

BEHIND THE CURTAIN

A CREATIVE & THEATRICAL RESOURCE GUIDE FOR TEACHERS


STUDENT MATINEE SERIES 2011-2012 is made possible by major support from



CARL B. & FLORENCE E.
KING FOUNDATION



ALEXANDER AND THE TERRIBLE HORRIBLE NO GOOD VERY BAD DAY!



Based on the book by JUDITH VIORST
Book and Lyrics by JUDITH VIORST Music by SHELLY MARKHAM

GRADES K through 5th

SEPT 22 - OCT 28 STUDENT MATINEE

SEPT 23 - OCT 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 & a lot more!

Dallas Children’s Theater

BEHIND THE CURTAIN

A Creative & Theatrical Resource Guide for Teachers

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PlayALEXANDER AND THE TERRIBLE, HORRIBLE,
NO GOOD, VERY BAD DAY

Based on the book byJudith Viorst

Book and Lyrics byJudith Viorst

Music by.....Shelly Markham

Director of Production.....Doug Miller

Cover Art.....Adapted from Judith Viorst

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 nine 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, folktales, 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.

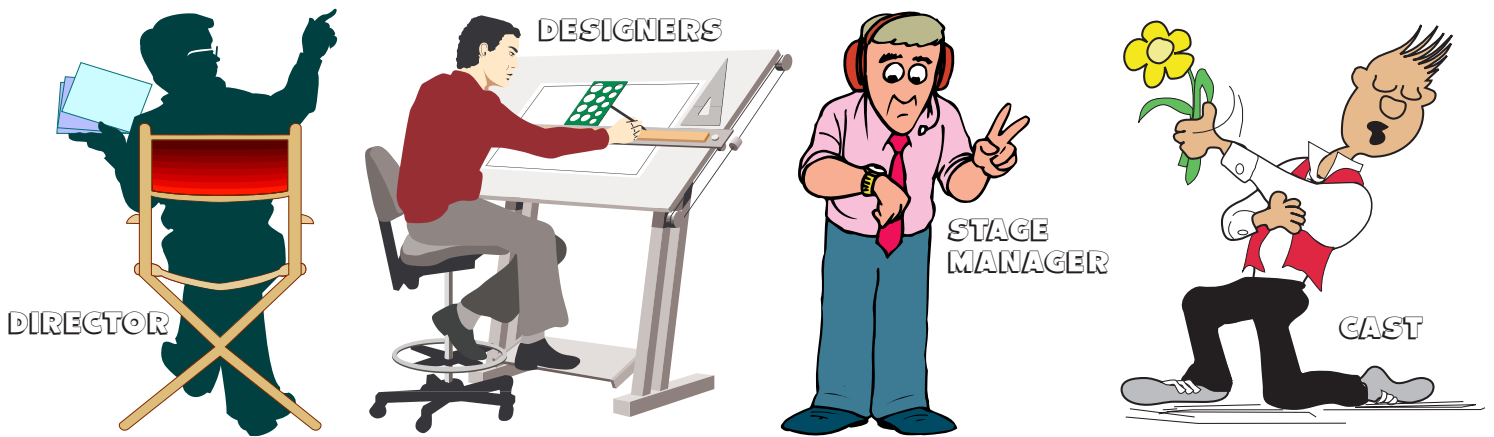
DCT founder and Executive Artistic Director, Robyn Flatt defines the artistic mission and oversees the operations of the organization, consisting of twenty-five full time staff members and more than 200 actors, designers, theater artists and educators.

**See pages 16 for the TEKS that your field trip to
Dallas Children’s Theater satisfies!**

Permission is granted for material included in this Resource Guide to be copied for use in the classroom

CURTAINS UP ON PUTTING TOGETHER A PERFORMANCE

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 that you do not see who help before, during, and after every production.



Director

- Determines the overall performance “look” of the performance
- Guides the actors in stage movement and character interpretation
- Works with designers to plan the lights and sound, scenery, costumes and make-up, and stage actions

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.

