



Performing Arts
FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

CLASS STUDY GUIDE

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The Adventures of Nate the Great

By Pamela Sterling

Based on the Nate the Great book series by Marjorie Weinman Sharmat



Pre-Show Activities

3-D Frozen Collage

OUT-OF-CHAIR ACTIVITY • 10-15 MINUTES

Objective: Students will explore one of the major emotions in "Nate the Great."

Discussion: Summarize the plot of the show: "Nate the Great" is about a boy who lives in a small neighborhood in a big city; he solves mysteries with his dog, Sludge, and his assistant, Kate. What is something that you would be very upset if you lost it? Take a few ideas.

Modeling: Ask one student to stand in front of the class and create a pose showing the class that he/she is a detective searching for the lost objects.

Activity: One by one ask each student to come up and freeze in a pose as though they are all detectives on the case, working together to solve the mystery. (Students might freeze with hands cupped around their mouth as though calling a dog's name, or be on all fours on the ground looking for clues.)

When every student is up, come by and tap each one on the shoulder. The tap is their cue to "come to life" and go back to their seat as though searching for their lost object.

Theater Etiquette

IN-CHAIR ACTIVITY • 5-10 MINUTES

Objective: Students will actively explore proper theater etiquette.

Discussion: How should you act when you see a play? Is it the same way you should act when watching a movie or playing at recess? Is it okay to laugh during a play if you think it is funny?

Brainstorm: As a class, create a list of good and bad theater behaviors.

Modeling: Invite one student to sit in a chair at front of the class and act out one of the poor behavior scenarios for about ten seconds. Ask the class to discuss what was inappropriate about the behavior. Next, ask the student to change his/her actions to be proper theater behavior for about ten seconds.

Activity: Select various good and bad theater behaviors from the list and ask students to act them out individually from their seats. After each scenario is acted out, initiate discussion about the behavior. When is it appropriate to behave like this? How would you react if other audience members around you did this? Conclude with the entire class acting as a good theater audience.

CAST & CREDITS

The Adventures of Nate the Great

By Pamela Sterling

Based on the "Nate the Great" book series by Marjorie Weinman Sharmat

Artistic Team

Director James Larson
Scenic Designer Mark Parrott
Lighting Designer..... Carson Gross
Costume Designer..... Sherrri Geerdes
Properties Master..... Ronald L. Wells, Jr.
Stage Manager..... Dani Taylor

Cast

Nate, *a great detective*..... Andy Saladino
Kate, *Nate's assistant* Sara Kaus
Sludge, *Nate's dog*..... Aaron Mann
Annie..... Amanda Waldron
Harry Andrew McGreevy
Rosamond..... Lauren Krupski
Claudia Kate Morgan
Oliver..... Tim Siragusa
Finley..... Brian Guehring
Pip David Ebke
Esmeralda Amanda Kibler
Fang, *Annie's big dog* Joshua J. Mullady

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A Behind-the-Scenes Spotlight on Stage Managing

An interview with Rose Theater Resident Stage Manager Dani Taylor

Dani joined The Rose this season as the Resident Stage Manager. She recently came off the road from touring for the last five years, where she worked on the National Tours of "Bye Bye Birdie," "Altar Boyz," "Cabaret," and "Sesame Street Live! Elmo's Healthy Heroes!" Dani is originally from the Chicago suburbs and is a graduate from Purdue University and very excited to be back in the Midwest working at The Rose.

Q: What does a stage manager do?

A: A stage manager helps organize and communicate during rehearsals and performances. During rehearsals they help keep track of actors blocking, lines, props, and other technical aspects that will be needed for the performance. During performances they make sure that everything happens in the right order. They use a headset to communicate to their crew to prompt lights, sound, set changes, as well as make sure the performance is the exact same every time.

Q: What training does stage manager need?

A: Depending on what type and level of stage management you would like to pursue, there are a few training options. You can look into being an Assistant Stage Manager for a community theater or school performance to learn about the process. If you find you enjoy it and are interested in making stage management your career, you can find a theater program at a College or University that has a focus in Stage Management.

Q: What made you want to become a stage manager?

A: I became involved in a community theater in my hometown out in the Chicago suburbs when I was 12. I was able to take classes and learn about the different aspects of theater. While in high school, I got involved in the technical side and had a chance to stage manage. I then decided that stage managing was the part I really enjoyed and pursued it in college.

Q: What is your favorite part of stage managing?

A: I enjoy being able to watch the whole process from early designs and concepts, rehearsals, all the way to the final product. It's great to be a part of a collaborating team and see the final production. I also enjoy the possibility of the unknown. Many unplanned events can take place during a live performance and it keeps you on your toes!

