

BEHIND THE CURTAIN

A CREATIVE & THEATRICAL STUDY GUIDE FOR TEACHERS



Music by Stephen Flaherty
Lyrics by Lynn Ahrens
Book by Lynn Ahrens and Stephen Flaherty
Co-Conceived by Lynn Ahrens, Stephen Flaherty, and Eric Idle
Based on the works of Dr. Seuss

AGES 5 AND ABOVE

OCTOBER 5 – OCTOBER 26 STUDENT MATINEE

SEPTEMBER 16 – OCTOBER 23 PUBLIC SHOWS

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.

Your Family Arts Center

DALLAS CHILDREN'S THEATER

Astonishing kids & families with the fun of Broadway-like plays & much more!

Dallas Children's Theater

BEHIND THE CURTAIN

A Creative & Theatrical Resource Guide for Teachers

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Play.....SEUSSICAL™

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SEUSSICAL-THEATRE YOUNG AUDIENCES is presented through special arrangement with Music Theatre International (MTI). All authorized performance materials are also supplied by MTI. www.MTIShows.com.

DALLAS CHILDREN'S THEATER, one of the top five family theaters in the nation, serves over 250,000 young people from 196 zip codes, 146 cities and 78 counties and 32 states each year through its 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 artists/teachers are based upon the approach developed in *The Integration of Abilities and 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.

TEKS that your field trip to Dallas Children's Theater satisfies are listed at the back of this guide.

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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 behind the scenes that 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, sounds, scenery, costumes, make-up, 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, they create a cue sheet to guide the crew in getting things set pieces on and off the stage during the performances.

During the performance, the stage manager uses this cue sheet to direct people and things as they move on and off the stage.

The CREW

Build and operate the scenery, costumes, props, and light and sound during the performance.

The CAST

Includes all of the performers who present the story on stage.

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 any time. 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 because they share the room with you. 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.

- 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 shout out to the actors on stage.
- Sit on your knees or stand near your seat.
- Bring snacks and chewing 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 when you are being seated.
- Keep all hands, feet, and items out of the aisles during the performance.

CURTAINS UP ON THE ROLE OF THE AUDIENCE (contd.)



1. 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?
2. Write a letter to Karl Schaeffer telling what you liked about his character.
3. 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?
4. Which job would you like to try? Acting, directing, lighting and sounds, stage manager, set designer, costume designer, or another role? What skills might you need to complete your job?

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 actors' movements on stage
DOWNSTAGE	the area at the front of the stage; closest to the audience
HOUSE	where the audience sits in the theater
LIGHTING DESIGNER	the person who creates the lighting for a play to simulate the time of day and the location
ONSTAGE	the part of the stage the audience can see
OFFSTAGE	the part of the stage the audience cannot see
PLAYWRIGHT	the person who writes the script to be performed. Playwrights may write an original story or adapt a story by another author for performance.
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, a 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; farthest from the audience

CURTAINS UP AFTER THE PERFORMANCE

Attending a play is an experience unlike any other entertainment experience. Because a play is presented live, it provides a unique opportunity to experience a story as it happens. **Dallas Children's Theater** brings to life stories 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 setting 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 and make it happen before your very eyes. All of these things make seeing a play very different from television, videos, computer games, or CDs 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 DCT.

- What was the first thing you noticed when you entered the theater?
- What did you notice first on the stage?
- What about the set? Did the set change during the play? How was it moved or changed?
- Was there any space besides the stage where action took place?
- 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?
- 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?
- Do you think the actors were able to bring their characters to life? Did you feel caught up in the story? What things do you think they had to work on in order to make you believe they were the characters?

CURTAINS UP ON ADAPTATION

An *adaptation* is a change made in something so that it can fit a new use. This performance of SEUSSICAL™ is an **adaptation** of several of Dr. Seuss's books - which are meant to be read - into a play - which is meant to be performed and viewed. Judith Viorst and Shelly Markham worked together to take stories written by Dr. Seuss and **adapt** them so they could be performed for an audience on stage.