Stage Manager

- Before the performance, creates a cuesheet to guide the crew in getting things on and off the stage during the performances.
- During the performance, the stage manager uses this cuesheet to direct people and things on and off the stage at the proper times.

Crew

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

Cast

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

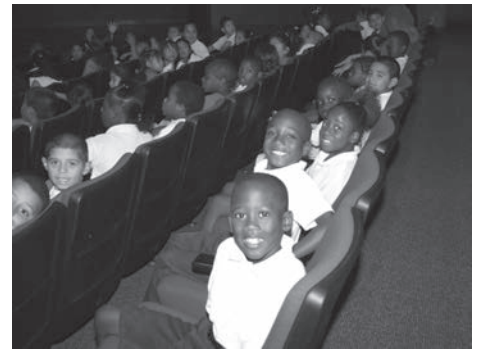
Audience

- 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 DCT 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 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.



**GIVE IT
A TRY!**

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 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.

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. Writers adapt the stories you read in order to bring them off the page and on to the stage. Designers and technicians create lighting effects so that you can feel the mood of a scene. Carpenters build 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 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 and tapes 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.

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?



**GIVE IT
A TRY!**

- Draw a picture of what the audience might look light 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 what you liked about the 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? Acting, Directing, Lighting and Sounds, 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 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, 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 *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day* is an adaptation of a book, which is meant to be read, into a play, which is meant to be performed and viewed. Judith Viorst and Shelly Markham worked together to take the story written by Judith Viorst and adapt it so that it 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 Judith Viorst be concerned about in making a musical adaptation of her story?
- 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?



**GIVE IT
A TRY!**

Use the compare and contrast template on page 15 to illustrate the similarities and differences between the book and DCT's performance of *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day*!



CURTAINS UP ON THE PLAYWRIGHT

Judith Viorst was born and raised in New Jersey and has lived in Washington, D. C., since her marriage to political writer Milton Viorst in 1960. They have three adult sons whose names are the same as those of the brothers in her play. A graduate of Rutgers University and the Washington Psychoanalytic Institute, Viorst is the author of numerous books of poetry and prose for both children and adults. Among her 14 children's books are two other Alexander stories and two collections of poems.



CURTAINS UP ON THE COMPOSER

Shelly Markham trained at the Chicago Musical College, then moved to New York City where he began studying with Lehmann Engel at the BMI Musical Theatre Workshop. He was chosen to study in the ASCAP-Disney Workshop with a revue called Too Old for the Chorus, which opened to critical acclaim at the Celebration Theatre in Los Angeles and the Berkshire Theatre Festival in Stockbridge, Massachusetts. In addition to the two shows he has collaborated on with Judith Viorst (Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day and Love and Shrimp), he has scored the PBS production of Charley's Aunt, composed shows based on family classics (including Tom Sawyer and The Prince and the Pauper) for producers Fran and Barry Weissler, written for Captain Kangaroo for CBS, and composed a musical based on the book Flavia and the Dream Maker for the Access Theatre in Santa Barbara, California.

CURTAINS UP ON WRITING

At the beginning of the play, the caped characters recite letters to Alexander describing bad things that happened to them. This reminds Alexander that he is not alone—other people have bad days just like he. Write a letter to Alexander describing a bad day that you had—then, to reassure him that good days are ahead, describe one of the best days that you have ever had!

Be certain to include the four parts of a proper letter; the heading, the salutation, the body, and the complimentary close. Students may use the Letter Template on page 13.

CURTAINS UP ON EXPRESSION

Alexander has a bunch of bad things happen to him first thing in the morning and they put him into a bad mood.

1. Have you ever woken up in a bad mood?
2. Does waking up in a bad mood affect the rest of your day?
3. How do you know that you are in a bad mood?
4. Is it possible to be in a bad mood on the inside but not show it on the outside?
5. Can other people tell you are in a bad mood? How?
6. Based on the answers from the previous questions, can we answer the question “what is a mood?”

Alexander sounds jealous because he only had cereal in his box, no toy.

