As part of DCT’s mission to integrate the arts into classroom academics, the *Behind the Curtain Resource Guide* is intended to provide helpful information for the teacher and student to use before and after attending a performance. The activities presented in this guide are suggested to stimulate lively responses and multi-sensory explorations of concepts in order to use the theatrical event as a vehicle for cross-cultural and language arts learning.

Please use our suggestions as springboards to lead your students into meaningful, dynamic learning; extending the dramatic experience of the play.
Dallas Children's Theater on Tour

**BEHIND THE CURTAIN**

A Creative & Theatrical Resource Guide for Teachers

DCT Executive Artistic Director........................................... Robyn Flatt
DCT On Tour Producer.................................................... Sally Fiorello

Resource Guide Editor........................................................ Marty Sherman
Resource Guide Layout/Design........................................... Kim Lyle

Play ......................................................................................... THE BFG
Based on the book by ...................................................... ROALD DAHL
Adapted by ........................................................................... DAVID WOOD

DALLAS CHILDREN'S THEATER, one of the top five family theaters in the nation, serves over 250,000 young people from 100 zip codes, 40 cities and 12 counties each year through its eleven main stage productions, touring, educational programming and outreach activities. Since its opening in 1984, this award-winning theater has existed to create challenging, inspiring and entertaining theater, which communicates vital messages to our youth and promotes an early appreciation for literature and the performing arts. As the only major organization in Dallas focusing on theater for youth and families, DCT produces literary classics, original scripts, folk tales, myths, fantasies and contemporary dramas that foster multicultural understanding, confront topical issues and celebrate the human spirit.

DCT is committed to the integration of creative arts into the teaching strategies of academic core curriculum and educating through the arts. Techniques utilized by DCT artist/teachers are based upon the approach developed in Making Sense with Five Senses, by Paul Baker, Ph.D.

DCT founder and Executive Artistic Director, Robyn Flatt defines the artistic mission and oversees the operations of the organization, consisting of twenty-five full time staff members and more than 200 actors, designers, theater artists and educators.
CURTAINS UP ON PUTTING A PERFORMANCE TOGETHER

Every DCT performance you see is the result of many people working together to create a play. You see the cast perform on stage, but there are people you do not see who help before, during, and after every production.

The DIRECTOR
Determines the overall look of the performance.
Guides the actors in stage movement and character interpretation.
Works with designers to plan the lights and sounds, scenery, costumes and make-up, and stage actions.

The DESIGNERS
Plan the lights, scenery, costumes, make-up, sound, and actions to help bring the director’s vision to life.
There are also designers who work to create the posters, advertisements, programs and other media for the performance.

The STAGE MANAGER
Before the performance, creates a cue sheet to guide the crew in getting things on and off the stage during the performances. During the performance, uses this cue sheet to direct people and things on and off the stage.

The CREW
Builds and operates the scenery, costumes, props, and light and sound during the performance.

The CAST
Performs and presents the story to the audience.

The AUDIENCE
That’s right! There can be no performance without you- the audience. The role of the audience is unique because you experience the entertainment with the performers and backstage crew. You are a collaborator in the performance, and it is important to learn your role so you can join all the people who work to create this Dallas Children’s Theater production.
CURTAINS UP ON THE ROLE OF THE AUDIENCE

Watching a play is different from watching television or a sporting event. When you watch T.V., you may leave the room or talk. At a sporting event you might cheer and shout and discuss what you’re seeing. Your role as a member of the audience in a play means you must watch and listen carefully because:

- You need to concentrate on what the actors are saying.
- The actors are affected by your behavior. Talking and moving around can make it difficult for them to concentrate on their roles.
- Extra noises and movement can distract other audience members.

Are you ready for your role in this performance?
Check the box next to the statements that describe proper etiquette for an audience member during the performance.

