

teacher resource guide

schooltime performance series



the very hungry caterpillar

arts
education
njpac
discover. create. grow.

about the performance

Eric Carle's children's books have been charming young people and their parents for many years. His 1969 classic, *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, is a colorful romp through the life of a caterpillar who eats his way through a feast of good things and ultimately even the pages of the book!

The acclaimed Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia adapted Carle's book into a beautiful stage show that incorporates innovative puppetry, black lights, striking scenic effects and evocative original music. The nearly hour-long production not only showcases the famous tale of a caterpillar with an enormous appetite, but also depicts two other Carle stories: *Little Cloud* and *The Mixed-Up Chameleon*. *Little Cloud* is about a cloud who likes to change itself into different shapes, from a sheep to an airplane. *The Mixed-Up Chameleon* is about a lizard who yearns to be something else instead.

This beautiful performance creatively utilizes puppets painted with fluorescent material that glows in the dark under special black light lamps. Two puppet animators dressed in black manipulate the objects on the stage. Puppets and other objects on stage appear to float and move against a black background, a captivating theatrical technique.

Mermaid Theatre has been touring this production for 20 years and has staged it over 3,500 times in more than a dozen countries. The performance has been translated into Dutch, English, Spanish, Japanese, Korean, French and Mandarin.

The show's ultimate aim is to bring these stories to life, capture children's imagination, and provide a rewarding introduction to both the performing arts and the excitement of reading.

About Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia

Mermaid Theatre, founded in 1972, is based in Windsor, a small town in Nova Scotia, Canada. Since its establishment, Mermaid Theatre has had an outsize impact on children's entertainment and education: The company has entertained more than five million people in sixteen countries on four continents. Every year, more than 300,000 audience members attend the company's shows, which tour regularly. At its Windsor headquarters, the organization welcomes people of all ages to attend its Institute of Puppetry Arts, sponsors artists-in-residence through its Theatre Loft program, and stages shows at the Mermaid Imperial Performing Arts Centre.

Mermaid Theatre's specialty is adapting classic children's literature into evocative performances. The company's choice of material is based on the belief that early exposure to literature, the arts and the power of imagination is vital to a child's emotional and aesthetic development. The company's objective is to produce theatre that is entertaining, informative and stimulating to all the senses. Just as important is the company's goal of encouraging literacy and generating enthusiasm for reading.

Show Credits

Author/Illustrator: Eric Carle

Director/Production Designer: Jim Morrow

Composer: Steven Naylor

Narrator: Gordon Pinsent

Stage Manager: Don Brownrigg

Performers: Michael Venn, Katie Dorian

About Eric Carle

Eric Carle, the prolific writer and artist, creates picture books that are a kaleidoscope of color, interactive, brilliantly illustrated and innovatively designed. They wow young children with timeless tales that spark both imagination and a love for reading.

The way he renders animals and other figures is now iconic and instantly recognizable as the work of Eric Carle. He frequently uses collage techniques that incorporate hand-painted papers, which he cuts and layers to form bright and cheerful images.

Born in Syracuse, New York, in 1929, Carle moved with his parents to Germany when he was six years old. In 1952, he returned to America, arriving in New York City with only an art portfolio and forty dollars. He soon started working as a graphic designer at The New York Times. Later, he was an art director for an advertising agency for many years.

His career illustrating children's books started when author Bill Martin, Jr. asked Carle to illustrate *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* First published in 1967, the story has become a valuable tool in helping hundreds of thousands of toddlers identify colors and associative meanings with objects.