1. Have you ever been jealous of something someone else had?
2. Does being jealous help you get what you want?
3. Can other people tell when you are jealous of them? How?

CURTAINS UP ON EXPRESSIONS (continued)

EXPRESSIONS COLLAGE

YOU WILL NEED:

Large paper or poster board
Scissors
Glue sticks
Old magazines and newspapers

HERE'S HOW: Provide students time to look through magazines and newspapers to find pictures of faces expressing a variety of emotions. Instruct them to cut them out and paste them on the poster board or paper. Older students can be encouraged to find words as well as pictures.

CURTAINS UP ON SOCIAL STUDIES

Alexander says that he'll move to Australia when he is angry or frustrated.

1. Where is Australia?
2. He wants to move to Australia to get away from his problems, like having to go back to the dentist. Have you ever run away from your problems?
3. Does it help?

Provide students with a globe or world map and let them find Australia. Use the computer to find out information about Australia. Is it a country or a continent? What kind of animals live in Australia? What plants are found there? What language do the people of Australia speak? Work in groups and report your findings in a class discussion.

CURTAINS UP ON ART

Use the following questions to jumpstart the activity.

Alexander draws a picture of an invisible castle and is disappointed when his teacher doesn't like it.

1. Do you think he deserves praise for his picture?
2. Do you think his picture is artistic?
3. Do you think that Alexander may have actually seen a picture when his teacher did not?
4. How could the picture be real to Alexander but not his teacher?
5. Does art always have to be something that we can see?
6. What are the different kinds of art?
7. Using the discussion from the previous questions, can we come up with a definition of art?

CURTAINS UP ON ART (continued)

'INVISIBLE' ART

YOU WILL NEED:

White crayons White drawing paper Dark colored tempera paint
Cups for paint Water Paintbrushes or sponges



HERE'S HOW:

1. Provide students with a white sheet of drawing paper and a white crayon. Instruct them to draw a picture pressing hard with the crayon. Simple drawings will work best.
2. Mix water with some tempera paint to create a 'wash'.
3. Allow students to paint evenly over their drawings with the wash & watch their invisible pictures emerge.
4. Display the artwork in the classroom or hallway.

CURTAINS UP ON FUN TOGETHER

Use the blackline master of the Tic Tac Toe game (on page 14) to encourage students to work in pairs together. Encourage each student to choose between gum and shoes, cut out their game pieces and cut out the game board. Provide time for several games and allow students to switch partners or game pieces.

CURTAINS UP ON READING MORE

Books by Judith Viorst:

Absolutely Positively Alexander: The Complete Stories (1997)

Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day (1979)

Alexander, Who Used to Be Rich Last Sunday (1972)

Alexander, Who Is Not (Do You Hear Me? I Mean It!) Going to Move (1995)

The Alphabet from Z to A (With Much Confusion on the Way) (1994).

Earrings! (1992)

The Good-Bye Book (1988)

I'll Fix Anthony (1969)

My Mama Says There Aren't Any Zombies, Ghosts, Vampires, Creatures, Demons, Monsters, Fiends, Goblins, or Things (1973)

The Tenth Good Thing About Barney (1971)

Poetry Collections by Judith Viorst:

If I were in Charge of the World and Other Worries

Sad Underwear and Other Complications

On the web:

www.kennedy-center.org/programs/family/alexander/students.html - This site offers Alexander games and an online adaptation read by Judith Viorst.

CURTAINS UP ON MATHEMATICS

USING A GRAPH

YOU WILL NEED:

Scissors

Crayons, Markers, or Colored pencils

Glue Sticks

A copy of tennis shoe blackline master (page 12) for each student

Butcher paper or bulletin board paper

Yardstick

HERE'S HOW:

On a large sheet of butcher or bulletin board paper, draw a grid with squares large enough in which to paste the shoe masters.