Consider these questions for discussion before you attend the DCT production:

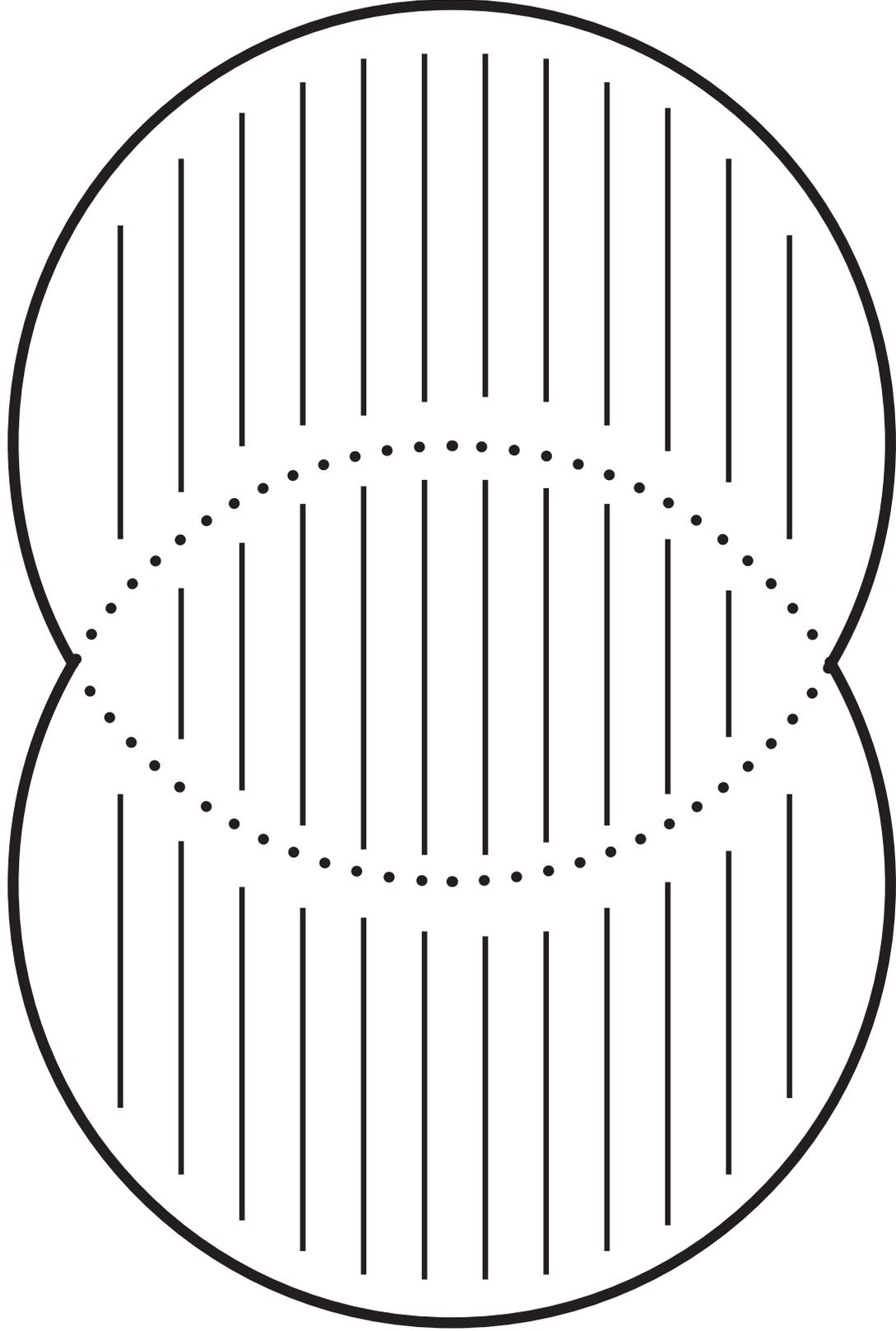
- What kinds of things did the authors have to consider in writing a script of the story?
- What kinds of things would Dr. Seuss be concerned about in making a musical adaptation of his stories?
- Do you think the performance will be shorter or longer than the book?
- What will the characters look like? Will they match their illustrations? 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?



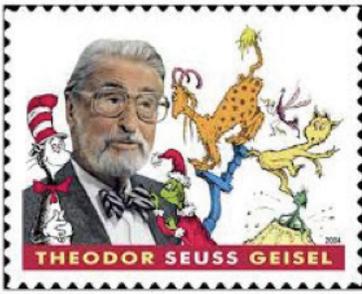
Use the compare and contrast template on the next page to illustrate the similarities and differences between the book and DCT's performance of SEUSSICAL™!



