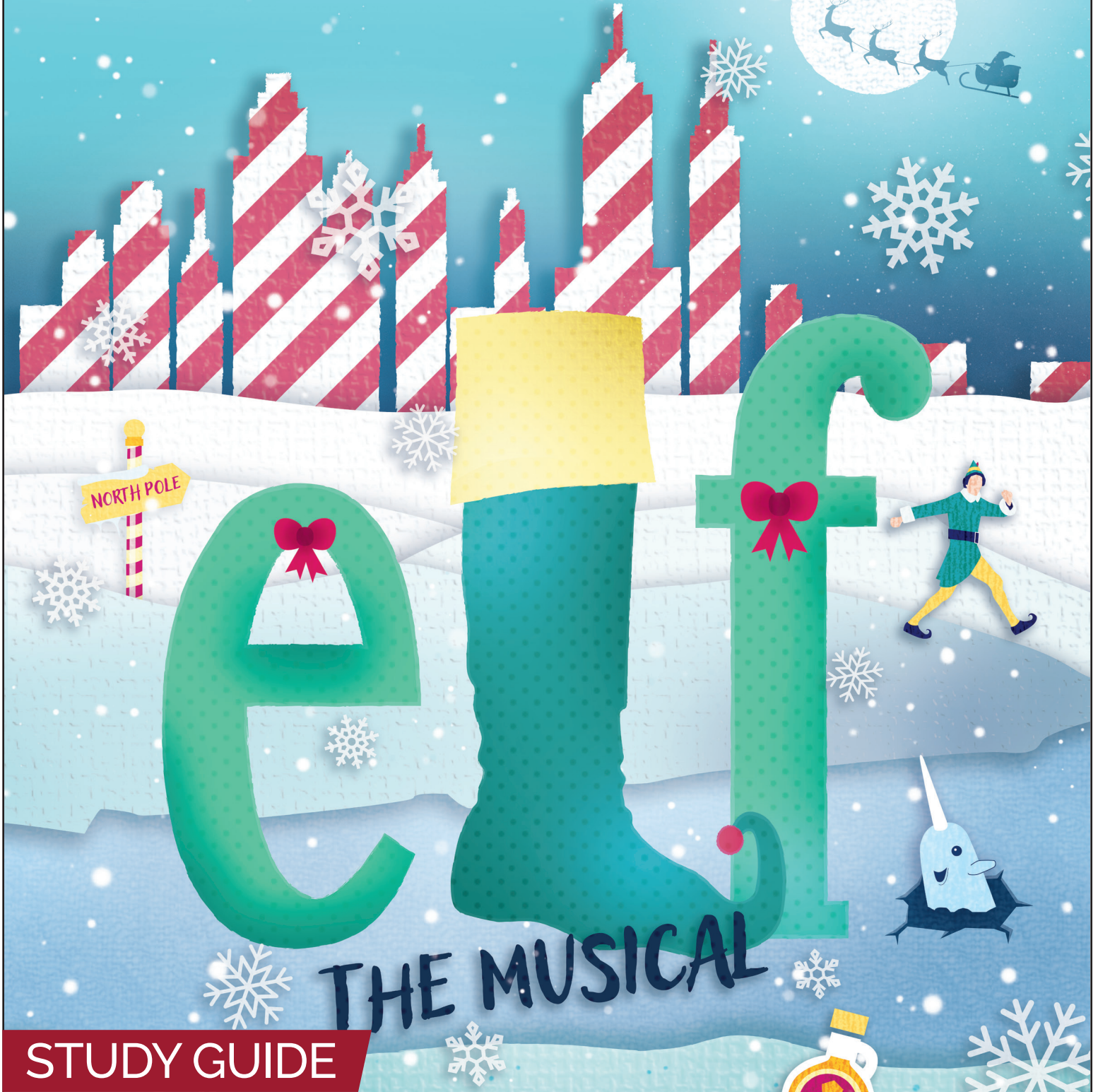


Presented by

Nutrien

BOOK BY THOMAS MEEHAN & BOB MARTIN
MUSIC BY MATHEW SKLAR AND LYRICS BY CHAD BEGUELIN
BASED ON THE NEW LINE CINEMA FILM WRITTEN BY DAVID BERENBAUM