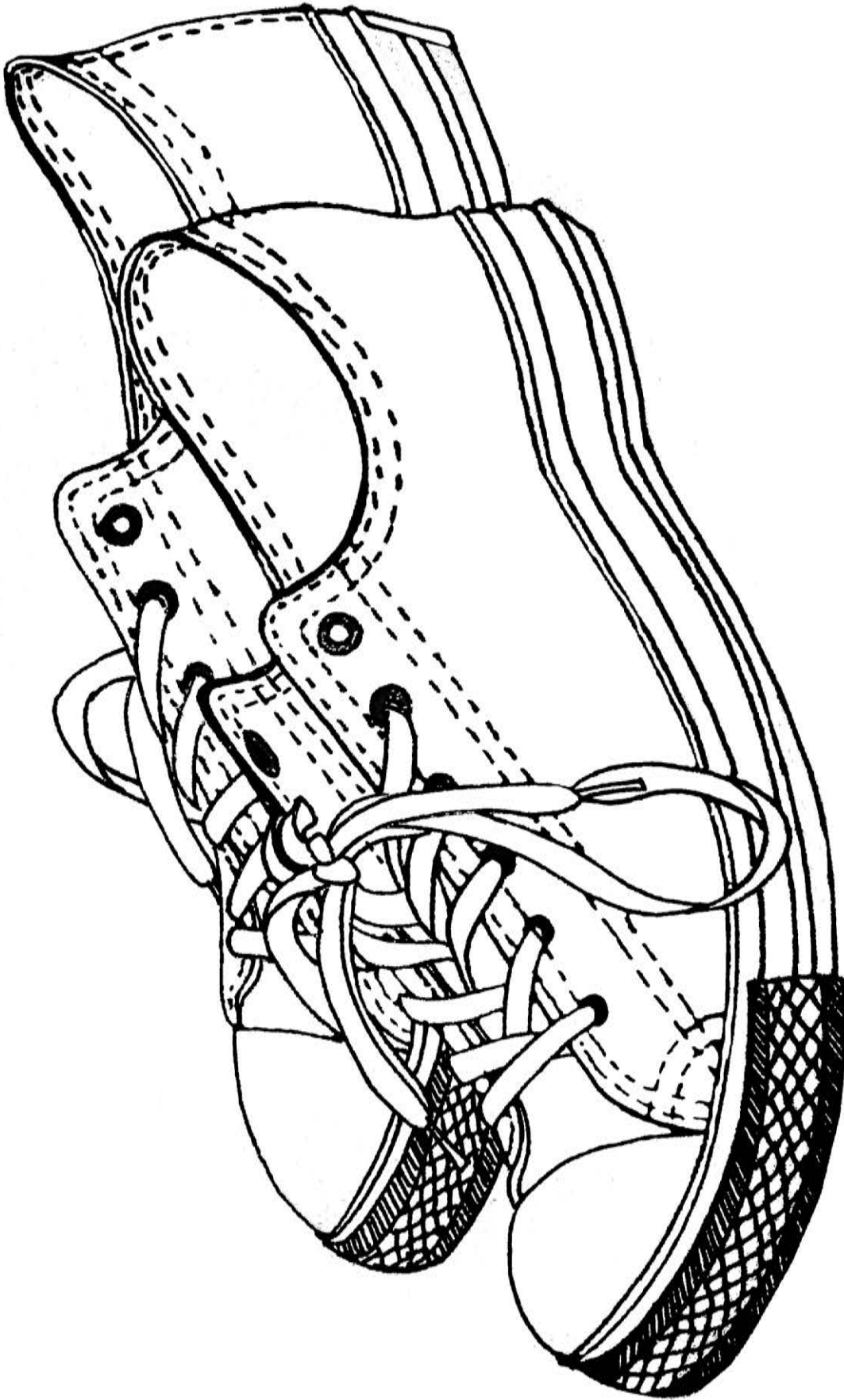
Explain that this activity will allow the class to have a visual measurement of the shoes each of them is wearing: a graph.

Encourage, through class discussion, students to provide headings for the graph. (Colors, styles, laces or Velcro, plain or printed, etc.)

