

The Children's Theatre Company has a commitment to create extraordinary theatre experiences that educate, challenge, and inspire young people. It is our hope that by presenting significant themes that affect the lives of young people in our community we can help to foster dialogue and active participation in the arenas that affect their lives. It is with this in mind that we offer...



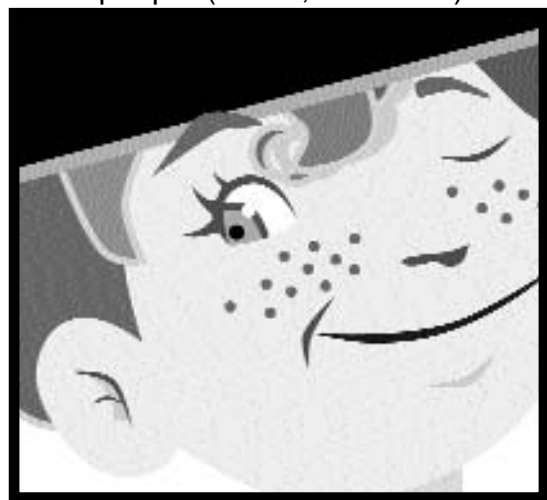
Pippi Longstocking

An experience in theatre can be a gateway into a greater understanding of who we are; it can enhance our understanding of life. You may come to PIPPI LONGSTOCKING thinking that it is fun to break routine and go on a field trip to, and after having seen it, walk away with a feeling of having glimpsed a significant truth about the world and how each of us lives in it. So, while it is crucial to take the time to process the experience by talking and exploring the exciting theatrical experience itself, the time spent in the theatre can also serve as a springboard into many areas of your curriculum.

A MAJOR MISCHIEF MAKER

Astrid Lindgren, the writer who created Pippi, always defended children and their rights. You could say she wrote from a child's point of view. She said that her favorite books as a child were *Anne of Green Gables* and *Pollyanna*, and the books she wrote brought us children that were at least as smart, brave and energetic as Anne and Pollyanna...

and then some! In fact, when Pippi was first written some people (adults, of course) were afraid to let children read about her!! She was a rebel! They wanted their children – especially the girls – to stay quiet and sweet and obedient. Well, that hasn't happened has it? Now we encourage young people to have fun and believe in themselves, and know how powerful they are as citizens of the world. (By the way, Pippi's name in French translates: "strand of steel" or "tiny bit of steel.") Pippi has got to be one of the most pivotal mischief makers in the history of kids – for more than sixty years Pippi has been liberating children all over the world!



HOW MANY PEOPLE MAKE A PLAY?

You will see about thirty people on stage during the performance of the play, but it took many, many more to create it for you.

When you see Pippi Longstocking you will see about 30 actors on the stage. They will play about twice that many roles so it may seem like more. These actors are just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to making a play come to life. In the backstage area behind the sets, and in the back of the theater in the lighting and sound booths, people perform in ways that are invisible to the audience.

It takes many people work to get the audience and the actors all ready at the same time for each performance. A long time before the day of the play, a lot of people start planning and working on it. At The Children's Theatre Company, it takes about a hundred and fifty people to get a show ready. They are writers, directors, designers, carpenters, stitchers, painters, prop builders, lighting and sound technicians, stage hands, musicians, and actors. (That is not even counting the people who have jobs that keep the theater running, and keep it ready to welcome an audience.)

About 75,000 students come to this theater with their classmates every year. All of them are part of the process of making a play, too, because every single audience is part of the performance they see. When you think about it, without the audience there would be no point in making plays at all.

Answer these questions:

1. How many WRITERS did it take to make this play?
2. There is always a director who oversees the entire production of a play, but there were several other designers and directors working on different aspects of this play. What are some aspects of a play that need to be DESIGNED or DIRECTED?
3. Who do you think made the COSTUMES? How many people do you think it took?
4. What are the PROPS, and who do you imagine made them?
5. Who do you suppose built the SET?

ANSWERS BELOW

1. The costumes were designed by one woman. She drew pictures of costumes, and then two dozen people made them. They used the drawings, or renderings, to make patterns, and then to make each costume. One man here specializes in making hats, and one woman's job is to make all the wigs! It is also someone's job simply to take care of all the different costumes pieces during the play.
2. There were a total of 8 different designers and directors working on this play! In addition to the director whose job it was to oversee the entire production (and in this case, the dances as well, since he was also the choreographer) there was also a Music Director to oversee the music. The play also had a Technical Director to make sure the set got built, and a Costume Director. Before these last two directors could do their work, though, there had to be both scenic, or set, and costume designers to decide what the set and costumes would look like. This play also had light and sound designers. Imagine all of these people working as a team to make different parts of the world of the play!
3. The costumes were designed by one woman. She drew pictures of costumes, and then two dozen people made them. They used the drawings, or renderings, to make patterns, and then to make each costume. One man here specializes in making hats, and one woman's job is to make all the wigs! It is also someone's job simply to take care of all the different costumes pieces during the play.
4. A prop is anything that is not a costume or a set. The pictures on the walls, rugs on the floors, lamps, and most of the furniture are props. Puppets are props, too! So two of the characters in the play, the monkey and the horse, came out of the prop shop. It took half a dozen men and women to create the props for this production.
5. The walls, floors, ceilings, and large pieces like the carnival are all pieces of the set. This set was designed by one man, and built and painted by about eight people. They work in a huge shop directly behind the stage. It can take five scenic painters five days to paint one of the big backdrops for this stage. Sometimes while you are watching one play, they are building another set, behind sound proofed doors! The set builders are, among other things, carpenters, welders, and painters.