STUDY GUIDE

Remai Arts Centre, 100 Spadina Crescent East, Saskatoon SK | persephonetheatre.org



elf

THE MUSICAL

Book by

Thomas Meehan and Bob Martin

Music by

Mathew Sklar

Lyrics by

Chad Beguelin

Choreography by

Shelley Stewart Hunt

Study Guide prepared by

Carla Mysko, Persephone Theatre



DIRECTOR'S NOTE

It has been such a joy to guide this delightful musical. As a Vancouver based artist I remember when a new Christmas movie was being filmed in 2003 in town and a few of my lucky friends were cast in the film – at the time somewhat embarrassedly admitting to me that they were playing elves in Santa's Workshop - little did any of us know that they would be perennially watched and celebrated in the quirky, clever, joy filled smash hit movie Elf directed by Jon Favreau who most recently directed the movie The Lion King.

ELF: the Musical was created in 2010, ran on Broadway in the Christmas seasons of 2010-2013, and toured extensively. The composer Mathew Sklar (The Wedding Singer) collaborated with lyricist Chad Beguelin (Disney's Aladdin) and captured the quiriness and heart of the movie and have brought us a toe-tapping, head-bobbing, chair-dancing, sparklejollytwinklejingley, Christmas-spirited musical.

Buddy, the purest, sweetest, innocent human elf reminds us all about the true spirit of Christmas and turns even the hardest Scrooge-like humbugs into believers. Sit back and enjoy – and I know that Buddy would be thrilled for you to feel warm and have your tongues swell up while we spread Christmas cheer by singing loud for all to hear!

~ Sarah Rodgers, Director



Cast and Creative Team

Cast

Felix LeBlanc	Buddy
Alyssa Billingsley	Jovie
Neil Barclay	Santa & Greenway
Kent Allen	Walter Hobbs
Janet Gigliotti	Emily & Ensemble
Taylor Hanley	Michelle
Casey McMaster	Michelle
Lindsay Warnock	Deb
Leon Willey	Manager & Elf
Benjamin Thomas	Chadwick & Ensemble
Jacqueline Block	Matthews, Shawanda, & Ensemble
Mark Oddan	Charlie & Ensemble
Aerhyn Lau	Sam & Ensemble
Rachelle Block	Macy's Girl & Ensemble

Orchestra

Deborah Buck	Leader
David Bindle	Percussion
Paul Suchan	Keyboard
Gerard Weber	Reeds
Brian Unverricht	Trombone

Children's Chorus

Arri Almeida	Luke Hegedus
Kai Batycki	Dale McMaster
Jenna de Villiers	Antony Salisbury
Eden Friggstad	Chloe Stephenson
Eden Hegedus	Violet Stone

Creative Team

Sarah Rodgers	Director
Deborah Buck	Musical Director
Shelley Stewart Hunt	Choreographer
Cameron Porteous	Set Designer
Bonnie Deakin	Costume Designer
Wendy Lundgren	Lighting Designer
Clinton Ackerman	Sound Designer and Apprentice Musical Director
Ricardo Alvarado	Child Supervisor
Daniel Ford Beavis	Fight Choreography
Laura Kennedy	Stage Manager
Jennifer Raithie-Wright	Extension Stage Manager
Liz King	Assistant Stage Manager
Mackenzie Dawson	Apprentice Stage Manager



About The Musical

Based on the beloved holiday film, this hilarious fish-out-of-water comedy follows Buddy the Elf in his quest to find his true identity. This story is about how the children in the family save the parent. It is a contemporary story that reminds us to find balance in our lives. Walter has become consumed by his work. It is Walter's children who save him and get him off Santa's naughty list. The fact that one of the children is a 6'4" elf named Buddy definitely contributes to the playful spirit of the story! Buddy, a young orphan, mistakenly crawls into Santa's bag of gifts and is transported to the North Pole. The would-be elf is raised, unaware that he is actually a human, until his enormous size and poor toymaking abilities cause him to face the truth. With Santa's permission, Buddy embarks on a journey to New York City to find his birth father and discover his true identity. Faced with the harsh reality that his father is on the naughty list and that his half-brother doesn't even believe in Santa, Buddy is determined to win over his new family and help New York remember the true meaning of Christmas.