Provide each student with scissors, markers, crayons, or colored pencils, and a glue stick and instruct them to decorate the shoes to match the pair they are wearing.

Cut on the dotted lines and paste the finished pair on the graph next to their name and under the correct heading.

Follow through with a discussion of comparison and contrast and how the graph makes it easy to see the results of a large measure of objects.

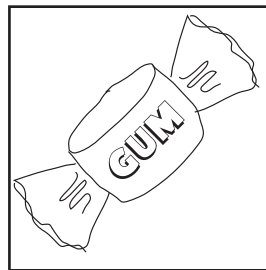
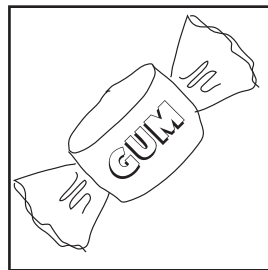
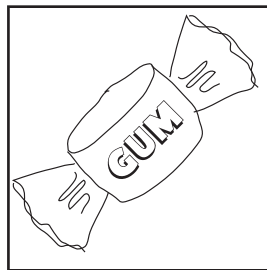
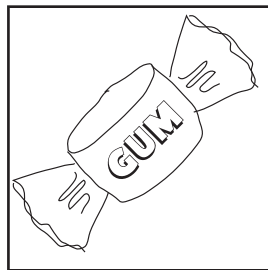
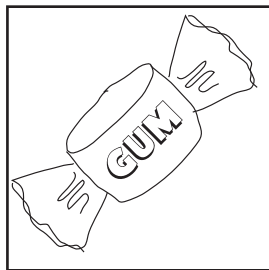
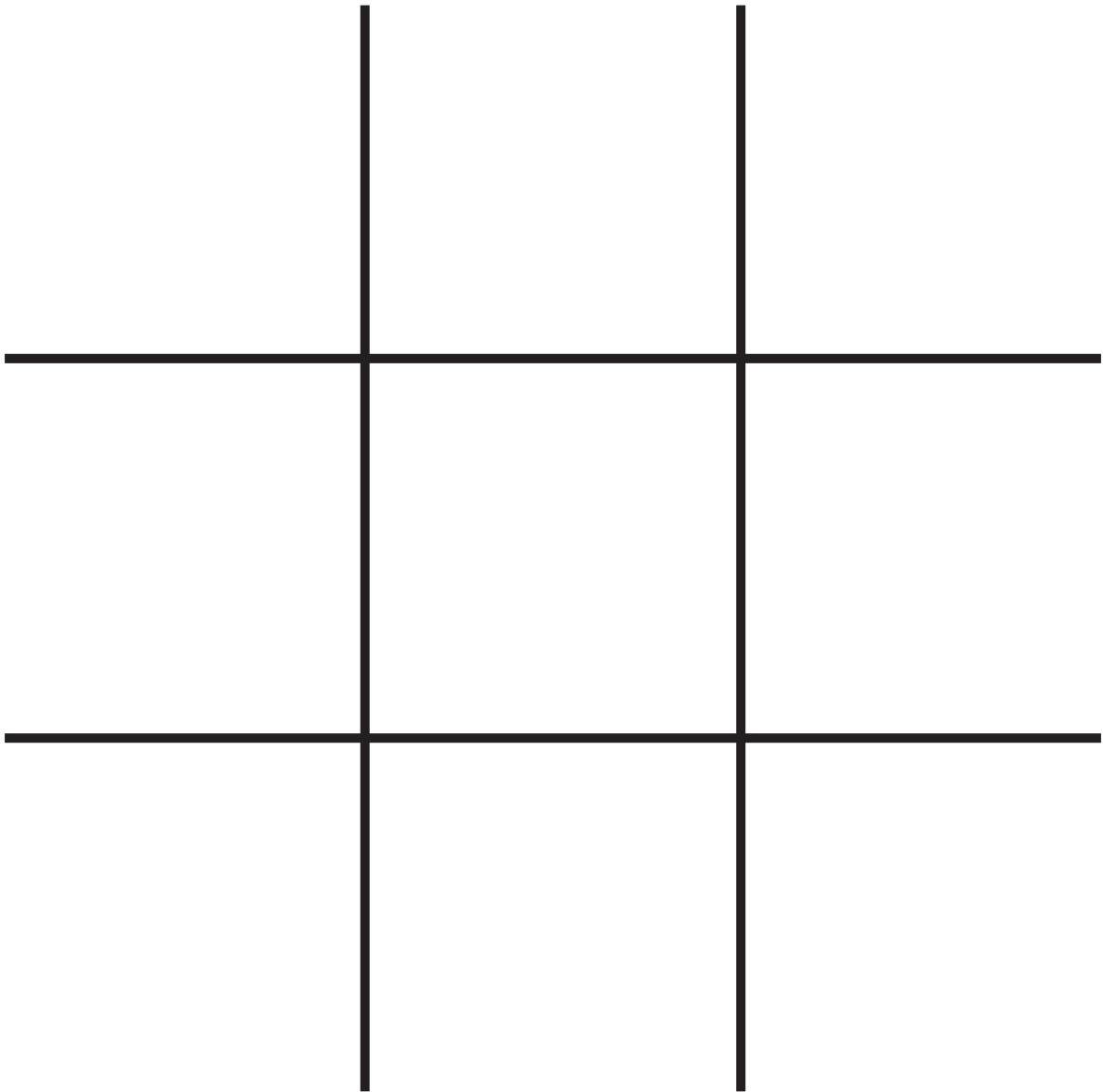