NAME _____

DATE _____

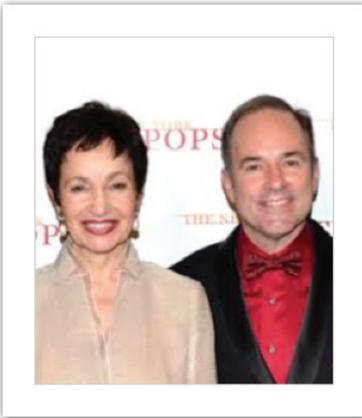
CURTAINS UP ON THE AUTHOR



DR. SEUSS The pen name Dr. Seuss was chosen by Theodor Seuss Geisel (1904-1991) when he dropped out of college to work in advertising, draw political cartoons, and write children's books. His ironic self-granted "doctorate" title is now known around the world by adults and children alike. As Dr. Seuss, he has been awarded a bevy of prizes -- including seven honorary doctorates -- and it comes as no surprise that his acceptance speeches are always in verse. Although his political cartoons were incisive, his advertisements inventive, and his Hollywood screenplays successful, it is for his children's books that he is beloved in 15 different languages, and for which he won a Pulitzer Prize.

CURTAINS UP ON THE PLAYWRIGHT AND COMPOSER

Taken from: <http://www.ahrensandflaherty.com/>



LYNN AHRENS was born on October 1, 1948 in New York and spent most of her childhood in Neptune, New Jersey. She graduated from Syracuse University in 1970 with a degree in Journalism. While she knew that she wanted to come to New York City after graduation, she never considered writing for musical theater. "I'd only seen one musical, FIDDLER ON THE ROOF, I loved it, but it didn't compute," she told Show Music Magazine. Instead she spent many years in advertising, working her way up from copy secretary to senior vice president at McCaffrey and McCall where Schoolhouse Rock was developed. In 1978, she formed her own production company and created a series of educational programs for children. In 1982, on a whim, she auditioned for the BMI Musical Theater Workshop, where she met Stephen Flaherty. They began working together the following year.

STEPHEN FLAHERTY was born in Pittsburgh on September 18, 1960, and graduated from the Cincinnati College Conservatory in 1982. Unlike Lynn, he knew from age 12 that he wanted to write musicals, and composed his first score at age 14. His mentor was Lehman Engel, founder of the BMI Workshop. Stephen entered the workshop right after graduation, and the rest is history.

CURTAINS UP ON LANGUAGE ARTS

"You can find magic wherever you look. Sit back and relax, all you need is a BOOK!"

- Dr. Seuss

Get Ready and READ!

Before attending DCT's production of SEUSSICAL™, you might enjoy reading some of the books upon which the show is based. Check your library for *Horton Hears a Who*, *Horton Hatches the Egg*, *Gertrude McFuzz*, *McElligot's Pool*, and *The Cat in the Hat*. You'll not only get insight on what SEUSSICAL™ is about, but you'll also have loads of practice with rhyming words!

Riddle Rhymes

A riddle is a statement or a question with a hidden meaning that forms a puzzle to be solved. Often, riddles are written in short verses that may rhyme. Here are some examples of rhyming riddles:

One of these is what's lowered down
At the end of a theater show.
You can find these in most houses;
They block sun coming through the window.

When the temperature gets high
And hot is what you're feeling,
Something that helps cool you down
Rotates up on the ceiling



YOU can write a riddle, too!

Writing a riddle is the reverse of solving a puzzle – you have to start with the answer. So first, choose something to write about (objects or animals are good for beginners). Once you know the solution, you have to think of the clues that will lead someone to guess it. Imagine you are that thing, and describe yourself.

You can use sentences like these to get you started.

- **I look like...**
- **I sound like...**
- **You find me...**
- **I have...**
- **I am...**
- **I feel**

CURTAINS UP ON LANGUAGE ARTS (contd.)



Younger students can use this activity as an introduction to rhymes and riddles.

This is a word which rhymes with cat,
It goes on your head because it's a _____.

I'm useful for journeys when you're going far,
I need lots of fuel because I'm a _____.

You'll find us near ponds or sitting on logs,
We jump and we croak because we are _____.

This is a word which rhymes with up.
You can drink out of me because I'm a _____.

This is a word which rhymes with bake,
I'm nice to eat because I'm a _____.

This is a word which rhymes with spoon,
I shine at night because I'm the _____.

A never-ending circle, a bright shiny thing,
It's on my fourth finger because it's a _____.