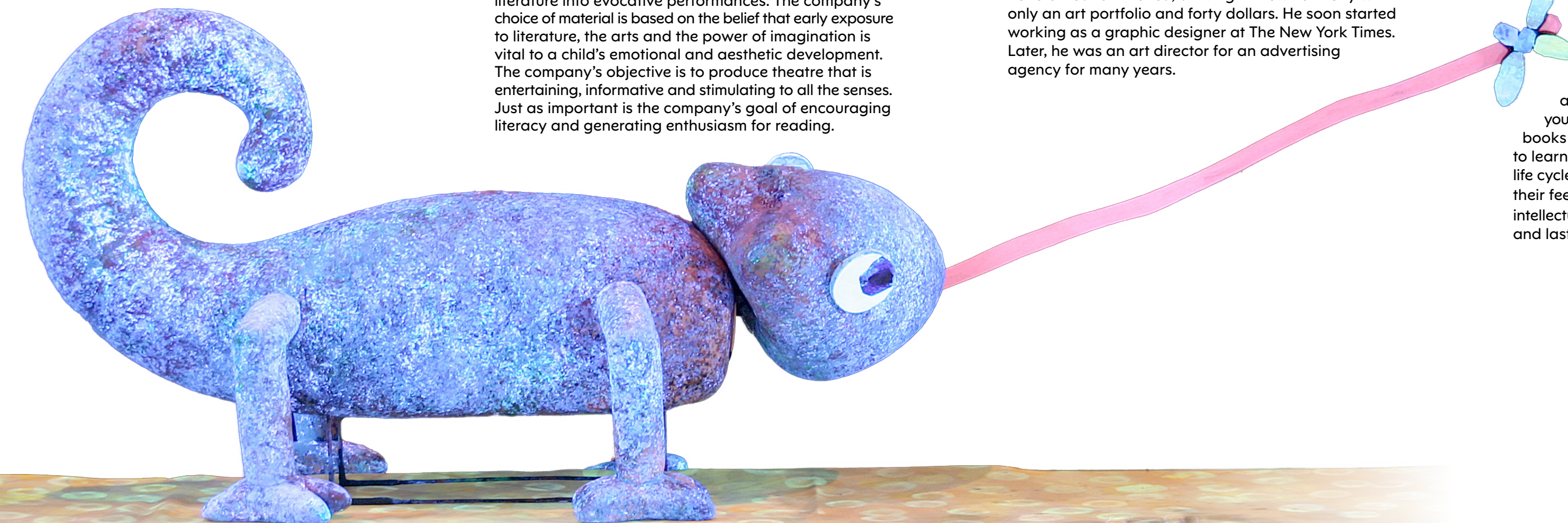
Soon Carle was writing his own stories. His first wholly original book was *1,2,3 to the Zoo*, followed soon afterward by his best-known work, *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*. This classic picture book has been translated into 62 languages and has sold over 41 million copies. At one point, it was estimated that a copy of the book sold every 30 seconds. Parents have read this book to their children, and their children, now adults, in turn have read this book to their own children, making it a multigenerational favorite.

Over the course of a long career, Eric Carle has illustrated more than 70 books, many of them bestsellers. In addition to illustrating, Carle wrote most of his children's books. More than 132 million copies of his books have sold around the world. He has also influenced a growing cadre of children's book writers and illustrators, many of whom

draw inspiration from Carle's storytelling skills and clever use of shapes and colors.

Carle's work taps into his intuitive understanding of children. The themes of his stories are drawn from his own love of nature and

animals—interests shared by most very young readers. His beautiful and entertaining books always offer the child the opportunity to learn about the world, from numbers to the life cycle of insects. Carle's concern for children, their feelings, inquisitiveness, creativity and intellectual growth makes his books stimulating and lastingly influential.



in the spotlight

An interview with Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia

How do your performances “introduce family audiences at home and abroad to the excitement of theatre and the performing arts”?

Mermaid Theatre is unique in the world of theatre for young audiences. All our shows adapt well-known storybooks that very young children are learning to read. We do this to promote both excellence in children’s theatre as well as literature and the joy of reading.

It’s a special feeling when a young child clutched his or her favorite book as they enter the theatre to see their favorite characters come to life on stage for the first time. Our shows are also detailed, elegant, and gently paced to allow the mind of the child to interact appropriately with the action onstage. And we use puppets which heighten the playfulness of our shows.