LETTER TEMPLATE

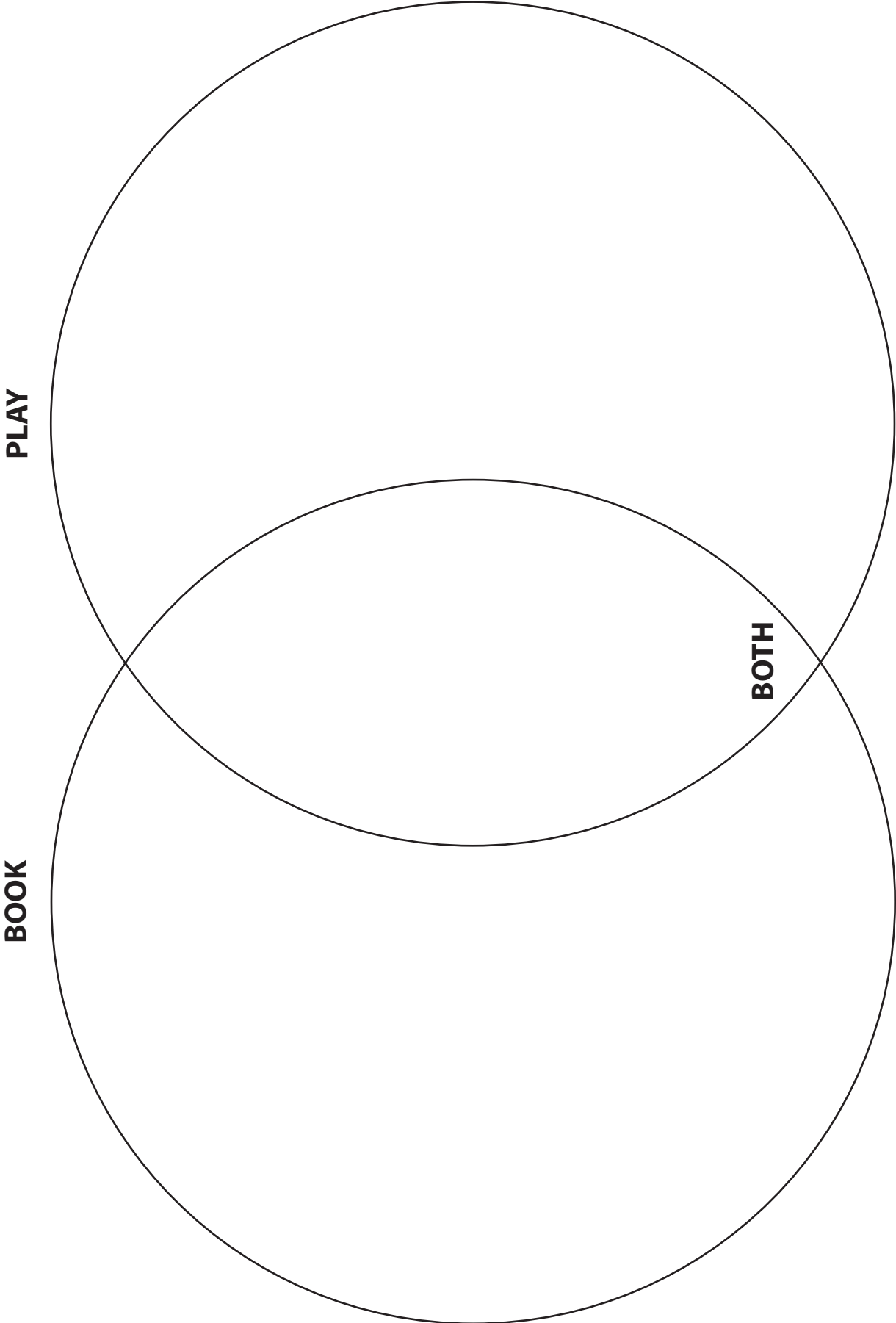
The image shows a letter template on a white page with a black border. At the top left, the text "LETTER TEMPLATE" is written in a simple, black, sans-serif font. Below this, the template is structured as follows:

