

# A Study Guide For *The Big (Not-So) Bad Wolf*

Welcome to The Rose Theater, where we strive to enrich the lives of children through professional live theater and arts education. We're pleased you have chosen to make The Rose a part of your students' learning experience, and we will do our best to make it both meaningful and educational. This study guide has been created to help identify the themes and lessons from *The Big (Not-So) Bad Wolf*, so they can be moved into the classroom for further development through discussion, activities, and assignments. The exercises presented here have been designed for easy adaptation, so they can be tailored to meet the needs of various age groups and curriculum goals.

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## Pre-Show Activities

### Reputation Statues

**Out-of-chair activity • 10 minutes**

**Objective:** Students will use their bodies to show stereotypes of the Big Bad Wolf.

**Vocabulary:** A reputation is what people think about you – even if they haven't met you.

**Brainstorming:** As a class, list everything the Big Bad Wolf has done and the people he has met. Next, list adjectives that would describe the wolf.

**Activity:** In groups of five, ask students to come to the front of the classroom to make a statue of the Big Bad Wolf.

**Discussion:** What do we like about the statues? How did the actors use their bodies to show us that they are the Big Bad Wolf? What if the Big Bad Wolf was misunderstood? What if he was actually a good guy?



# A Behind-the-Scenes Spotlight on Acting

An interview with Michael Wilhelm, the creator and original performer of *The Big (Not-So) Bad Wolf*.

## *The Big (Not-So) Bad Wolf*

### Artistic Team

Director ..... James Larson  
Playwright ..... Michael Wilhelm  
Costume Design ..... Sherri Geerdes  
Study Guide  
Contributors ..... Kate Wintz  
Michael Wilhelm  
Michael Harrelson  
Brian Guehring

### Cast

Mr. Wolf ..... Michael Wilhelm or  
Michael Harrelson

## Acting as Animals

**In and out-of-chair activity**  
**10 minutes**

**Objective:** Students will embody physical characteristics of animals.

**Discussion:** How do actors show they are animals? They change their bodies and voices to become an animal character.

**Warm-up:** With the children still seated in their chairs, ask them as a group to create animal sounds: dog, cat, pig, wolf, duck, monkey, gorilla, lion, chicken, mouse, etc.

**Activity:** Have the students find a space of their own in room where they cannot touch each other, then ask them to act out each animal's movements.

### **Q: What do you do as an actor to become the The Big (Not-So) Bad Wolf (BBW)?**

A: Preparing to become the BBW is a pretty simple process, because in some ways I really feel like the BBW. I'm large (6'4", 270 lbs.) and hairy, and I can seem a little intimidating. I try to find the things that allow me to work with kids in class and on stage without frightening them and bring that into the show. What it comes down to is trying to establish an honest relationship, where they can make their own judgements about what to think about the character.

### **Q: What is it like being in a play by yourself?**

A: It's not really like being in a play by yourself. It's more like spending time with 30-300 friends. I get to interact with the kids, ask them questions and play off their responses. I invite them into my world and they, in turn, invite me into theirs.

### **Q: How is *The Big (Not-So) Bad Wolf* different from other shows I might see at The Rose?**

A: Honestly, I think it could be and is very much like some of the other shows you can see at The Rose, but without the lights and sets and sound effects. This show can also be done in a classroom, a gym, a church space or a conference room.

### **Q: Could you tell us about your costume for Mr. Wolf?**

A: The costume that I wear for the BBW is the same one that I have been wearing from the start. I have literally worn it for nearly 480 shows. The head piece was replaced last year with new wires. I wear overalls over a white shirt, and then a suit jacket that has been fitted with fur and a furry vest. I have gloves with furry hands and large claws, a head piece and a tail that sticks out the back of my jacket.

### **Q: Could you tell us about your make up for Mr. Wolf?**

A: The make-up starts with a base of grey over all the visible parts of my face and neck. Sometimes, I have my own facial hair that covers part of my face and blends into the head piece. I add a black nose and some lines to give my face a little texture.

### **Q: What do you want the audience to take away from this show?**

A: The themes from the show include things like being nice to each other, not judging people, don't tell lies and using good manners.

### **Q: What all do you do at The Rose?**

A: I have worked for The Rose for 20 years now, and I have had the immense pleasure to do just about anything that you could imagine. I have acted, directed, written plays and musicals, worked in marketing, taught classes, toured locally and nationally, run sound, built sets and met some amazing people.

### **Q: What's your favorite part of working at The Rose?**

A: I love that we work with kids. My job for 20 years has been to help kids realize their potential, and to have fun doing it. I love this job!

# Post-Show Activities

## Group Statues

**Out-of-chair activity • 15 minutes**

**Objective:** Actors will use their bodies and imaginations to create frozen images that reflect particular parts of the play.

**Brainstorm:** Ask the students to brainstorm different stories from the play (such as *Little Red Riding Hood* or *Three Little Pigs*).

**Model:** Choose a moment from the play, and ask a volunteer to model a statue of one of the characters from the scene. Have another student create a silent model of another character from the scene. Continue to add statues until all characters of the scene are on stage.

**Discussion:** What are these volunteers doing well? What do you think these characters would say at this moment?

**Activity:** Divide the class into small groups and let each group create a group statue from a scene in the play.

## Costume Design

**In-chair activity • 10 minutes**

**Objective:** Students will explore costume design by drawing a costume for a character.

**Discussion:** What did the actor of the show wear to show that he was a wolf? How did we know he was a wolf? Did he look scary? What if he was wearing all pink? Or, what if he was wearing all black?