How do you encourage literacy and the love of reading?

Our company’s mission is to adapt universally well-known stories by some of the world’s best-known authors into theatre productions that tour the globe. We have been fortunate to have the opportunity to adapt some of the best, including: *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*; *Guess How Much I Love You*; *Swimmy/Frederic/Inch By Inch*; *Goodnight Moon*; and *Stella, Queen of the Snow*. The challenge for theatre creators, regardless of whether their plays are adaptations or original concepts, is to produce work that is elegant, entertaining, and high quality.

How do you select which children’s books to bring to the stage?

The first consideration when choosing a storybook is whether the story is appealing to children. Most successful books written for the very young are penned and often illustrated, by adults who have special insight into what young children like and how the young mind thinks. These books often include simple text, evocative pictures, and defined characters that are easily relatable. In the most successful stories, the message, if there is one, is most often implied and, although an important consideration, it’s often a secondary to the story itself. Masterful children’s authors can evoke a sense of wonder and awe through elegant storytelling, delightful pictures, and memorable characters that children want to visit again and again, night after night. Many of these stories also make good plays.

Many of your audience members have never seen a theatre performance before. How do they react?

It’s been my experience that audiences all over the world respond more or less the same to our productions, especially the children. They respond positively to the bright colors,

the playful action, the recognizable characters and imagery, and the beautiful music—but mostly they are happy simply to be with friends and family, in the theater, and to laugh, shout and be entertained.

What type of puppets do you use in your performances? Who creates them?

We are not a puppet company in the classic sense but a company that incorporates objects to tell stories. The objects that are more fully realized (with eyes, mouths, hands and feet, for example) we call our puppets. We have used traditional styles (hand, rod, marionettes or stringed, body, mouth or Muppet, and shadow) in past shows, but design decisions are almost always based more on the unique challenges associated with adapting well-known storybook characters into fully realized objects rather than on a particular puppet tradition. We first carve objects, or sculptures, and then learn how to move them through space by experimenting. Some of these sculptures have rods or strings incorporated and, as such, are considered traditional puppet styles but in any given play we create many styles of puppets, both traditional and new. We have no books to discover how to move these objects. We simply study and learn through experimenting and trial and error.

Who composes the music you incorporate into your performances?

Music is a fundamental component of each Mermaid show, a primary consideration from the early stages of development to completion. Music not only provides the requisite beat and rhythm that complement the action but also adds a layer of emotional texturing that underscores each moment throughout the play. Steven Naylor is our principal sound designer and composer and we have been fortunate to include his considerable skill and knowledge in our creative process for a long time.

Can you tell us more about the Institute of Puppetry Arts?

Mermaid’s Institute of Puppetry Arts was created to provide training opportunities for anyone with an interest in learning the art of object movement and puppetry. Since the company’s inception 44 years ago, puppetry has maintained a fundamental role in the development of each new play, and has been integral in securing Mermaid’s unique place in the ecology of theatre for young audiences in North America and beyond. We offer a variety of workshops for both the general public and the theatre community; our professional training session, called Animation; and a play creation component, with curriculum-based theatre pieces presented in school auditoria.



inspired ideas in the classroom

P

Prepare for the performance

If you have...

5 minutes: Talk to students about audience behavior/expectations (audience etiquette). Ask students: How is watching a movie or TV show different from watching a live theatre performance?

10 minutes: (above conversation and) Show them the promotional video for Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia's *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* mermaidtheatre.ca/video

30 minutes: (above conversations and) Read or show your students the three Eric Carle stories from the performance:

The Very Hungry Caterpillar youtu.be/vkYmvxPoAJI

The Mixed-Up Chameleon youtu.be/FrmZeXt7ScU

Little Cloud youtu.be/jWVwkdLg8Rs

Why do you think an audience is supposed to act a certain way (audience etiquette) at a live performance?

Is there a part from the Eric Carle books you are hoping to see in the performance?

Do you think the performance will look like the book illustrations? Why?

