives and experiences.”
 - Students will explore the moral lessons of acceptance and inner beauty through the play.
- “Engaging in the arts develops people’s ability to understand and express complex ideas.”
 - Students will use their new understanding of the fairy tale construct to explore the depiction of moral lessons through drama.

Core Competencies

- “Research, describe, interpret, and evaluate how artists use processes, materials, movements, technologies, tools, techniques and environments in the arts.”
 - Students will evaluate how the fairy tale construct is depicted in the production.

English Language Arts 6–8

Big Ideas

- “Language and text can be a source of creativity and joy.”
- “Exploring stories and other texts helps us understand ourselves and make connections to others and to the world.”
 - Students will explore the themes of acceptance and inner beauty within the play, while also relating and evaluating it within their own lives.

Core Competencies

- “Synthesize ideas from a variety of sources to build understanding.”
 - Students will use drama as a means to further understand themes which are also prevalent in our current society.
- “Exchange ideas and viewpoints to build shared understanding and extend thinking.”
- “Think critically, creatively, and reflectively to explore ideas within, between, and beyond texts.”
 - Students will use critical thinking and reflection through discussion on the activity and creativity and imagination in their writing.

Plot Summary

Beauty and the Beast is a traditional fairy-tale written by French novelist Gabrielle-Suzanne Barbot de Villeneuve and was first published in 1740. It was then rewritten by Jeanne-Marie Laprince de Beaumont and again by Andrew Lang to produce the version most commonly told today.

The tale begins with a mythical enchantress who casts a spell upon a self-centered and arrogant prince. When an old beggar woman enters the castle, offering the prince a rose in exchange for shelter, he is repulsed by her ugliness and sends her away. The old beggar woman suddenly turns into a beautiful enchantress and punishes the prince for his cruelty by turning him into a monstrous beast and transforming all those that live in the castle into enchanted household objects. She tells the Beast that the spell can only be broken when he learns the meaning of true love. She gives him the rose and tells him when the last petal falls he will be a beast forever, but if he can learn to love and be loved in return, then the spell will be broken.

Belle, a beautiful and intelligent young woman who feels out of place in her provincial French village, goes looking for her father, Maurice when he doesn't return from a trip. Maurice, who has become lost on his journey home, stumbles upon a mysterious castle. In an attempt to stay warm for the night, Maurice enters the castle where he is imprisoned by the Beast for trespassing. When Maurice doesn't return home, Belle attempts to rescue him. Belle offers herself up to take her father's place as the Beast's prisoner. This is the first time the Beast has witnessed a selfless act and agrees to make the switch.

Belle begins to live in the enchanted castle with the rest of the household, populated by such beloved characters as Mrs. Potts, Lumiere, Cogsworth, and Chip, who all watch anxiously as Belle and the Beast grow to understand and befriend one another. Belle helps the Beast learn empathy, compassion and understanding. As the two begin establishing a relationship, their feelings grow ever deeper. But, as the clock ticks and petals continue to fall off the enchanted rose, will they confess their love for one another before it is too late?

Characters

Belle: Belle is a strong, intelligent, and independent young woman who feels trapped in her provincial small-minded town. Over time, she is able to see the true beauty and character within the Beast.

Beast: The Beast is paying the price for his moment of mean-spiritedness towards the Enchantress. On the outside, he appears to be menacing and angry. Ultimately, we discover his softer and caring side as he interacts with Belle.

Gaston: Although Gaston is popular with the townspeople, he is shallow and self-centered. He despises the Beast.

Lefou: Lefou is Gaston's eager sidekick, always wanting to please Gaston.

Maurice: Maurice is Belle's loving father. He is gentle, enthusiastic, and inventive. He and Belle have a strong relationship.

Babette: Babette is an enchanted feather-duster. She and Lumiere are in a relationship.

Lumiere: Lumiere is a light-hearted, romantic, and charming Candelabra. He gives a warm welcome to Belle at the Castle.

Cogsworth: Cogsworth is a tightly-wound, enchanted mantle clock. He is a perfectionist, and is the head of the Beast's household.

Mrs. Potts: Mrs. Potts is a warm-hearted and motherly enchanted teapot. Chip is her son.

Chip: Chip is a curious and inquisitive little teacup. He is the son of Mrs. Potts.

Madame de la Grande Bouche: Madame is an enchanted wardrobe, who used to be an opera diva. She comforts Belle during her first few days at the Castle.

Ensemble: Townspeople, Silly Girls, Enchanted Objects, Wolves, Enchantress, Young Prince.

Discussion Questions

These questions can be used as writing prompts, as well as prompts for small-group and large-group discussions.

Pre-show Discussion Questions

The following questions have been included to spark discussions and to get students thinking about what they might experience prior to viewing the production.

- Have you seen any live performances on stage before? What are your expectations about what you will see on stage in this production?
- What do you already know about the play, including the plot, production elements (such as lighting, sound, costumes, and sets) and the characters? How do you anticipate that these elements will come together in the play?
- Have you ever felt judged based on your own appearance, or judged someone else based on their appearance? Did your opinions change as you got to know each other more?
- What does it mean to be one's true self? How would you explain *your* true self?
- What is a fairy tale? What do fairy tales have in common? What can we learn from fairy tales?
- How are musicals different from plays? Does music enhance storytelling?