- [ ] Try your best to remain in your seat once the performance has begun.
- [ ] Share your thoughts out loud with those sitting near you.
- [ ] Wave and call out to the actors on stage.
- [ ] Sit on your knees or stand near your seat.
- [ ] Bring snacks and gum to enjoy during the show.
- [ ] Reward the cast and crew with applause when you like a song or dance and at the end of the show.
- [ ] Arrive on time so that you do not miss anything or disturb other audience members while you are being seated.
- [ ] Keep all hands and feet and items out of the aisles during the performance.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CURTAINS UP ON THEATER VOCABULARY</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACTOR</td>
<td>any theatrical performer whose job it is to portray a character</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAST</td>
<td>the group of actors in a play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CENTER STAGE</td>
<td>the middle of the stage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHARACTER</td>
<td>any person portrayed by an actor onstage. Characters may also be animals, and sometimes things.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHOREOGRAPHER</td>
<td>the person who designs and teaches the dances in a production</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COSTUME DESIGNER</td>
<td>the person who creates what the actors wear in the performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIRECTOR</td>
<td>the person in charge of the entire production</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOWNSTAGE</td>
<td>the area at the front of the stage; closest to the audience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOUSE</td>
<td>the area in the theater where the audience sits in the theater</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIGHTING DESIGNER</td>
<td>the person who creates the lighting for a play to simulate the time of day and the location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ONSTAGE</td>
<td>the part of the stage the audience can see</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OFFSTAGE</td>
<td>the part of the stage the audience cannot see</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLOT</td>
<td>the story line</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROSCENIUM</td>
<td>the opening framing the stage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROJECT</td>
<td>to speak loudly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROP</td>
<td>an object used by an actor in a scene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SET</td>
<td>the background or scenery for a play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SETTING</td>
<td>the time and place of the story</td>
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<tr>
<td>SOUND DESIGNER</td>
<td>the person who provides special effects like thunder, ringing phone, or crickets chirping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STAGE CREW</td>
<td>the people who change the scenery during a performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STAGE MANAGER</td>
<td>the person who helps the director during the rehearsal and coordinates all aspects of the lights, sound, and scenery with the actors during the performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UPSTAGE</td>
<td>the area at the back of the stage; farthest from the audience</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CURTAINS UP AFTER THE PERFORMANCE

Attending a play is an experience unlike any other. Because a play is presented live, it provides a unique opportunity to experience a story as it happens. Dallas Children's Theater brings stories to life through its performances. Many people are involved in the process. Playwrights adapt the stories you read in order to bring them off the page and onto the stage. Designers and technicians create lighting effects so that you can feel the mood of a scene. Carpenters build the scenery and make the place of the story become a real place, while costumers and make-up designers can turn actors into the characters you meet in the stories. Directors help actors bring the story to life before your very eyes. All of these things make seeing a play very different from television, videos, computer games, or CDs and audiobooks of stories.

Hold a class discussion when you return from the performance. Ask students the following questions and allow them to write or draw pictures of their experience at the show.

1. What was the first thing you noticed when you entered the theater? What did you notice first on the stage?
2. What about the set? Draw or tell about things you remember. Did the set change during the play? How was it moved or changed? Was there any space besides the stage where the action took place?
3. How did the lights set the mood of the play? How did they change throughout? What do you think “house lights” are? How do they differ from stage lights? Did you notice different areas of lighting?
4. What did you think about the costumes? Do you think they fit the story? What things do you think the costume designers had to consider before creating the costumes?
5. Was there music in the play? How did it add to the performance?
6. What about the actors? Do you think they were able to bring the characters to life? Did you feel caught up in the story? What things do you think the actors had to work on in order to make you believe they were the characters?

• Draw a picture of what the audience might look like from the stage. Consider your work from the viewpoint of the actors on stage. How might things look from where they stand?

• Write a letter to a cast member telling them what you liked about their character.

• Write how you think it might feel to be one of the actors. Are the actors aware of the audience? How might they feel about the reactions of the audience today? How would you feel before the play began? What about after the show ends?

• Which job would you like to try? Actor, Director, Lighting or Sound Crew Member, Stage Manager, Set Designer, Costume Designer, or another role? What skills might you need to complete your job?