Q: What is the most difficult part of stage management?

A: Sometimes in rehearsals we can lose focus and get off track. While it's mostly fun, I usually am the one who has call us back to order and keep us moving forward.

Q: What is your favorite part of Nate the Great?

A: I enjoy when Nate and Fang meet for the first time!

Explore the Job of a Stage Manager

Tape It Out!

OUT-OF-CHAIR ACTIVITY • 20-25 MINUTES

Objective: Students will be to collaborate to create a floor plan for a location from "Nate the Great."

Discussion: A stage manager has many jobs. One important job is that he/she must tape out the floor of the rehearsal room before the actors come to rehearsals. This means he/she lays tape down on the floor to indicate walls and platforms that will be used on stage so the actors will know the layout

Activity: In small groups, students will decide which location from the "Nate the Great" show they will create. Each group will be designated a section of the classroom. Using masking tape or items from the classroom, each group will transform their area of the room into a rehearsal hall for that scene.

Sidecoaching: Remind students about what is needed in that scene. Encourage them to listen to each other's ideas and incorporate all ideas into the final product.

Post-Show Activities

Smartest Pet Contest

IN-CHAIR ACTIVITY • 30-40 MINUTES

Objective: Students will be able to use visual and performing arts together to create their own Smartest Pet Contest.

Discussion: What pets did the characters in “Nate the Great” have? What special talents did their smart pets showcase? What other pets can you have? Encourage students to think of pets people might not commonly have (like Oliver’s eel). What can a pet do to show that it is smart?

Activity: Ask every student to choose one smart pet to create. Make your own sock puppet pet just like the ones in the show! Use an old sock and cut out felt, fun foam and fabric to add ears, paws, teeth, a tongue and more. You can glue on google eyes to finish your puppet. Encourage students to name their pet and to make additions that will show off its intelligence.

Extension: As a class, hold your own Smartest Pet Contest. Each student will get a chance to perform with the puppet he or she created. The class can also work together to create a “Smartest Pet” prize.

Make a Mystery to Solve

OUT-OF-CHAIR ACTIVITY • 20-30 MINUTES

Objective: Students will be able to use clues and reasoning to find objects.

Discussion: How does a detective solve a mystery? What tools do detectives need to do their jobs? How do they use these tools?

Preparation: Hide an object that is meaningful to the class somewhere in the school. Create clues and obstacles that will lead the students to the hiding place.

Activity: Tell the class that the object has gone missing. Ask students to look around the classroom to find clues. Working together as a class, go on a scavenger hunt around the school that will eventually lead to the final hiding place of the object. This can be especially fun if the faculty, staff, and even other students know about the hunt. They can help give clues to your students.

Create a Living Storybook

OUT-OF-CHAIR ACTIVITY • 10 MINUTES

Objective: To use imagination and bodies as acting tools, and also to review the play.

Discussion: The actors used their bodies to create different scenes during the play. They also used their imaginations to tell us a story. How can we use our bodies and imaginations to retell the story of “Nate the Great”? Remember, we’re going to have to work together to tell this story.

Activity: Review the story of “Nate the Great” with the students. Discuss how they can break up the story into five parts. What happens in the beginning? What next? How about the middle? After that? And how does the story end? Divide the class up into two groups. Tell them they are going to retell the story of “Nate the Great” with five frozen pictures, like a storybook. They must decide which characters or set pieces they are in each picture. Remember, the students don’t have to be the same characters in each picture. How can they tell the story without moving or speaking? Then have the groups show their “storybooks” to each other. Have the group who plays the audience guess what is happening in each picture.

Sidecoaching: Which characters should be in this picture? Which set pieces should we show? How can you show with your body which character you’re playing? What positions can we freeze in to show what is happening?

Mmmm...Pancakes

IN AND OUT-OF-CHAIR ACTIVITY • 25-30 MINUTES

Objective: Students will use their art and acting skills to create and experience tasting their own delicious, one-of-a-kind pancakes!

Discussion: During the course of the play Nate constantly talked about and ate pancakes. Ask students to think about what type of pancake they would like to create if they could use any type of ingredient or topping they wanted for it! First, think about your favorite kinds of dessert and breakfast ingredients and/or toppings. Then, together make a list of these ideas. Next, ask students to turn to a neighbor to discuss the ideas on the list, adding any other toppings or ingredients to the list that they want. Finally, ask each student to create his/her own list and finalize what ingredients and toppings they would like to have in their pancake creation.

Activity: Tell them to visualize what their pancake would look like. Then, have students use crayons and markers to draw their own unique pancake creation! Encourage students to think outside the box and be as creative and detailed as possible.