Characters

Buddy	Born human, raised at the North Pole as a Christmas Elf, Buddy is eager to find his place in the world. He is a child at heart and has a childlike curiosity that is endearing but gets him into trouble.
Jovie	Buddy's girlfriend. She works at Macy's and has a bit of a cynical outlook on life and love because of the men she has dated. She is caught off guard by Buddy's genuinely big heart.
Walter	Buddy's workaholic father. He is a children's book publisher, but lacks the childlike spirit that Buddy has. He is selfish, tense, and generally angry at life.
Emily	Walter's wife. Though she is sweet and willing to take him in, she thinks Buddy is crazy at first. She wishes Walter would spend more time with their family.
Michael	Buddy's stepbrother who is excited to have a new friend and brother. Unlike his parents, he doesn't take much convincing to have Christmas spirit. He wishes his father would spend more time with him.
Deb	Walter's secretary. Takes an instant liking to Buddy simply for the novelty of it. Though she aims to please and is a bit of a suck-up, she feels under appreciated.
Manager	A manager at Macy's. A good, friendly person just trying to do the job and get by.
Mr. Greenway	Walter's boss. He is what Walter will become if he continues down the path he is on. A tyrannical, workaholic who cares nothing about the people around him or who work for him.
Santa	Just another workingman. Loves his job and Christmas, but also likes to relax and watch the game when a rare opportunity arises. A natural storyteller.
Chadwick	One of Walter's right-hand men. He is desperate to keep his job, and is the more simple-minded of the two.
Matthews	One of Walter's right-hand men. He is desperate to keep his job and is the schemer of the two.
Ensemble	They play elves, New Yorkers, office workers, etc.

...MORE



(Photo Credit: Olivier Sultan CAA)

Chad Beguelin (Lyrics) was born in 1969 and is an American playwright who wrote the lyrics and book for the Broadway musical *The Wedding Singer*. He was nominated for two Tony® Awards as well as a Drama Desk Award for Outstanding Lyrics for his work on *The Wedding Singer*. He wrote the lyrics for the Broadway musical *Elf*, as well as the book and lyrics for *The Rhythm Club* and *Wicked City*. He wrote the books for Disney's *Aladdin* and *On the Record*. Beguelin will make his off-Broadway playwriting debut with *Harbor*. As a screenwriter, Beguelin sold a script to Grammet Productions and also worked as a staff writer for Disney's live action film department in California.



(Photo Credit: Musical Theatre International)

Matthew Sklar (Music) was born in Westfield, New Jersey in 1973, is a Broadway composer. He was nominated for the 2006 Tony Award for Best Original Score for his Broadway debut as the composer for the musical *The Wedding Singer*. He also composed the music for the Broadway musical hit *Elf* which broke box office records five of the nine weeks of its limited engagement at the Al Hirschfeld Theatre in 2010-2011. Matthew co-produced the original Broadway cast albums for both shows. He has been a pianist, conductor, and dance music arranger for many productions including *Shrek*, *42nd Street*, *Miss Saigon*, *Les Misérables*, *Nine* and *Caroline*, or *Change* and written his own original musicals, which include *The Rhythm Club*, *Judas and Me*, and *Wicked City*. He has been working on Broadway since the age of eighteen.

Vocabulary Enrichment

Words, names and phrases in **this color** are key terms and phrases to understanding the world and context of Elf, in greater detail. Using further research, find the meaning of each, and discuss with the class.

- Lights come up on the **North Pole** as Santa begins to read us a story about Buddy the Elf.
- Unsure where to take a guy dressed as an elf, the security guards take Buddy to **Macy's**.
- Later that night, Buddy takes Jovie skating at **Rockefeller Center**. Jovie admits that she does have a little **Christmas spirit**. Thrilled, Buddy **convinces** her that all she needs to do is spread it around by singing "A Christmas Song." As the song ends, Jovie and Buddy share their first kiss under the **Rockefeller Christmas Tree**.
- It's Christmas Eve and Buddy ends up in a **Chinese restaurant** with a bunch of out-of-work Santas. Buddy is surprised to learn how little **respect** Santa seems to get these days.
- Mr. Greenway arrives to hear the book idea. Just as it becomes clear that Walter has nothing to **pitch** Greenway, Buddy appears and **saves the day**. ("The Story of Buddy the Elf")
- In Central Park, Santa tries to get his sleigh to fly.
- He finds a crowd but can't **rally** them into believing.