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Answers: 1. Thomas Olsson and Truda Stockenström, wrote this play. However, they based the play on a character created by Astrid Lindgren about fifty years ago, so in a way it took three writers for this play. (The music for this play also had to be written by a composer, and that same composer plus one of the playwrights worked on the lyrics, or words for, the songs.)

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CRITIQUING A PLAY

One of the first responses we have to seeing a play is, "I liked it" or "I thought it was terrible!" In fact, it is difficult NOT to judge a play (or any other work of art) entirely on your own opinion. However, you can apply a method to evaluating the experience and become aware of what you yourself bring to the performance.

As a viewer you bring many things to the play, just as those who create the play and the performance bring what and who they are. The more aware you can become of the individuality of the play and the choices made to create it, and of your own specific point of view (or context), the deeper and more developed your response will be.

Here are four steps to follow that will give you a guideline for critiquing a play:

- **DESCRIPTION:** Describe the play. Tell what you saw and heard. Include the title, the subject, and what you know about the creators of the piece (see Credits below). Be objective. Try not to express opinions. Think of yourself as a detective – "Just the facts!"

Examples: The play was about a girl. There were puppet characters in it.

- **ANALYSIS.** Express your thoughts about the messages the play is trying to convey. How does it convey them? The more you understand about the elements of theatre the more thorough you can be. (See the sidebar: Elements).

Examples: Pippi's house is important to her and it's a big set that the audience can see inside.

- **INTERPRETATION:** State what you think the artist/s mean to say with the production and how it affected you. Use specific examples of when and how you were affected. Remember, interpretation is very personal. Your interpretation may differ greatly from someone else's. There is no right or wrong answer.

Examples: It made me lonely when Pippi sang in the night. It reminded me of when I was at camp missing my family.

- **JUDGMENT:** Express your personal opinion. What do you think about this piece of work? Give some reasons why you like or do not like the work. Does the play have artistic merit? The answers you have already given will help you identify why you responded the way you did.

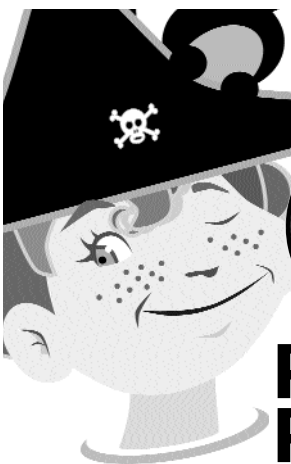
Example: I loved this play. It made me feel like I was right in the same neighborhood with Pippi; I laughed sometimes and felt sad sometimes, too.

Some elements of a play:

- Character
- Plot
- Conflict
- Dialogue/ Monologues
- Staging
- Costumes
- Set
- Lighting
- Sound and/or music
- Style, (realistic or not)
- Themes

Credits: This is information such as the name of the play, where the story came from, the author, the actors, the production team, and when and where it was performed. You can learn a great deal simply by knowing these facts.

Example: PIPPI LONGSTOCKING is a play based on a book that was written many years ago in Sweden and is still read all over the world. Something about this character is meaningful to a lot of different people.



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This critiquing process is based on the Art Critiquing Process designed for interpreting visual art found at: <http://www.brigantine.atlnet.org/GigapaletteGALLERY/websites/ARTiculationFinal/MainPages/ArtCritiquingMain.htm>

BUILD A CRITIQUING CUBE

Complete the sides using the four steps on page 7. Then construct your cube.

Directions:

- **FIRST:** Write the title of the play or draw an image representing it on the top of the block.
- **STEP ONE:** Write the Description section. Remember, it is here that you are going to list the facts.

• **STEP THREE:** In the Interpretation section, express your thoughts about the work. What did the artist/s mean?

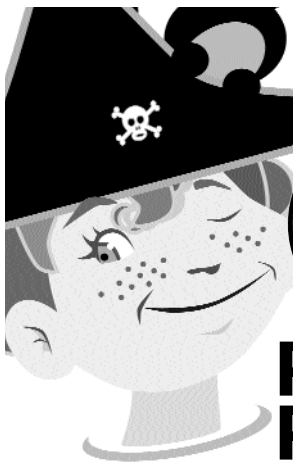
• **STEP FOUR:** On this last side, express whether you think this was a successful work of art. Why or why not?

