

njpac
arts
education

**schooltime
performance
series**



velveteen
a new musical

teacher resource guide

about the performance

Velveteen: A New Musical is a timely re-telling of the classic *Velveteen* tale, incorporating original songs, audience interaction and pertinent messages for young audiences. When Lulu moves in with her Gran, she feels lost and scared of her new home. To comfort her in the midst of change, her Gran gifts her a stuffed rabbit named Velveteen as a birthday gift. As Lulu's old toys (Ty, Sophia and Lionel) watch, she and Velveteen become the best of friends, sparking a bit of competition amongst the toys. Gazing through the window, Velveteen begins to realize that he is not quite the same as the rabbits he sees hopping around the yard. Is he even real? What does it mean to be real? As the years pass and with the help of another of Lulu's longtime toys, Velveteen realizes that the magic of being real has been within him all along! Young audiences will experience what it means to be a friend, find their identity and purpose, and embrace both the thoughtfulness and playfulness of this timeless story.



cultural connections

“Real isn’t how you are made, it’s a thing that happens to you.” This text from Margery Williams’ 1922 book *The Velveteen Rabbit* has spawned a timeless tale whose lessons still remain poignant today. Williams, a lifelong author, penned several stories illustrating the relationship between children and their toys, often bestowing human traits and emotions to the toys. This concept undoubtedly reveals a natural connection to the *Toy Story* franchise movies which follow a similar trajectory and are extremely well-known in popular culture.

In *Velveteen: A New Musical*, Williams’ tale is adapted for the stage, focusing partly on the ways rabbits communicate their feelings through actions. In the song “Meeting the Bunnies,” the outdoor rabbits share that they hop as a way to move from one place to another, thump to express anger and binky when they’re excited. Even household pets express their emotions in specific ways, some more unique than others. Animals as a whole communicate through actions and sounds. Consider a bear that rises up on its hind legs, a snake that lets out a hiss or a dog whose tail wags rapidly. Certainly, audience members will form connections between the rabbits on the stage and the animals they’ve encountered in their lives.

Another theme woven throughout *Velveteen: A New Musical* is exhibiting tenacity in the face of change. As Lulu settles into living with her Gran, she begins to find comfort in friendships with both new and old toys. During the show, the seasons change and with them, the progression of time. We see the relationship between Lulu and Velveteen transform as Lulu grows up and her “favorites” change. The same is true for each of us as we reflect upon a favorite stuffed animal, song, game, or friend we once cherished. Lastly, we watch Velveteen show what it means to be a true friend as Lulu becomes ill, providing her with comfort and companionship. Through all of these changes, Velveteen continues to feel deeply all of the emotions that come his way and finds out what it means to be really real.

vocabulary

Binky

A movement made by a rabbit when they are excited

Character

A specific person or role portrayed by an actor in a performance

Choreographer

A person who creates a story through movement

Communicate

To share important information, ideas or emotions

Costume

The clothing, accessories and makeup an actor wears to portray a specific character

Crepuscular

A term used to describe animals who are most active at dawn and dusk

Emotions

Bodily signals that show us our feelings

Herbivores

A term used to describe animals who only eat plants and vegetables (no meat)

Persistence

Continuing to do something or trying to achieve a goal, despite obstacles, difficulty or discouragement