Word Jumble

TLIS SHIW	YPAHP
WNOS	ELIEVEB
GIALVEL	SVEEL
HHEECCTAK (Hint: it is 3 words)	
CCCCOATR (Hint: it is 2 words)	
YSYAM	RREEIND
POOKWRSH	AANTS
TRNOHPLEO	(Hint: it is 2 words)

LESSON 1: Designing the show

Exploring the designer's impulses for *ELF The Musical*.

Objective:

Students will begin to develop knowledge of how the scenery in *ELF The Musical* impacts the visual and overall storytelling.

Lesson Overview

- Students will be introduced to one of the many ways in which storytelling, story framing, and storybooks are all fully integrated into *ELF The Musical*.
- Students will examine pop-up books and snow globes.
- Students will consider how these objects might be incorporated into the scenic design for *ELF The Musical*.
- Students will develop their own ideas for how to incorporate these elements into a design concept for one of the locations presented in the show.
- Students will present their design concepts to the class

Materials Needed: Pop-up books, snow globes, paper and pens, pencils, crayons, colored pencils, or markers. Possibly scissors and tape or glue sticks. Option to allow students to include swatches of fabric, magazine photos, greeting cards, as well as computers, tablets, or other tech that will assist in executing the assignment.

Instruction:

Activity I – Warm-up (10-15 minutes)

1. Divide class into pairs or small groups of students.
2. Distribute one pop-up book per group. **Note:** If there are not enough pop-up books and/or snow globes to go around, consider providing half the class with pop-up books to start and the other half with snow globes then swap. It is *not* necessary that the content be holiday specific.
3. Ask students to explore the books/snow globes and consider their personal response to them. Responses may be documented in writing or simply shared with teammates:
 - What do you notice about the books/snow globe?
 - How does the pop-up book/snow globe share the story visually, in a way that a traditional book, even an illustrated one, cannot?
 - How do these differences impact your experience and understanding of the story?
 - Are the scenes in the pop-up book depicted in a realistic or more imaginary way?
 - Ask students to examine how the books are actually put together and engineered. How do the parts and pieces open up and reveal themselves?
4. Facilitate a brief large-group sharing of observations and personal connections to the pop-up books.
5. Swap books for snow globes and repeat steps 1-4.
6. After students have looked at both pop-up books and snow globes ask:
 - What do you imagine it would be like to live in the world of a pop-up book or inside a snow globe?
 - Would it feel normal, magical, scary or something else?
 - How would this world impact your lifestyle, mood, clothes and behaviors?