NJ Student Learning Standards

English Language Arts
NJSLA.SL1.
NJSLA.SL2.

E

Experience the performance

Encourage your students to look for favorite moments from the books in the performance.

Do they hear repetitive text that is directly from the book? Do they see how the characters and settings are similar to the book illustrations?

Sit back and enjoy the performance. Look for the characters and settings (the places where the story happens) that you already know from the books. Do they look like the illustrations? How are they similar or different?

Visual and Performing Arts
1.4 Aesthetic Responses & Critique
English Language Arts
NJSLA.SL2.

R

Reflect, respond and read

Reflect on the performance with your students. Make an anchor chart to post with their answers.

What was your favorite story? What did you like about that story? Who was your favorite character? Why do you like that character?

Did you find out something new about a story or character that you didn't know from the books?

Be a Theatre Critic! A critic is a person who gives a judgment about the quality of something.

Using **Activity Sheet 1**, draw a picture of something that happened in the performance that you liked.

Younger students: Tell your teacher a sentence or two about what you drew and why.

Older students: Write a few sentences about why you liked that part of the performance.

Visual and Performing Arts
1.4 Aesthetic Responses & Critique
English Language Arts
NJSLA.SL1.
NJSLA.W2.

F

Focus

Show your students examples of the art of Eric Carle. Feel free to use illustrations from any of his books.

What do students notice or like about the art?

What kind of details do they see in the illustrations? What do the colors make them think about?

Could the illustrations help you understand the story if we didn't have the text? How?

Does it look like illustrations in other books? Why or why not?

For more information on Eric Carle's illustrations check out: eric-carle.com/q-makepic.html

We get so much information from the artwork (illustrations) in a book.

Did you know that there is a whole museum of children's book art?

It is called **The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art** and it is in Massachusetts.

You can learn more about the museum here: carlemuseum.org/

Visual and Performing Arts
1.1 The Creative Process
1.3 Performance
English Language Arts
NJSLA.SL2.

O

Originate

Create a classroom art museum based on the work of Eric Carle. You can choose how many of the projects to make and showcase in your classroom.

Little Cloud paintings: Fold a piece of blue construction paper in half then open it up. Drip, sponge or brush white paint on 1 side of the fold. Fold the paper again and flatten/blot it with your hand so that the paint will be on both sides of the fold. When you open the paper a white "cloud" image will be on the paper. Have students write a sentence about what they think their cloud looks like.

Mixed up animals: Using **Activity Sheet 2** have students create a brand new animal! Students can draw on the worksheet or cut out pictures of animals and glue them in the sections.

Butterfly collage: Print an outline of a butterfly onto paper. Have children glue different sizes and colors of tissue paper on the wings to create their own collage design. Remember, the wings should match. Encourage them to layer pieces of tissue paper on top of each other just like Eric Carle!

You are going to create artwork inspired by Eric Carle's books and the performance you saw. Be creative and have fun!

Visual and Performing Arts
1.1 The Creative Process
1.3 Performance

R

Rehearse

Your museum can have art showcased on walls & bulletin boards or on tables. You can sort the art by theme or artist—make the museum as detailed or as simple as you want. You can create labels (title, artist, etc.) and frames (paper, popsicle sticks) for each piece of art. Do you want to showcase the inspiration books too? Have your students help you.

Once the class has designed the museum, have your students walk around. They should each be able to describe the process of creating the art and talk about their favorite pieces—one of their own creation and one that is created by a classmate.

You are going to be an official tour guide through your class art museum. Make a name tag to wear. Be prepared to tell your guests about Eric Carle, the pictures in his books and the performance you saw. Explain how you made the art project(s) and be sure to have two favorite projects to point out. Why do you like those projects? Practice speaking slowly and clearly so your guests will be able to hear and understand you.

Visual and Performing Arts
1.1 The Creative Process
1.3 Performance
1.4 Aesthetic Responses & Critique
English Language Arts
NJSLA.SL4.
NJSLA.SL5.