The net consists of seven rectangular sections arranged in a cross shape. The top section is labeled 'INTERPRETATION' and has a semi-circular tab labeled 'Tab A' on its top edge. The center section is labeled 'NAME'. To the left of the center is a section labeled 'ANALYSIS' with a vertical tab labeled 'Tab F' on its left edge and a semi-circular tab labeled 'Tab E' on its top edge. To the right of the center is a section labeled 'JUDGMENT' with a vertical tab labeled 'Tab C' on its right edge and a semi-circular tab labeled 'Tab D' on its top edge. Below the center section is a section labeled 'DESCRIPTION'. Below the 'DESCRIPTION' section is a blank rectangular section. Below the 'JUDGMENT' section is a blank rectangular section with a semi-circular tab labeled 'Tab B' on its bottom edge. Below the 'ANALYSIS' section is a semi-circular tab labeled 'Tab G' on its bottom edge.

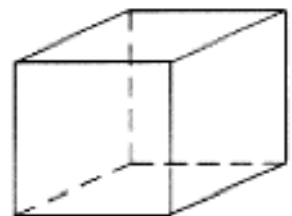
• **STEP TWO:** Next complete the Analysis section. Write down how the artist used the Elements to create this play.

• **FINALLY:** Once all the sides are completed, sign your name. Cut on dotted lines. Fold on solid lines. Carefully glue the sides together to form a cube.

NOTE: This image can be enlarged using a photo copier. A larger cube would be easier to write on.



PIPPY PAGE SEVEN



ENGAGING THE IMAGINATION

DISCUSSION, WRITING PROMPTS; EXPLORATION

A Central Question: Pippi is a rule breaker. Name one rule she breaks. Have you ever broken a rule? And if so, did you have a good reason? Is it ever okay to break a rule? Write a story that shows your opinion by using an example.

- Pippi's original name in Swedish is Pippi Långstrump, and her full name is Pipilotta Delicatessa Windowshade Mackrelmint Ephraim's Daughter Longstocking! Do you know your name in the language of your ancestors - or any other language? If so, what is it? Create a name for yourself that you feel tells a great deal about you. Write it down and explain why you chose it.

- Pippi lives with a horse and a monkey. If you could choose any animal to live with you what would it be? Where would it sleep? What chores would you like it to do for you?

- Pippi has her house, Villa Villekulla, all to herself. What kind of house would you live in if you could design a house made to fit your needs perfectly? What would you name your house? Describe or draw it.

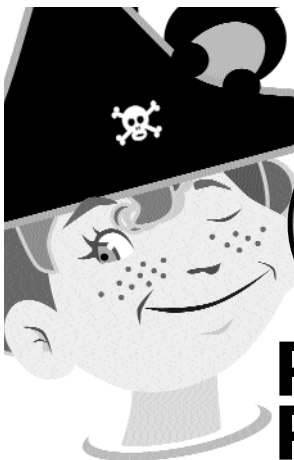
- Pippi Longstocking is a musical play. Interspersed throughout the production are many fully staged choreographed musical numbers. They range from raucous to wistful and convey many different moods. Talk about how the music was used in the play to do two things: 1) tell the story, and 2) inspire feelings in the audience.

- Pippi Longstocking contains characters that are larger than life and yet are very much like people we meet and know, whether it is a neighbor, a friend, or a teacher. Pick one character from the play that reminds you of someone you know. Write about how the two are similar and how they are different.

- Once Pippi saw a sign that said, 'DO YOU SUFFER FROM FRECKLES?' "No, I don't," she declared. "But my dear child," said the shop keeper, "your whole face is covered in them." "I know," says Pippi, "but I don't suffer from them. I like them!"

If you didn't know anything else about Pippi, what would you know about her by reading this incident? Write a character description of her.

A Quote: Astrid Lindgren said, "If children are given love, good behavior will look after itself." Do you think that is true? Discuss it.



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FEEDBACK your response is invaluable as we seek to redesign our study materials. Thank you.



1. Did using this Study Guide add to your theater experience?

- Yes Some No

2. How much of the Study Guide did you read?

- Didn't have time About a quarter All

3. What do you think of what you read? Mark as many as apply.

- Useful Enjoyable
 Nothing new Not for my students because

4. Did you get the Study Guide in time to prepare to see the play?

- Yes No Comment

5. What sections of the Study Guide did you find most important?

6. How did the experience of preparing for and then seeing the play impact you students?

7. Did you spend more time working with the material BEFORE or AFTER the play?

- Before After About the Same

8. Which of the following best describes you?

- I teach: middle school high school
 home school
 other _____

Comments: _____

(continue on separate page if desired)

**MAIL TO: THE CHILDREN'S THEATRE COMPANY/2400 3RD AVE. SO.
MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55404-3597/ATTN: EDUCATION DEPT.**



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PAGE TWELVE**

The Children's Theatre Company, which was awarded the 2003 Regional Tony Award for sustained artistic excellence, is nationally and internationally acclaimed as America's flagship theatre for young people and families. Each year, The Children's Theatre Company's public performances, school matinees, regional tour performances, and Theatre Arts Training Programs serve nearly 330,000 people.

Peter Brosius, Artistic Director
Teresa Eyring, Managing Director
Gregory Smith, Director of Education

This **Study Guide** was developed and written by Chris Kliesen Wehrman, April '06.