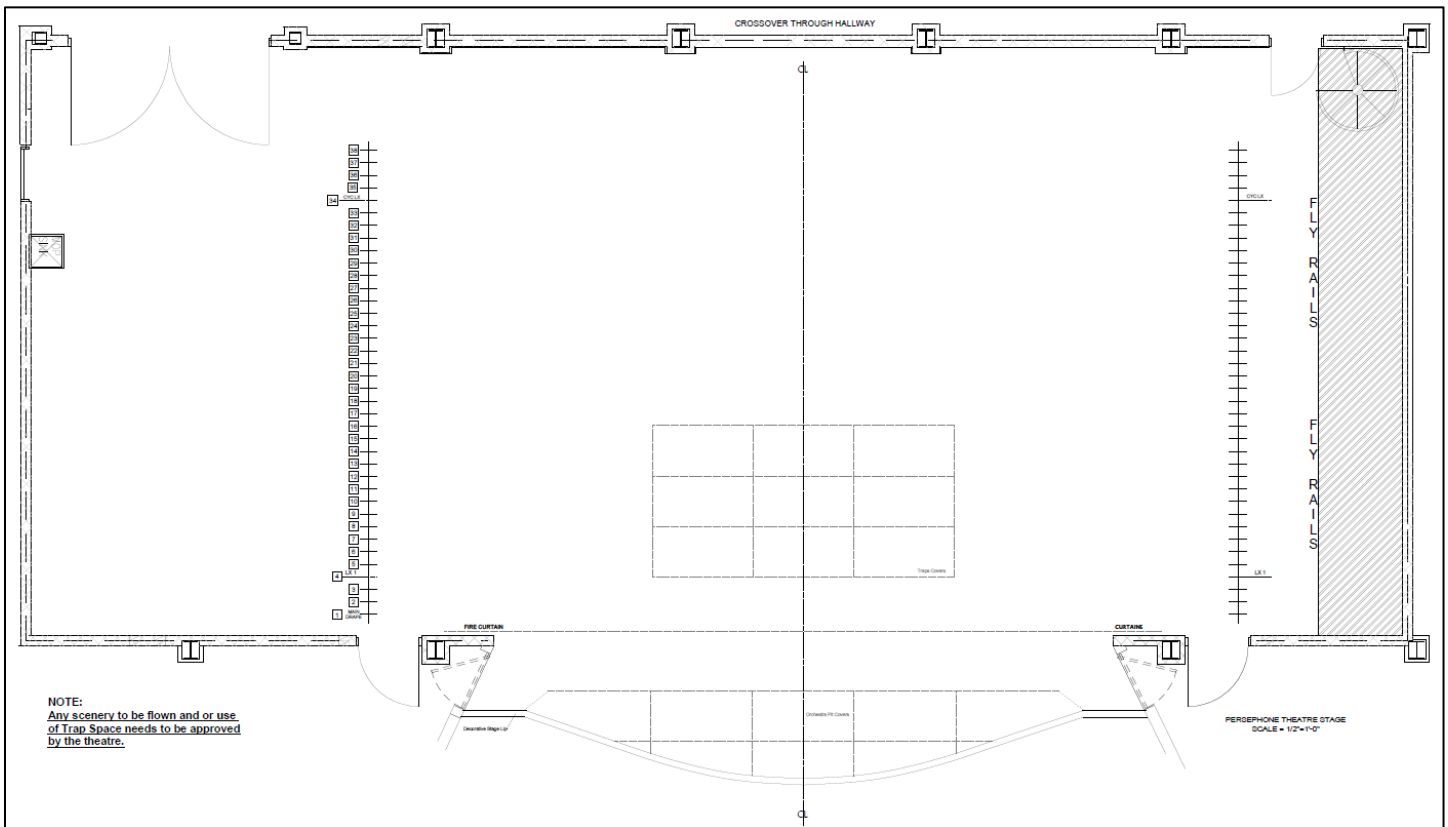
Activity II – Main Activity (15-20 minutes)

1. Activate and assess students' prior knowledge of *ELF The Musical* (the movie and/or the musical), theatre and scenic design with a brief discussion. Possible questions:
 - Who can describe and define scenery?
 - How does the scenery contribute to the storytelling in a play or musical?
 - What does the scenery help us to understand?
 - How is a story shared differently on-stage than in a book?
 - What time of year does *ELF The Musical* take place?
 - Where does *ELF The Musical* take place?
 - What do you know about Buddy the Elf?
2. Congratulate the students on their new careers as set designers and let them know that their design team has been asked to pitch an idea for the scenic design of *ELF The Musical* to the show's director.
3. Explain that each group will be assigned one location from the musical for which they will develop a design concept that creates the look and feeling of a living pop-up book and/or snow globe on the provided stage diagram.
4. Randomly distribute location assignments. If assignments are made secretly on separate slips of paper it will provide an element of surprise when students present their ideas.
5. Locations include: North Pole, Santa's Toy Factory, Macy's "Santaland", the skating rink at Rockefeller Center, Central Park/Tavern on the Green, The Empire State Building, Walter Hobbs' Office, The Hobbs' Apartment.
6. Tell students that they will want to consider what the audience will need to see in order to understand their pop-up book/snow globe concept.
7. How will this set design create a special experience or magical feeling like you had with the pop-up books and snow globes?
8. How will this set design change the way the audience experiences the story?

9. Allow students to choose the form their design presentations will take. This may include descriptive writing, drawings or compiling images and color swatches from the internet, cards, fabrics or magazines.
10. Remind students to plan how they will share their ideas with the class. What will they say? Who will do what?
11. Remind students that they are presenting a work in progress and are not expected to be perfect or finished in any way. Instead it is a sharing of their collaboration, creative thinking and ideas.