M

Make magic

Invite other classes or parents to your art museum. Your students may act as museum guides.

They should be able to tell their visitors about how they made the different types of art in the museum.

Welcome your guests to the class museum and take them on a tour. Talk to them about what they are seeing in the museum.

Be sure to thank your guests for coming to your art museum!

Visual and Performing Arts
1.3 Performance
1.4 Aesthetic Responses & Critique
English Language Arts
NJSLA.SL4.

curriculum standards

NJ Arts Standards

1.1 The Creative Process

All students will demonstrate an understanding of the elements and principles that govern the creation of works of art in dance, music, theatre, and visual art.

1.2 History of Arts & Culture

All students will understand the role, development, and influence of the arts throughout history and across cultures.

1.3 Performance

All students will synthesize skills, media, methods and technologies that are appropriate to creating, performing and/or presenting works of art in dance, music, theatre and visual art.

1.4 Aesthetic Response & Critique

All students will demonstrate and apply an understanding of arts philosophies, judgment and analysis to works of art in dance, music, theatre and visual art.

National Arts Standards

- 1: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.
- 5: Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation.
- 6: Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.
- 7: Perceive and analyze artistic work.
- 8: Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.
- 11: Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.

new jersey student learning standards

English Language Arts

NJSLSA.W2.

Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

NJSLSA.SL1.

Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

NJSLSA.SL2.

Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

NJSLSA.SL4.

Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

NJSLSA.SL5.

Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.

FIND THE STANDARDS

For more detailed information on the standards, visit these websites:

NJ ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS
state.nj.us/education/cccs/2016/ela

NJ SOCIAL STUDIES STANDARDS
state.nj.us/education/cccs/2014/ss

NJ WORLD LANGUAGE STANDARDS
state.nj.us/education/aps/cccs/wl

NJ ARTS STANDARDS
state.nj.us/education/cccs/2009/1.pdf

NATIONAL ARTS STANDARDS
nationalartsstandards.org

cultural connections

Saving insects—and the world

Visit a garden and you'll find insects in the dirt and on the growing plants. Ants dig through the soil, bees buzz over flowers and butterflies flutter through the air. Some people find them scary or see them as a nuisance, but insects are integral parts of Earth's ecosystem. They pollinate plants, enrich the soil and provide food to animals like birds and mammals. They are the most abundant form of animal life on the planet; Earth is home to 17 times more insects than humans, according to *The Guardian*. (This number includes spiders and crustaceans, which are related to insects.)

Unfortunately, insect populations worldwide are plummeting at alarming rates with scary implications on the world's ecosystem.

"Over 40% of insect species are threatened with extinction. Biodiversity of insects is threatened worldwide," read *Biological Conservation's* April 2019 report, which collated figures showing steep population decreases.

The most threatened among insects are butterflies and moths; the order of insects that also includes bees, ants, and wasps; and dung beetles. If such losses continue, Eric Carle's stories, including *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, may one day become visual reminders of a vibrant, bug-filled past.

Why is this happening? The report said major factors contributing to this are habitat loss, the prevalence of intensive agriculture or factory farming (which includes the heavy use of pesticides and herbicides), increasing urbanization, pollution such as fertilizer runoff, the introduction of invasive species, and climate change.

What can be done? The report recommends reform of current large-scale agricultural practices, the preservation of existing habitats, and remediation of polluted water.

For the average person, there are concrete, actionable steps to take. If you live with a patch of green lawn, the NRDC recommends not mowing parts of your lawn, or replanting it with low-maintenance turf grass, native plants or an edible landscape with vegetables and fruit trees. All of these alternatives provide habitat and food sources to mammals, birds and insects. If cities or towns forbid this in the local ordinances, residents should petition the governing body to allow for sustainable landscaping.