• Choose a favorite story and draw or use the computer to create a program cover design for a theatrical adaptation of your story.
CURTAINS UP ON THEATER VOCABULARY

ACTOR any theatrical performer whose job it is to portray a character
CAST group of actors in a play
CENTER STAGE the middle of the stage
CHARACTER any person portrayed by an actor onstage. Characters may often be people, animals, and sometimes things.
CHOREOGRAPHER the designer and teacher of the dances in a production
COSTUME DESIGNER the person who creates what the actors wear in the performance
DIRECTOR the person in charge of the entire production
DOWNSTAGE the area at the front of the stage; closest to the audience
HOUSE where the audience sits in the theater
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ONSTAGE the part of the stage the audience can see
OFFSTAGE the part of the stage the audience cannot see
PLOT the story line
PROSCENIUM the opening framing the stage
PROJECT to speak loudly
PROP an object used by an actor in a scene
SET the background or scenery for a play
SETTING the time and place of the story
SOUND DESIGNER the person who provides special effects like thunder, ringing phone, or crickets chirping
STAGE CREW the people who change the scenery during a performance
STAGE MANAGER the person who helps the director during the rehearsal and coordinates all crew during the performance
UPSTAGE the area at the back of the stage; furthest from the audience
**CURTAINS UP ON ADAPTATION**

An adaptation is a change made in something so that it can fit a new use. This performance of *The BFG*, is an adaptation of the book written by Roald Dahl, which is meant to be read, into a play, which is meant to be performed and viewed.

**Consider these questions for discussion before you attend the DCT production:**
- What kinds of things did the author have to consider in writing a script of the story?
- Do you think the performance will be shorter or longer than a book version of the tale?
- What will the characters look like? Will they match illustrations you might have seen? What differences can you expect?
- What about the story? What changes might you expect in adapting it for the stage? Why would these changes be necessary?

**After the performance, consider these questions:**
- Were there any characters or events that were in the book but not in the play? Why do you think these choices were made?
- Did the changes make the story stronger or was it weaker because of them?
- What do you think the set and costume designers need to consider when bringing the book to the stage?
- What things helped to tell the story on stage?

Use the compare and contrast template on the next page to illustrate the similarities and differences between the book and DCT’s performance of *The BFG*.

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**CURTAINS UP ON THE AUTHOR**

Roald Dahl was one of the greatest story-tellers of all time. He was born in Llanduff, South Wales, of Norwegian parents, in 1916, and educated in English boarding-schools. Then, in search of adventure, the young Dahl took a job with Shell Oil in Africa. When World War II broke out he joined the RAF as a fighter pilot, receiving terrible injuries and almost dying in a plane crash in 1942. It was following this “monumental bash on the head” and a meeting with C. S. Forester (author of the famous Captain Horatio Hornblower stories) that Roald Dahl’s writing career began, with articles for magazines such as The New Yorker. He wrote successful novellas and short stories for adults, such as *Tales of the Unexpected*, before concentrating on his marvelous children’s stories. The first of these, *James and the Giant Peach*, in 1960, was followed by *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, and an unbroken string of hugely successful, best-selling titles. Roald Dahl worked from a tiny hut in the pale orchard of the Georgian house in Great Missenden, Buckinghamshire which he shared with his wife, Liccy. He was always brimming with new ideas and his many books continue to bring enormous enjoyment to millions of children and their parents throughout the world. Roald Dahl died on November 23, 1990.


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**CURTAINS UP ON THE PLAYRIGHT**

David Wood began writing as a student at Oxford University in the sixties. He wrote his first play for children in 1967 and has since written over sixty more. They are performed all over the world and include *The Gingerbread Man, The Owl and the Pussycat Went to See... The Selfish Shellfish, The See-Saw Tree*, and others.