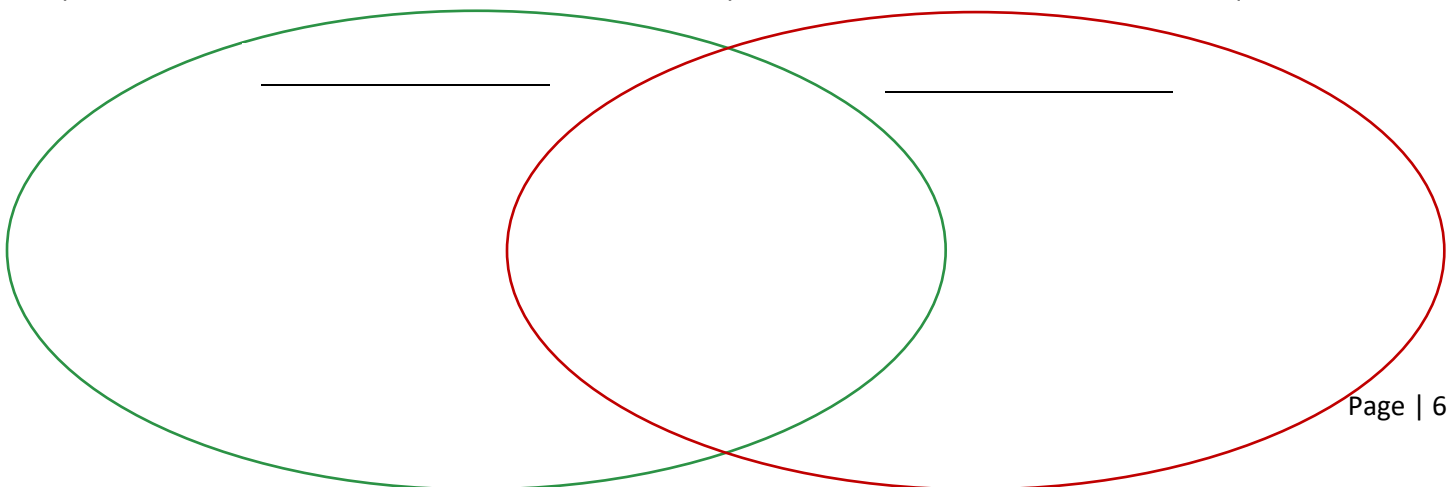
Activity III – Sharing and Reflection (10-15 minutes)

1. Each group will present their design concept to the class. Impose time limits as needed.
2. This sharing should include reflection questions about their process and choice making. Some suggested reflection questions include:
 - What were some of the challenges you faced while doing this assignment?
 - How did you work through these challenges?
 - What did you notice in the choices of the other groups?
 - If you could revise your design plan, what would you change?



Venn Diagram

Compare and Contrast two characters from Elf. What do they have in common? What makes them unique?

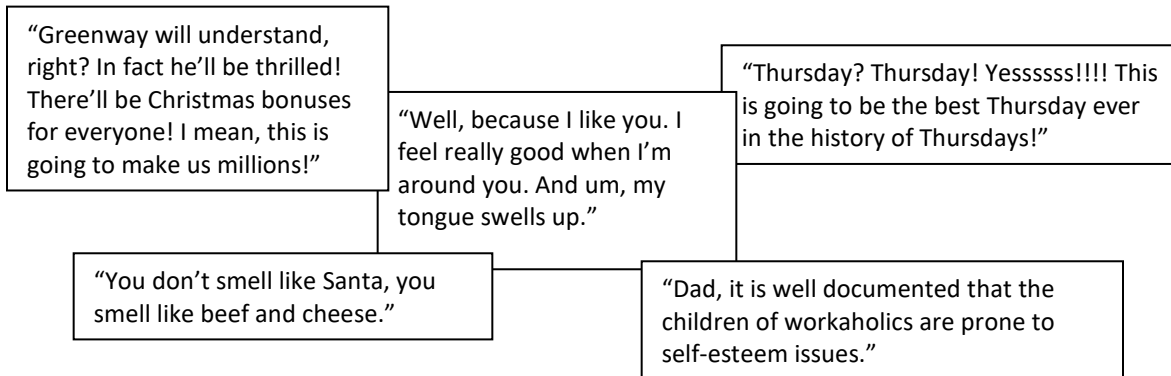


Listening for Lines

Playwrights are people who write plays. They write lines of dialogue for the actors to speak. The dialogue gives us information about the story, the characters, and the way the characters feel about one another and their situation. The way the actors deliver (speak) their lines also tell you a lot about the character something that makes the character convincing or believable.