Answers: hat, car, frogs, cup, cake, moon, ring

CURTAINS UP ON SCIENCE

"Unless someone like you cares a whole lot, nothing is going to get better. It's not."

- Dr. Seuss

Protecting Our Planet and Its Inhabitants

Horton protects Mayzie's egg, without removing it from its habitat, by sitting on the nest while Mayzie is gone. In addition, he save the Whos' town on a clover at the last minute when they are able to speak up for themselves.

Our planet is filled with many plants and animals that cannot speak for themselves and need care and consideration in order to remain safe in their natural habitats. *Can you name some?*

Do you believe we, as humans, have a responsibility to help protect the habitats of all of Earth's creatures? How can we do that?

Use this activity to discover ways in which YOU can help protect and preserve our world from threats we can see, and from those that might seem invisible. Older students can be encouraged to find the answers to the following questions through research.

What is a habitat?

A habitat is a specific place in which plants and animals live to meet their needs.

What are the needs that every organism in order to survive?

All organisms must have a food and water source. Most need shelter from their natural enemies and potential threats to their environments, and a place to raise their offspring. Some build their own cover, such as birds (nests), beavers (dens) or ants (colonies), while others like most plants, are left open to the elements.

How might plants and animals interact within a specific environment?

An environment is made of the habitats of many different organisms. Think about how earthworms, birds, coyotes, and humans might interact within a forest environment.



Have students work in groups to choose an animal or plant to research. Encourage them to find out all they can about the habitats and needs that must be met in order for its survival. Students can draw or find pictures of their animal and its habitat to share with the class.

Once the research is completed, share your findings with your class.

Here are some questions to help guide your research.

1. What animal or plant have you chosen?
2. What kind of habitat does your animal or plant require?
3. Name food and water sources needed for your animal or plant's survival.
4. How does your animal or plant protect its offspring?
5. What are some things that might threaten your animal or plant's habitat?
6. How can humans help protect your animal or plant's habitat?



Create a large mural showcasing the information students learned about their animals or plants. Have them draw pictures of the habitat or use pictures from magazines or the internet to place their animals within it.

Extend the activity by having students create signs encouraging friends to help protect the environment and paste them in appropriate areas within the mural. Display the finished project in the hallway to share what you've learned with others.

CURTAINS UP ON ART

"Oh, the thinks you can think!"

- Dr. Seuss

A Seuss-sensical Animal

With Horton's care, Mayzie's egg hatches an elephant bird! Dr. Seuss is known for his nonsense characters. In this activity, students have a chance to create a Seuss-like animal and illustrate it.

You will need:

- Pencil
- Black Marker
- Crayons
- Drawing paper
- One sheet of colored paper
- Scissors
- Glue stick



- + Start by folding your drawing paper in half.
- + Use the pencil to draw the top half of an animal of your choice on one half of the paper. Draw the bottom half of a different animal on the other half of the drawing paper.
- + Outline both halves of your pencil drawings with the black marker then color them in with crayons.
- + Cut out each half of your Seuss-like animal just outside your outline.
- + Paste them onto your colored paper for display.

Clover Pencils

You will need:

- Pencils
- Pink pom poms
- Tiny white pom poms or small piece of a cotton ball
- Green floral tape or duck tape
- Strip of paper for a tag
- Tacky craft glue or hot glue (with adult supervision)



- + First, wrap your pencil in green tape.
- + Glue the white "speck" to the pink pom pom, this is the head of your pink clover.
- + Carefully glue the clover head to the eraser end of your pencil.
- + Write Horton's phrase, "a person's a person no matter how small" on a strip of paper and wrap it around your pencil as a reminder that EVERYONE matters.

CURTAINS UP ON CHARACTER

"A person's a person, no matter how small."

-Horton

Use the following questions to jumpstart a discussion of the importance of community.

- What do you think Dr. Seuss meant when he said, "A person is a person no matter how small"?
- Why do you think Horton was so determined to help the Whos, even though the other animals were making fun of him?
- What difference did Jojo's voice make for the Whos? What do you think this shows about community?



Use the following community-building games to help students understand the importance of each member of a community, and how working together makes us all strong.

The Hula Hoop Game

Instruct students to stand in a circle and hold hands. Begin the game with a hula hoop around two student's linked hands and encourage them to work together to move the hula hoop over and around each student in the circle. Help students develop strategies for working together to move the hoop around the circle as quickly as possible.