Extension: Clear an area large enough in the room so that students can sit in a circle. One at a time, each student will get a turn to “take a bite” of his/her pancake creation. Students will be using their imaginations and acting skills when doing this. The teacher should coach the students to take in the scrumptious smells of their pancake, and pretend as if they are actually biting into and tasting their delicious pancake creation. Then, after the student has done so, he/she will describe the ingredients and toppings that are a part of their pancake creation to the rest of the class. The other students will then take in the smells of the pancake, and pretend to “take a bite” of their fellow students’ pancake creation. Allow students to share how the pancake smelled and tasted. Each student in the circle will get a chance to share their pancake!

Objects I Would Hate to Lose

OUT-OF-CHAIR ACTIVITY • 10 MINUTES

Objective: Students will think of an important object that means a lot to them. Then, they will use their acting skills to pantomime using that object and have other students guess what it is.

Vocabulary: *Pantomime* – When someone uses gestures or expressions without speech to convey a message.

Discussion: As a class, recollect how during the course of the play, many characters lost objects that were important to them, which is why they had to ask Nate to find them. Ask students: How would you feel if you lost something really important or valuable to you? What might you do to find it? Ask students to think about an important object that means a lot to them. It can be a keepsake, a family heirloom, or perhaps a favorite toy, article of clothing, or favorite video game or movie.

Activity: Clear an area large enough in the room so that students can sit in a circle. One at a time, each student will get a turn to pantomime using the object they have thought of. Students use their body language and gestures as well as their imaginations to pretend as if they are actually using this object. Once student is done pantomiming their object, let other students in the circle guess what the object was. Each student in the circle will get a chance to share his or her keepsake object.

Bring The Rose to Your Classroom

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

- **The Big (Not-So) Bad Wolf**
Students will be transfixed by the jolly-not-so-scary Big Bad Wolf portrayed by a professional Rose teaching artist. This show features stories about wolves that have a “wolfish” edge to them and provides a fun way to explore themes such as honesty, trust, and good behavior.
- **The Wonderful World of Dr. Seuss**
The world of Dr. Seuss comes to life when The Cat in the Hat arrives to share the places he’s been. The show features beloved songs and stories such as *Green Eggs and Ham*, *The Sneetches*, *The Grinch*, and of course, *The Cat in the Hat*.
- **The Bully Show**
The Bully Show was selected for The Kennedy Center’s prestigious New Visions/New Voices program. The play takes place at the taping of a new game show, YOU WANNA BE A BULLY!, with the kids acting as the studio audience and contestants. It challenges students to reconsider their assumptions about bullies, victims, and spectators.

Three- to five-day curriculum based workshops are also available! Topics include Bringing Literature to Life, Acting & Characters, Tall Tales, and more! For more information, please contact James Larson at (402) 502-4618 or jamesl@rosetheater.org.

Please feel free to contact us!

Letters may be written to:
Andy Saladino
(or cast of *The Adventures of Nate the Great*)
2001 Farnam Street
Omaha, NE 68102

Emails may be sent to:
Andy Saladino at
andys@rosetheater.org
or (402) 502-4629

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Bibliography

If you enjoyed the play, you might also enjoy these great resources:

Books for Kids

Nate the Great series by Marjorie Weinmann Sharmat
Join everyone’s favorite neighborhood detective as he solves even more cases.

Olivia Sharp series by Marjorie Weinmann Sharmat
Olivia is Nate’s cousin...and another detective! Her adventures are sure to please fans of fun mysteries.

Cam Jansen series by David A. Adler
This is another series about a kid detective. These books are action-packed adventures, great for mystery-loving readers.

My Father’s Dragon by Ruth Stiles Gannett
This is an adventure story about a boy who runs away to rescue a baby dragon. He finds himself on Wild Island and surrounded by many different animals on his quest to find the baby dragon.

Henry and Mudge series by Cynthia Rylant
A fun series about Henry and his 180-pound dog, Mudge. Their fun adventures are great for independent readers.

Web Sites for Kids

<http://kids.mysterynet.com/>
This website is full of fun stories, games, and activities about mysteries. Solve some mysteries or make up your own! This is also a great place to find more books about detectives.

<http://www.fbi.gov/fun-games/kids/kids-investigate>
Find out how real detectives with the FBI solve mysteries. This website has great games that teach about forensic science and how to solve a case like a real pro.

Web Sites for Teachers

<http://www.MysteryNet.com/learn/>
This website offers lesson plans and further research for using mysteries in your classroom.

<http://www.carolhurst.com/subjects/mysteries.html>
A wonderful children’s literature website with a wide variety of mystery books, both fiction and nonfiction. Included are also discussion points to use with your class.