**Vocabulary:** A **costume designer** selects colors and fabrics and uses them to make costumes that the actors can wear on stage. Their goal is to help the audience figure out what character each actor is portraying as part of the show.

**Brainstorming:** List all the characters discussed in *The Big (Not-So) Bad Wolf*.

**Activity:** Ask the students to draw a costume design for one of the characters.

**Side Coaching:** What colors would you use? Is your character nice, quiet, loud, or mean?

**Discussion:** Allow the students to share their drawings and explain their design choices.

## Who Am I?

**Out-of-chair activity • 20 minutes**

**Objective:** Students will interact with each other as famous “good guys” and “bad guys” and will discuss how it feels to be each.

**Brainstorm:** As a class, brainstorm a list of good guys and bad guys from well-known stories.

**Activity:** Tape (or pin) an index card on the back of each student that labels them as one of the following characters: Captain Hook, Dracula, Evil Queen, Mad Scientist, Cinderella, Nemo, Gingerbread Man, Bambi, etc.. Next, tell the students that they have to be silent for the remainder of the activity. They are to move about the room looking at each other’s

index cards (not their own!) and react to each person’s designated character. After five minutes, ask them to move to either the “good side” or the “bad side” of the room, whichever one corresponds best to the reactions the other students have made in response to their index card. Once they have selected a side, they can remove their index cards and look at them.

**Discussion:** Did they go to the correct side? Ask students to reflect on their experiences. How did they feel as “good guys” and “bad guys?” How did they react to each other?

**Extension:** Have the students return their index cards, mix them up, and repeat the activity. This time add vocal reactions to the characters. How did it feel this time?

## Telephone

**In-chair activity • 5-10 minutes**

**Objective:** This activity will demonstrate how stories become twisted as they are told from person to person

**Discussion:** The Big (Not-So) Bad Wolf said that the media had twisted the stories about him. What were some of the things the wolf said that were untrue?

**Activity:** Ask the students to sit in a circle. Whisper a phrase into one student’s ear, then ask that student to turn to the person next to him and whisper it in their ear. This should continue around the circle. The last student to receive the message then tells the class the message. Compare it to the message that was used at the beginning.

**Discussion:** How did the message change? How would you feel if someone exaggerated a story about you?



# Resources for Students and Teachers

If you enjoyed *The Big (Not-So) Bad Wolf*, you may want to reference the resources listed below when planning pre and post-show activities for your classroom:

## Please feel free to contact us!

### Letters may be written to:

The Rose Theater  
2001 Farnam Street  
Omaha, NE 68102

### Emails may be sent to:

Michael Wilhelm at  
michaelw@rosetheater.org

Sponsored by:



## Books

*The Three Pigs* by David Weisner  
*Goldilocks and the Three Bears* by Valeri Gorbechev  
*The Boy Who Cried Wolf* by B.G. Hennessy and Boris Kulikov  
*Little Red Riding Hood* by Candice Ransom  
*The True Story of the Three Little Pigs* by Jon Scieszka and Lane Smith  
*Mind Your Manners, B.B. Wolf* by Judy Sierra  
*Goldilocks Returns* by Lisa Campbell Ernst  
*O, Hungry Wolf! A Nursery Rap* by Betsy Lewin  
*The Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig* by Eugene Trivizas  
*Beware of the Storybook Wolves* by Lauren Child  
*Bad Boys* by Margie Palatini  
*Yours Truly, Goldilocks* by Alma Flor Ada  
*The Wolf's Chicken Stew* by Keiko Kasza  
*Jim and the Beanstalk* by Raymond Briggs  
*Giants Have Feelings, Too* by Alvin Granowsky  
*Help Yourself, Little Red Hen* by Alvin Granowsky

## Web Sites

Nebraska StoryArts: [http://www.nebraskastoryarts.org/nebraska\\_festival.html](http://www.nebraskastoryarts.org/nebraska_festival.html)

National Storytelling Network: <http://www.storynet.org/>

Omaha Organization for the Purpose of Storytelling:  
<http://www.nebraskastoryarts.org/oops.html>

International Wolf Center: <http://www.wolf.org/wolves/index.asp>

Wolf Fact Sheet: [http://www.defenders.org/programs\\_and\\_policy/wildlife\\_conservation/imperiled\\_species/wolves/](http://www.defenders.org/programs_and_policy/wildlife_conservation/imperiled_species/wolves/)

More information on wolves:  
<http://animals.nationalgeographic.com/animals/mammals/wolf.html>

# Bring The Rose to Your Classroom

The Rose Theater offers a variety of classroom workshops, residencies, and touring productions! For your next engagement with The Rose, please consider one of the following:

- *Nebraskaland! The New Nebraska History Theme Park* - An educational play about famous Nebraskans
- *The Wonderful World of Dr. Seuss* - An imagination-inspiring show that captures the spirit of Seuss's magical tales
- *The Bully Show* - An interactive play that challenges students to reconsider their assumptions about bullies

Three to five-day curriculum based workshops are available! Topics include *Bringing Literature to Life*, *Acting & Characters*, *The American Revolution*, *The Civil War*, and more!

**For more information, contact James Larson at 502-4618 or [jamesl@rosetheater.org](mailto:jamesl@rosetheater.org).**