To assist butterflies and other pollinators, experts say the best advice is to grow plants for these insects, such as fennel or dill for swallowtail butterflies. Bees—from

the European honeybee to bumblebees—love the nodding heads of pollen-rich bee balm flowers and sunflowers. Be sure to grow native or species-variety of plants because hybrid flowers, such as heavily-bred tulips, are not favored by pollinator insects. Even a balcony or small patio is room enough for potted plants, which can be helpful to the insect population. Just don't spray those plants with pesticides.

Some people plant milkweed in order to attract Monarch butterflies, which have also seen steep population declines in recent years. After a Monarch has fluttered through a path of milkweed, these ecological activists will look through the leaves for the tell-tale shape of butterfly eggs. They then take the eggs and incubate them until they hatch into very hungry caterpillars! They shelter the caterpillars and feed them milkweed leaves until they form a chrysalis. The goal is to give the insects a leg-up on survival because caterpillars can be eaten by other insects or birds. Once a butterfly emerges from a chrysalis, it can be set free in the wild, replenishing the wild population.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service provides more tips on how to help save Monarchs and other insects.

Information can be found at fws.gov/savethemonarch/individual.html



8 The Very Hungry Caterpillar

vocabulary

Bedtime story

A story read or recounted to someone (as a child) at bedtime.

Black light

A special lamp that emits invisible ultraviolet light and very little visible light. Black light lamps can be used for scientific, theatrical, artistic, medical and forensic purposes. When you paint an object with a fluorescent material and you shine a black lamp over it, the object will glow and emit visible light. This is the technique that Mermaid Theatre uses to convey characters and scenic elements in *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*.

Butterfly

An insect with two pairs of large wings that are covered with tiny scales, usually brightly colored, and typically held erect when at rest. Butterflies fly by day, have clubbed or dilated antennae, and usually feed on nectar. Butterflies and moths are in the same order of insects. They go through four stages of life: eggs, larva, pupa and adult butterfly.

Caterpillar

The larva stage of the butterfly. After mating with other butterflies, adult butterflies lay eggs on a plant, where caterpillars hatch. They grow rapidly as they eat and then stop growing after reaching a certain size. The caterpillar transforms into the pupa stage, where they encase themselves in a relatively hard shell called a chrysalis. After a while, a butterfly emerges from the chrysalis. This transformation is called metamorphosis.

Cocoon

A silky case spun by the larvae of many insects for protection in the pupa stage. Some butterflies and moths spin a silk cocoon for their chrysalis.

Collage

A technique of composing a work of art by pasting on a single surface various materials not normally associated with one another, such as newspaper clippings, parts of photographs, theater tickets and fragments of an envelope. Eric Carle uses collage techniques for his books.

Illustration

A picture or diagram that shows an image or information in a visual manner, respectively. A person who makes illustrations is an illustrator. Illustrators like Eric Carle either base their images on real things in the world or makeup objects or figures from their imagination.

Marionette

A puppet that is moved by pulling strings or wires that are attached to its body.

Picture book

A book that has many pictures and is usually for younger children.

Pollinator

Insects that pollinate flowers and other plants. These include butterflies, moths, bees, wasps and flies.

Puppet

A small-scale figure (of a person or animal) usually with a cloth body and hollow head that fits over and is moved by the hand.

Puppet animator

A performer who animates puppets.

Rod puppet

A rod puppet is made out of wood, wire and string and is manipulated with wooden or wire rods. Rod puppets can sometimes have a complete working hinged mouth but many do not. Arms are usually a requirement as rods are attached to them.



resources

Websites

Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia
mermaidtheatre.ca

The Very Hungry Caterpillar & Other Eric Carle Favorites
Show Information: mermaidtheatre.ca/caterpillar

Eric Carle Website
eric-carle.com/home.html

The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art
carlemuseum.org

A Brief History of Children's Picture Books and the Art of Visual Storytelling
theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2012/02/a-brief-history-of-childrens-picture-books-and-the-art-of-visual-storytelling/253570/