Post-show Discussion Questions

The following questions are ideal for engaging students in reflection and exploration of the major themes, characters, and other elements of the production.

- What ideas or themes did the play make you think about?
- What did you notice about the ways in which the characters communicated with one other?
- What did you notice about the ways in which the characters displayed their emotions?
- What did you think about the technical elements of the production: which elements stood out to you the most, and why? What effects did this have on your understanding of the play?
- How did the musical numbers affect your experience as an audience member; and specifically, your understanding of the characters' thoughts and emotions?
- Imagine that you could meet with members of the cast, crew, artistic team, or production team. What questions would you ask them about the choices and elements in the production?

- What does the media and our society teach us about the meanings of “beauty” and “beast”? What do you think of these messages?
- What is the significance of the rose?
- Why do you think people fear differences? Why do you think that all of the townspeople were so willing to attack the beast, even though they had never met him? What makes it difficult for an individual to take a stand against a big crowd?
- Think about a character in *Beauty and the Beast*. What are their character traits, and how did they transform or change during the musical? How are you similar and/or different to this character?
- In your opinion, what does it mean to live “happily ever after?”

What is a Fairy Tale?

The history of the fairy tale can be dated all the way back to ancient Rome, and nearly every culture has their own collection of fairy stories. However, the fairy tale is most commonly associated today with the famous writing duo The Brother’s Grimm who wrote down the oral versions of such stories as *Cinderella*, *The Frog Prince*, and *Rapunzel*. Since then, the famous Walt Disney has taken these stories, revamped and popularized them into what we know today.

Contrary to the name, a fairy tale does not need to include fairies. However, there are a number of specific elements that will be found in every fairy tale:

- Traditionally, fairy tales are set long ago, or in ‘fantasy time’ where the actual historical timeline is not important
- They will include elements of magic. These may be people with magical powers, enchanted creatures or objects, etc. And it is important to note that the magical influence could be either positive or negative
- The plot of a fairy tale will focus on a problem that needs to be solved, culminating in the happy resolution of this problem
- Characters are very obviously good or evil
- Plot will always include at least one lesson on morality that the characters must learn in order to solve their problems and reach a happy ending.

(Sources: “Read, Write, Think” and “Brother’s Grimm”)

Activity 1: “Beauty” vs. “Beast” in our Society

(Recommended for English Language Arts or Social Studies classes)

Rationale: The purpose of this activity is to develop the understanding that what a person looks like is only the beginning of who they are.

Step One: Have your students select a picture from a magazine of something they think is “attractive” and something they think is “beastly” and bring it to class.

Step Two: In class, the teacher should collect the pictures and post some of them (for example, 3 of each) around the room. Have the students circulate, writing words that come to mind on a separate sheet, posted next to the picture. Once there are a few suggestions written for each picture, ask them to return to their desks.

Step Three: Follow up by sharing the written suggestions with the whole class and facilitating a discussion session on why they felt the way that they did about each image. Ask the class to identify the characteristics of North America’s ideal image of ‘beauty’. What does our society typically classify as ‘beast’? How might other cultures understand and interpret ‘beauty’ and ‘beast’?

Step Four: Using a culture other than ‘Western,’ create a Venn diagram to compare and contrast the characteristics of ideal beauty around the world. What does this tell us about how we value beauty within society?

Step Five: Writing activity. Students should choose one of the posted images and write a page of narrative imagining the person’s inner life. Some guiding questions are: What do they like to do? What are they afraid of? What is their family life like? What are their passions? What is their personality like—are they bubbly, outgoing, introverted etc.?

Activity 2: Acceptance and Inner Beauty

(Recommended for Drama or English Language Arts classes)

Rationale: This activity is designed to connect the construction of fairy tales to the student’s own lives. Students will also explore their understanding of the themes of **acceptance** and **outer versus inner beauty**. This activity would pair very well with a unit on fantasy or fairy tales.

Pre-Show: Read the students the introductory section of this packet on fairy tales. This should be accompanied by the sharing of one or more other fairy tales from various cultures and discussion on how each story fits the traditional mold of a fairy tale. Examples:

Arabian Nights – Middle East/South Asia

The Granddaughter Who Was Eaten by a Big Fish – An oral Cree fairy tale

<https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1316530132377/1316530184659#chpm1>

Post-Show: Distribute the fairy tale worksheet and have students work in pairs to discuss what elements of a traditional fairy tale were present in *Beauty and the Beast*. Go through the sheet together to see what parts of the play work as a fairy tale and what don’t.

Split students up into small groups (4–6). Using their worksheets as a guide, students should create an original, modern-day fairy tale as a group.

- 1–2 minutes long
- Utilize the same themes and moral lessons that appear in *Beauty and the Beast*, but depict them with a new, modern setting, plot, and characters.
- Curiosity: How would the reversal of gender roles in the play affect our feelings about the theme?

A Fairy Tale Comparison

With a partner, fill in the chart by answering the questions on the left and finding the elements of a traditional fairy tale in your example story and the musical *Beauty and the Beast*.

NOTE: Not all of the boxes may get filled.

Element of Fairy Tale	Example Story	<i>Beauty and the Beast</i>
1) Set long ago or in a 'fantasy' time. What is the setting?		
2) What is the element of magic?		
3) Which characters are wholly good or wholly evil?		
4) What is the big problem to be solved?		
5) Is there a happy ending?		
6) What is the moral lesson?		

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