His stage adaptations of well-known Roald Dahl books include, Roald Dahl’s *The BFG* and *The Witches, The Twits, James and the Giant Peach, Fantastic Mr. Fox, Danny The Champion of the World and George’s Marvellous Medicine*. Mr. Wood directed many of his plays for his own company, Whirligig Theatre (founded with John Gould in 1979), which for 25 years toured to major theatres nationwide include Sadler’s Wells in London. He’s also credited with writing screenplays, radio scripts and children’s books. In 2004, David Wood was awarded an OBE (Order of the British Empire) for services to literature and drama in the Queen’s birthday honors.

–Biography information from www.davidwood.org.uk
CURTAINS UP ON LANGUAGE ARTS

As he was writing The BFG in the early-1980s, author Roald Dahl set about creating a new vocabulary for the story’s giant — a 238-word language that he ultimately named, “Gobblefunk”. See his working list for the BFG’s Gobblefunk language on page 13. Use the following activity to provide students practice in using context clues to determine the meaning of a word.

You will need:
Whiteboard or Chart paper
List of BFG sentences from DCT’s production (provided on page 12)
Drawing materials

Divide students into small groups and provide each group a copy of the BFG sentence sheet. Allow them time to determine the meaning for each of the gobblefunk words underlined on the sheet. Encourage them to use the clues in the surrounding sentences to help them write their definitions.

A Gobblefunk Dictionary

“Meanings is not important. I cannot be right all the time. Quite often I is left instead of right.” – the BFG

Create a dictionary using context clues from the story to define Gobblefunk. Create illustrations where you can and add them to the book. You can assign individuals words or allow students to work as groups. Compile their definitions and illustrations and print a class copy of your Gobblefunk Dictionary.

Using Acronyms

An acronym is a word formed from the initial letter of a name or word. The term “acronym” derives from a Greek word that means “first letter name” and according to Merriam Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, the earliest recorded use in English was in 1943. While there is debate on whether an acronym must form a word that can be pronounced as a word, it is generally accepted that any ‘word’ formed using a combination of initial letters or sounds of a word or phrase constitutes an acronym. Your students will likely be familiar with many acronyms used in texting.

Here are some examples of other types:

- Pronounced as a word, containing only initial letters
  Scuba: self-contained underwater breathing apparatus
  Laser: light amplification by stimulated emission of radiation
- Pronounced as a word, containing non-initial letters
  Gestapo: Geheime Staatspolizei (‘secret state police’)
  Nabisco: National Biscuit Company
- Pronounced as a word, containing a mixture of initial and non-initial letters
  AIDS: acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
  Radar: radio detection and ranging
- Pronounced as a word or as a string of letters, depending on speaker or context
  FAQ: frequently asked question
  SAT: Scholastic Achievement (or Aptitude) Test(s)
Provide students with the following list of acronyms and allow them to work in pairs to ‘translate’ them. Set a time limit and let the groups share their answers when time is up.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ET</td>
<td>RU there?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FYI</td>
<td>zzz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WWW</td>
<td>w/e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASAP</td>
<td>EZ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>gr8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV</td>
<td>CUL8R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BFF</td>
<td>4ever</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Answers: extraterrestrial, for your information, worldwide web, as soon as possible, United States of America, television, best friends forever, laughing out loud, are you there?, sleeping, snooze, or boring, week end, easy or simple, great!, see you later!, forever

Older students might enjoy giving this a try!

This is a part of an essay written by a Scottish 13 year-old student. See if you can ‘translate’ it into proper sentence form.

My smmr hols wr CWOT. B4 we used 2 go 2 NY 2C my bro, his GF & thr 3 :-@ kds FTF. ILNY, its gr8.

Bt my Ps wr so {:-/ BC o 9/11 tht thay dcdd 2 stay in SCO & spnd 2 wks up N.

Up N, WUCIWUG--). I ws vvv brd in MON. 0 bt baas & ^^

Here's what it says:

My summer holidays were a complete wast of time. Before, we used to go to New York to see my brother, his girlfriend and their three screaming kids face to face. I love New York, it's a great place.

But my parents were so worried because of the terrorism attack on September 11 that they decided we could stay in Scotland and spend two weeks up north.

Up north, what you see is what you get- nothing.