History of Collage
artspace.com/magazine/art_101/art_market/art_101_collage-5622

History of Puppetry
theaterseatstore.com/blog/history-of-puppetry

About Butterflies
si.edu/spotlight/buginfo/butterfly

Monarch butterflies are dying out. Here's how cities can help.
on.natgeo.com/2Kt3v13

Save the monarch butterfly
fws.gov/savethemonarch/

More Sustainable (and Beautiful) Alternatives to a Grass Lawn
on.nrdc.org/2dw2Bjp

Videos

Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia – Introduction
youtu.be/7cfUT6cEJBw&t=17s

The Very Hungry Caterpillar & Other Eric Carle Favorites
youtu.be/cNFM-XzFfbQ

Eric Carle reads *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*
youtu.be/vkYmvxPoAJI

The Mixed-Up Chameleon
youtu.be/FrmZeXf7ScU

Little Cloud by Eric Carle
youtu.be/jWVwkdL98Rs

Books

Complete List of Eric Carle's Books
eric-carle.com/ECbooks.html

A History of Children's Books in 100 Books
by Roderick Cave and Sara Ayad
Firefly Books (October 10, 2017)

Puppets and Puppet Theatre
by David Currell
Crowood Press (March 1, 1999)

Making and Manipulating Marionettes
by David Currell
Crowood Press (January 1, 2005)

Buzz, Sting, Bite: Why We Need Insects
by Anne Sverdrup-Thygeson
Simon & Schuster (July 2, 2019)

Bugs: A Stunning Pop-up Look at Insects, Spiders, and Other Creepy-Crawlies
by George McGavin and Jim Kay
Candlewick (October 8, 2013)

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the arts in your school

In-School Residencies: Drama + Social Studies. Dance + Math. It all adds up in NJPAC's In-School Residencies in which professional teaching artists partner with educators to bring the arts into the classroom. Each 7- to 10-week program culminates in a student performance or an interactive family workshop. All programs address state and national standards. NJPAC is the regional provider in New Jersey for international arts programs like the NJ Wolf Trap Program and Dancing Classrooms Global.

Assemblies: NJPAC presents engaging school assembly programs that are presented by professional artists that invite students into the enchanting world of live performance. NJPAC's assembly series promotes cultural awareness and invigorates learning by presenting works that are connected to your school's curriculum.

Professional Development: NJPAC Professional Development engages classroom teachers, arts specialists and teaching artists as integrated teams that combine arts pedagogy, content, classroom management and social behavioral strategies to ignite and inspire arts-rich classrooms. Working as a team empowers teachers to share practice and strategy. Our goal is to inspire artistic and intellectual capacities in students, building competence and confidence in both students and teachers.

study the arts at njpac

Saturday Programs: NJPAC's Saturday programs are geared towards students at every level—from those who dream of starring on Broadway to those who are still learning their scales. Students work with professional artists to build technique and develop their own creative style in film, contemporary modern dance, hip hop, jazz, musical theater and symphonic band.

Summer Programs: Want to begin to explore the arts? Or immerse yourself in the study of one genre? Then join us at NJPAC next summer in one of seven programs that spark the creativity in every child through the study of music, dance and theater.

For more information or to schedule an appointment, please call our education sales team at 973.353.7058 or email artseducation@njpac.org. Visit njpac.org/education

Generous support for Schooltime provided, in part, by



NJPAC Arts Education programs are made possible through the generosity of our endowment donors: The Arts Education Endowment Fund in honor of Raymond C. Chambers, The Joan and Allen Bildner Family Fund, Albert and Katherine Merck, and The Sagner Family Foundation

Generous annual support for NJPAC Arts Education Programs is provided by: NJ Advance Media/The Star-Ledger, McCrane Foundation, Inc., care of Margrit McCrane, John and Suzanne William/Goldman Sachs Gives, MCJ Amelior Foundation, Amy Liss, Jennifer A. Chalsty, Johnson & Johnson Family of Companies, Panasonic Corporation of America, and Atlantic, Tomorrow's Office, Stewart and Judy Colton