Actors experiment with different ways to deliver their lines before they decide which best works to both the story and shed light on the character. Try delivering these character’s lines in different ways (happily, sadly, proudly, angrily, etc.)

Who said it?



Listen for these lines and observe how they are delivered and what it tells you about the emotion expressed. Say the lines out loud. If you say them in a different way, with a different emotion, does it change the meaning? Was any of them funnier than the others?

What's on your list?

Hand out small pieces of scrap paper and ask students to make a list of 3 things they would like to receive as gifts. Collect the papers and mix them up in a bowl. Have each student select one of the papers and see if they can figure out whose wish they are reading and explain why they think they know whose it is.



Elf the Musical – Word Search

D P W M Y Y L H F S E W P L J
W I J L D D I B A R O I U R J
S P T D V B K N A O C F V I D
G A U F Q A T V K C W I Y O F
N B M D H A N U K K A H R T J
I E K T C Y A W N E E R G R M
G G W L S V P J O F L T S K J
N Q A Y M I G W E E O Y L V P
I U N X E K R C A L P L E M L
S Y Z T H A I H V L H I I U O
Y V A E M T R N C E T M G E Z
F X A A S Z X T T R R E H L M
Q W D L E A H C I M O D R F L
N A O H O L I D A Y N J E N E
N S T I R I P S M A C Y S B N

BUDDY
CHRISTMAS
DEB
ELF
EMILY
HANUKKAH
HOLIDAY
JOVIE
KWANZAA
MACYS
MICHAEL
MRGREENWAY
NEWYEAR
NORTHPOLE
RAMADAN
ROCKEFELLER
SANTACLAUS
SINGING
SLEIGH
SOLSTICE
SPIRIT
WALTER

LESSON 2: Holiday Research

Objective:

To learn about other holiday traditions held by others outside of your family.

- Research a winter holiday tradition from outside your family that is not specifically associated with Christmas. What are the specific rituals and history behind this practice (be thorough in your investigation)? Are there any shared values in this celebration with the reasons you observe your holiday festivities? If you were to adopt any aspect of this celebration into your own life, what would it be and why?
- Research the origins of the folklore associated with Santa, elves, the North Pole, etc. Where did these symbols and characters come from and why? How have they changed over time?
- Interview another person in your class about the specific holiday traditions that may be unique to their family. Then have that person interview you about your own holiday traditions. Share your findings with the class and discuss the similarities and differences. Is there anything you take for granted as something everyone does for the holidays that you are surprised to find is distinctive your family's traditions?

Suggestions include:

Sinterklass Eve, Los Posados, Hanukkah, Omisoka, Ramadan, Chinese New Year, Boxing Day, Winter Solstice, Yule, or Kwanzaa



"The best way to spread Christmas Cheer is singing loud for all to hear."

Buddy the Elf



LESSON 3: Singing Loud for All to Hear

Entry Point:

What does it take to write a song that is clever and funny like the songs in Elf the Musical

Objective:

Students will be introduced to writing lyrics that tell a story.

Lesson Overview

- Students will be introduced to the ways in which storytelling through song is integral to Elf the Musical.
- Students will experience the physical comedy present in Elf the Musical.
- Students will create their own holiday themed song lyrics.
- Students will share their holiday songs with the class.

Materials Needed: Lyrics to your students' favorite holiday standards such as Jingle Bells, Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer, Frosty the Snowman. Paper and pencil or pen. Space to move in.

Instruction:

Activity I – Warm-up (5-10 minutes)

1. Clear enough space for students to stand in a circle.
2. Ask them to imagine that they were raised at the North Pole with Santa Claus and the elves.
 - How do they think their lives might be different than they are now?
 - Do you think elves might move differently than people?
 - Ask students to move around the room the way they imagine elves might.
 - After some practice, students return to their place in the circle.
 - Ask students to imagine that they are leaving the North Pole and going to a big American city for the very first time.
 - What would you notice about your city if seeing it for the first time? What places and everyday activities would seem strange and might be scary or funny the very first time you experience them? For example: Maybe taking a first ever subway ride? Or eating a food they don't have at the North Pole?
 - Choose an idea that everyone agrees is funny and exciting and invite students to demonstrate that first time experience using their bodies only – no voices
 - After some practice time, you may want to have half the class share their work while the other half observes, then swap and repeat.
 - Have students share their observations about the choices people made. What made them clear to the viewer or not?
 - Repeat with another “first time” scenario, asking students to incorporate what they learned in round one.
 - Return to the circle to transition.