I was extremely bored in the middle of nowhere. Nothing but sheep and mountains.
The BFG’s Gobblefunk Quotations

1. Because you saw me. If anyone is ever seeing a giant, he or she must be taken away hipswitch.

2. Nothing is growing except for one extremely icky-poo vegetable. It is call the snozzcumber.

3. “No. I love the way you talk.” – Sophie

4. A whizzpopper! Us giants is making whizzpoppers all the time! Whizzpopping is a sign of happiness. It is music in our ears!

5. I, Sophie, is a dream-blowing giant. I blows dreams into the bedrooms of sleeping chiddlers.

6. Oh my! It’s a phizzwizard! A golden phizzwizard! This will be giving some chiddler a very happy night when I is blowing it in.

7. Your majester, I is your humbug servant.

8. Delumptious fizzy frobscottle! Everyone must be drinking it!
Roald Dahl’s working list for the BFG’s gobblefunk language
via listsofnote.com
CURTAINS UP ON PHYSICAL FITNESS

Blowing Dreams

You will need:
Small, lightweight craft feathers
Construction paper
Tape

Here’s How:
Roll your piece of construction paper into a cone shape and tape the ends to form a ‘horn’. Use your feather as a ‘dream’ and blow it upwards through your dream horn. Encourage students to work in teams to keep the dreams afloat or set up a target ‘dream catcher’ basket and have them blow the dreams to the basket. Divide a larger class into teams and run a dream blower relay race!

CURTAINS UP ON ART AND CULTURE

Make Your Own Dream Catcher

The idea of catching dreams is not unique to Roald Dahl and his BFG. Native American legend tells of a Lakota spiritual leader who received a web from Iktomi, in the form of a spider, to help his people filter bad thoughts from good in searching for wisdom. Dream catchers of twigs, sinew, and feathers have been woven since ancient times by Ojibwa people. They were woven by the grandfathers and grandmothers for newborn children and hung above the cradleboard to give the infants peaceful, beautiful dreams. Legend holds that the slightest movement of the feathers in the dreams catcher indicates the passage of a beautiful dream while bad dreams are trapped in the web of the dream catcher and evaporate in the morning sun

Follow this link for a wonderful activity to use with your students:

Dream Jars

Allow students to create their own dream jars and fill them with pleasant dreams. You may choose to use the jar template provided (on page 15) or encourage students to bring in a jar and let them fill it with pictures and words to describe their dreams. Extend the activity by providing materials with which the students can decorate their jars.
Display the jars either on a bulletin board or on a shelf or table in the classroom and allow students to share them with the class.
CURTAINS UP ON MORE

The Roald Dahl Museum and Story Centre - www.roalddahlmuseum.org
Fun information about Roald Dahl for students and lots of classroom resources for teachers.
The Official Roald Dahl website - www.roalddahl.com

A Selected List of Books by Roald Dahl
Autobiographies
Boy – Tales of Childhood
Boy and Going Solo
Going Solo
The Great Mouse Plot
My Year
Children's Books
The BFG
Charlie and the Chocolate Factory
Charlie and the Great Glass Elevator
Esio Trot
Fantastic Mr. Fox
George's Marvelous Medicine
The Giraffe and the Pelly and Me
The Gremlins
James and the Giant Peach
The Magic Finger
Matilda
The Twits
The Witches
Poetry
Dirty Beasts
Revolting Rhymes
Rhyme Stew

Short Story Collections
The Great Automatic Grammatizator and Other Stories
Kiss Kiss
Lamb to the Slaughter and Other Stories
The Mildenhall Treasure
The Roald Dahl Omnibus
Over to You
Selected Stories of Roald Dahl
A Roald Dahl Selection: Nine Short Stories
A Second Roald Dahl Selection: Eight Short Stories
Skin and Other Stories
Someone Like You
Tales of the Unexpected
Tales of the Unexpected (Volume 1)
Tales of the Unexpected (Volume 2)
Two Fables
The Umbrella Man and Other Stories
The Wonderful Story of Henry Sugar and Six More