The Yarn Web

Students should sit in a circle for this game. Begin by handing one student a large ball of yarn. Instruct students to toss the ball of yarn to one person and give that person a positive compliment. That student will then toss the ball of yarn to another student but must keep a hold on his piece of string. If a student drops the string, you can use the opportunity to reinforce how important each member of the community is and have him pick his end of the string back up.

When all students have received the ball of yarn, instruct them to carefully set the string on the floor. Invite them to discuss what they've created as a team!

CURTAINS UP ON MORE

Books by Dr. Seuss:

And to Think That I saw it on Mulberry Street, 1937
The 500 Hats of Bartholomew Cubbins, 1938
The King's Stilts, 1939
Horton Hatches the Egg, 1940
McElligot's Pool, 1947
Thidwick, the Big-Hearted Moose, 1948
Bartholomew and the Oobleck, 1949
If I Ran the Zoo, 1950
Scrambled Eggs Super!, 1953
Horton Hears a Who, 1954
On Beyond Zebra!, 1955
If I Ran the Circus, 1956
How the Grinch Stole Christmas!, 1957
The Cat in the Hat, 1957
The Cat in the Hat Comes Back, 1958
Yertle the Turtle and Other Stories, 1958
Happy Birthday to You!, 1959
Green Eggs and Ham, 1960
One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish, 1960
The Sneetches and Other Stories, 1961
Dr. Seuss's Sleep Book, 1962
Hop on Pop, 1962
Dr. Seuss's ABC, 1963

Fox in Socks, 1965
I Had Trouble in Getting to Solla Sollew, 1965
The Cat in the Hat Songbook, 1967
The Foot Book, 1968
I Can Lick 30 Tigers Today, 1969
I Can Draw Myself, 1970
Mr. Brown Can Moo! Can You?, 1970
The Lorax, 1971
Marvin K. Mooney, Will You Please Go Now!, 1972
Shape of Me and Other Stuff, 1973
Did I Ever Tell You How Lucky You Are?, 1973
There's a Wocket in my Pocket!, 1974
Great Day for Up!, 1974
Oh, The Thinks You Can Think!, 1975
The Cat's Quizzer, 1976
I Can Read With My Eyes Shut!, 1978
Oh Say Can You Say?, 1979
Hunches in Bunches, 1982
The Butter Battle Book, 1984
You're Only Old Once!, 1986
Oh, The Places You'll Go!, 1990
Daisy-Head Mayzie, 1995

On the web:

www.seussville.com

the official Seuss web site run by Dr. Seuss Enterprises and Random House

www.catinthehat.org

the Springfield, MA National Monument Seuss site

www.k-state.edu/english/nelp/seuss

this page has links to all things Seuss on the web

<http://pbskids.org/catinthehat/>

PBS has put together a site with games for kids to play

<http://www.drseussart.com/>

a site devoted exclusively to the art of Dr. Seuss

T.E.K.S. SATISFIED BY A SEUSSICAL™

117.4 - Theatre, Kindergarten.

K.5 - Response/evaluation. The student responds to and evaluates theatre and theatrical performances.

A - Begin to identify appropriate audience behavior.

B - Respond to dramatic activities.

C - Demonstrate awareness of the use of music, creative movement, and visual components in dramatic play.

D - Observe the performance of artists and identify theatrical vocations.

117.7 - Theatre, Grade 1.

1.5 - Response/evaluation. The student responds to and evaluates theatre and theatrical performances.

A - Identify appropriate audience behavior.

B - Respond to and begin to evaluate dramatic activities.

C - Identify the use of music, creative movement, and visual components in dramatic play.

D - Observe the performance of artists and identify theatrical vocations.

117.10 - Theatre, Grade 2.

2.5 - Response/evaluation. The student responds to and evaluates theatre and theatrical performances.

A - Identify and apply appropriate audience behavior.

B - React to and begin to evaluate dramatic activities.

C - Employ music, creative movement, and visual components in dramatic play.

D - Observe the performance of artists and identify theatrical vocations.

117.13 - Theatre, Grade 3.

3.5 - Response/evaluation. The student responds to and evaluates theatre and theatrical performances.

A - Evaluate and apply appropriate audience behavior consistently.

B - Evaluate simple dramatic activities and performances.

C - Incorporate music, movement, and visual components in dramatic play.

D - Observe the performance of amateur and professional artists and begin to compare vocations in theatre.