- A single horizontal line for the header.
- A second horizontal line for a salutation, ending with a comma (,) on the right side.
- A large central section consisting of 18 horizontal lines for the main body of the letter.
- A closing section at the bottom right consisting of two horizontal lines, with the top line ending in a comma (,).

TIC TAC TOE GAME



COMPARE AND CONTRAST ACTIVITY



T.E.K.S. satisfied by ALEXANDER...

117.3 - Music, Kindergarten.

K.4 - Response/evaluation. The student responds to and evaluates music and musical performance.

A - Identify steady beat in musical performances.

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.

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.

117.6 - Music, Grade 1.

1.6 - Response/evaluation. The student responds to and evaluates music and musical performance.

A - Distinguish between beat/rhythm, higher/lower, louder/softer, faster/slower, and same/different in musical performances.

117.7 - Theatre, Grade 1.

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

A - Identify appropriate audience behavior.

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

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

117.9 - Music, Grade 2.

2.6 - Response/evaluation. The student responds to and evaluates music and musical performance.

A - Distinguish between beat/rhythm, higher/lower, louder/softer, faster/slower, and same/different in musical performances.

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.

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

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

117.12 - Music, Grade 3.

3.6 - Response/evaluation. The student responds to and evaluates music and musical performance.

A - Define basic criteria for evaluating musical performances.

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.

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.

117.15 - Music, Grade 4.

4.6 - Response/evaluation. The student responds to and evaluates music and musical performance.

A - Apply basic criteria in evaluating musical performances and compositions.

117.16 - Theatre, Grade 4.

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

A - Identify and apply appropriate audience behavior at performances.

C - Compare and contrast the ways ideas and emotions are depicted in art, dance, music, and theatre and select movement, music, or visual elements to enhance classroom dramatizations.

D - Compare theatre artists and their contributions.

117.18 - Music, Grade 5.

5.6 - Response/evaluation. The student responds to and evaluates music and musical performance.

B - Evaluate, using music terminology, personal preferences for specific music works and styles.

117.19 - Theatre, Grade 5.

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

A - Analyze and apply appropriate audience behavior at a variety of performances.

C - Compare and contrast ideas and emotions depicted in theatre, dance, music, and art and select and explain the use of movement, music, or visual elements to enhance classroom dramatizations.

D - Analyze and compare theatre artists and their contributions.