Activity II – First Steps (10-15 minutes)

1. Activate and assess students' prior knowledge of songs and experience with singing while preparing them for the next steps. These questions are just a starting point:
 - How many of you like to sing?
 - Do you ever make up your own songs?
 - When and where are you most likely to sing? Shower? In a chorus or choir? Christmas caroling?
 - Do you have a favorite holiday song? Why is it your favorite? How does it make you feel?
 - What's the funniest song you know?
 - What songs do you know that tell a story?
2. Has anyone here ever changed the lyrics to a song for fun?
 - If students are willing, invite one or two sing their altered lyrics.
 - Ask students if they would like to try to change the lyric to a song?
3. In the large group, ask students to contribute holiday song titles that most of the students will already know.
4. Song selected, have a quick sing along to jog everyone's memory
5. Ask students how they might change a few of the words and give the song new meaning. Humor is encouraged here! Focusing on the rhyming words helps.
6. Invite students to sing their new lyrics or have the whole group sing with them. Try several ideas.
7. Ask students how someone coming to their city from the North Pole for the first time might perform their new lyrics differently? Try it!



Activity III – Main Activity (15-20 minutes)

1. Divide students into groups of 3-5 students. Each group with their own workspace.
2. Let students know that they are now a songwriting team and they are going to write new lyrics to a well-known holiday song.
3. Allow each team to select their song or teacher may assign them. Be sure to provide a printed copy of the lyrics available for students' use.
4. Ask students to read lyrics aloud and/or sing the song in their groups.
5. Randomly assign song ideas by distributing slips of paper
 - one per group – with a song idea on it. The ideas listed here can all be found in ELF The Musical:
 - A song about how decorating for Christmas brings good cheer at the holidays
 - A song that is a letter to Santa
 - A song about being a Santa for others
 - A song about Buddy the Elf
6. Take students through a process of generating material for their writing:
 - When students have received a song idea, have them discuss the topic. What do they know about it? What images come to mind? Can they build a story around it?
 - How can they begin to alter the lyrics to the original song to create their assigned song topic? Can they make it funny? How can they include the feeling of experiencing something for the very first time, like they did in the warm-up?
 - Ask groups to select their favorite idea from their discussion.
 - Remind students that songs are like mini stories and should have a beginning, middle and end!
7. Have students move into rewriting the lyric to their song. Remind students to notice how the rhymes fall in the original song and do their best to rhyme in the same places.
8. Students may also choose to write their own melodies if it will help them sing their story.

Activity IV – Sharing and Reflection (10-15 minutes)

1. Each group presents their songs to the class.
2. Encourage students to be bold and sing out!
3. This sharing should include reflection questions about their process and choice making. Some suggested reflection questions include:
 - What were some of the challenges you faced doing this assignment?
 - How did you work through these challenges?
 - Were you able to tell a story through a song?
 - What would you change if you could do it again?



Use familiar songs to eliminate the fear of creating something from scratch.

Reminder: **BE BRAVE!**



Write a Review



“The play’s the thing...” Hamlet

Watching a live theatre performance is a very different thing from watching a movie or television show. Actors respond to the “energy” of the audience and to emotional responses from the audience. As a class discuss what you experienced when you went to the theatre and how you felt after. Talk about the actors, musicians, costumes, and set.

1. What was the first thing you noticed on the stage?
2. Name three things you noticed about the set. Did the set help tell the story?
3. What did you like about the costumes? Were they what you would expect? What would you have designed?
4. What role did the lighting have in this play? Did the changes in lights mean anything to the story? How do we relay what mood is portrayed by using lights?
5. What was your favourite part of the performance? What part made you feel most engaged in the story?
6. Have you seen the movie or read the book? What things are different between those and the live performance?
7. Could you tell if any of the actors played more than one part? How did you recognize them?
8. What stories would you like to see adapted into a play? What would make them enjoyable to watch on stage?
9. If you could see yourself as one of the characters from Elf the Musical, who would you like to be?
10. Write Persephone Theatre and tell us what you thought of the show. Please make sure you give your name, grade and school.

Send your review to carlam@persephonetheatre.org.