Prop

An object used by an actor

Ripe

A term used to describe a food being fully grown and ready to eat

Tenacity

Refusing to give up or let go

Thump

A movement made by a rabbit when they are angry

Velveteen

A heavy cotton fabric that is similar to velvet

Warren

An underground tunnel created by rabbits that connect them to one another



inspired learning for the classroom

Teacher Focus		Student Activity	NJ Student Learning Standards	
P	Prepare	Discover what your students already know about this art form, topic or type of performance. Then explain more fully what they will see at the theater and why it's important. This can be accomplished by sharing images, vocabulary, videos or context that might help them appreciate the performance more fully.	Read the book, <i>The Velveteen Rabbit</i>, aloud with the class or find an illustrated PDF or animated video version on YouTube. Prompt students to share their favorite parts of the story and remind them that <i>Velveteen: A New Musical</i> closely follows the same plotline. For further enrichment, show students the Pre-Show Workshop video by Playhouse Square, the company that conceptualized and produced <i>Velveteen: A New Musical</i>. If desired, jump to specific segments within: • “Warm Up with Jailyn” (the show’s choreographer): 1:57 • Character Exploration: 4:47 • “What Is That?” Prop Game: 5:28 • Fun Facts About Rabbits: 7:22 • Choreography Q&A with Jailyn: 8:27	English Language Arts RL.IT.K.3. Visual & Performing Arts - Dance: 1.1.2.Pr4a OR Anchor Standard 4 Visual & Performing Arts - Dance: 1.1.2.Pr5d OR Anchor Standard 5
E	Experience	For some students, this may be their first time in a theater. Review audience etiquette and go over expectations for arrival and departure from the theater. Before watching the show, provide a discussion question for them to consider during the performance. Optional: At school, let students share a one-word answer to a prompt about how they feel (e.g. which TV character do you feel like today? If you were a texture, what texture would you be?). After the field trip, ask students the same question and let them explain why they feel the same or why they feel differently.	Sometimes, an audience member is required to remain still and quiet from the beginning of the performance until the end. However, in <i>Velveteen: A New Musical</i>, audience members are invited to perform along with the actors on stage! When invited, students will be able to echo sounds, move to simple dance moves and sing short phrases on a neutral syllable. This may be a different experience than what is traditionally considered to be appropriate audience etiquette. Be sure to distinguish between the two and remind students to participate enthusiastically — but only when invited! Ask students to consider the following: 1. How does it feel to be a part of the show? Have you ever attended a show like this before? 2. What other songs, dances, or activities do you know of that use call and response and simple moves?	Visual & Performing Arts - Dance: 1.1.2.Pr5e OR Anchor Standard 5 Visual & Performing Arts - Music: 1.3A.2.Cr1a OR Anchor Standard 1 Visual & Performing Arts - Music: 1.3A.2.Pr6b OR Anchor Standard 6
R	Reflect	Give students a moment to think about their answer to the discussion question you introduced in the experience section. Then allow them to share their response out loud with the class. Next, have students reflect on the skillset of the performers they saw in the show. Go around the class and have each student fill in the following statement: “I can already _____ like the performers did, but I can’t _____ yet!” After everyone is done, remind them that with enough time and practice, they can accomplish anything they set their minds to.	Reflect on the themes of change, friendship and authenticity by leading a class discussion surrounding the following questions: 1. If you could be an actor, do you think you would enjoy singing or dancing more? Or both equally? 2. What are some of the signs of summer that you saw on the stage? What signs of fall, winter and spring do you see in your life? 3. How can you be a good friend like Velveteen? 4. What traits make you special and unique?	SEL Competencies: Self-Awareness, Social Awareness, Relationship Skills
F	Focus	Use this time to review the vocabulary section and complete the <i>SchoolTime</i> activity sheets.	Click here for SchoolTime Activity Sheets	Visual and Performing Arts - Visual Art: 1.5.2.Cr1b OR Anchor Standard 1: Generating and conceptualizing ideas Visual and Performing Arts - Visual Art: 1.5.2.Cn10a OR Anchor Standard 10 Career Readiness, Life Literacies, and Key Skills – Information and Media Literacy: 9.4.2.IML.3
O	Originate	After reviewing vocabulary, write a class poem about the performance, where each student adds a line. Once the poem is complete, read the poem as a class three times with each student saying the line they wrote. Before each repetition, give them a prompt to inform how they deliver their line (e.g. say it like you’re excited, scared, angry, etc.). Optional: To reinforce learning from the focus section, encourage students to incorporate all the vocabulary words.		Visual and Performing Arts · Anchor Standards 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 10 SEL Self-Awareness, Social Awareness, Relationship Skills, Responsible Decision-Making
R	Rehearse	Have each student draw their own picture inspired by the show and their class poem. As they are working, use this time to walk around and ask them each about what they are drawing, the materials they are using and what inspired them.		Visual and Performing Arts ·Anchor standards 1, 2, 7, 8, 10 SEL Self-Awareness, Social Awareness, Relationship Skills, Responsible Decision-Making
M	Mix it all together!	Allow each student to present their artwork and discuss why they drew what they did, giving them an opportunity to express themselves visually and verbally. Between presentations, allow two or three students to describe their reactions to the artwork that was presented. Encourage them to use phrases like “It reminded me of _____” or “It made me feel _____” rather than describing the art as good or bad. Once everyone is done presenting, put the artwork up on the wall with the class poem to complete your students’ poem gallery.		Visual and Performing Arts · Anchor standards 5, 6, 7, 8, 10 SEL Self-Awareness, Social Awareness, Relationship Skills, Responsible Decision-Making

curriculum standards

English Language Arts

RL.IT.K.3. With prompting and support, identify characters, settings, and major events in a story.

RL.CT.2.8

Compare and contrast two or more versions of the same story.

RL.IT.2.3

Describe how characters respond to major events and challenges.

SL.PE.2.1

Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about grade 2 topics and texts, in small and larger groups.

RL.MF.2.6

Use information gained from illustrations and words to demonstrate understanding.

Visual & Performing Arts

Dance: 1.1.2.Pr4a

Perform planned and improvised movement sequences, with variations in direction (e.g., forward/backward, up/down, big/small, sideways, right/left, diagonal), spatial level (e.g., low, middle, high), and spatial pathways (e.g., straight, curved, circular, zigzag), alone and in small groups. OR Anchor Standard 4: Selecting, analyzing, and interpreting work

Dance: 1.1.2.Pr5d

Explore a variety of body positions requiring a range of strength, flexibility and core support. OR Anchor Standard 5: Developing and refining techniques and models or steps needed to create products

Dance: 1.1.2.Pr5e

Explore locomotor action vocabulary (e.g., gallop, hop, slide, skip) and non-locomotor action vocabulary (e.g., bending, stretching, twisting) and execute codified movements from various styles/genres with genre specific alignment. OR Anchor Standard 5: Developing and refining techniques and models or steps needed to create products

Music: 1.3A.2.Cr1a

Explore, create and improvise musical ideas using rhythmic and melodic patterns in various meters and tonalities. OR Anchor Standard 1: Generating and conceptualizing ideas.

Music: 1.3A.2.Pr6b

Perform appropriately for the audience and purpose. OR Anchor Standard 6: Conveying meaning through art

Visual Art: 1.5.2.Cr1b

Engage in individual and collaborative art making through observation and investigation of the world, and in response to personal interests and curiosity OR Anchor Standard 1: Generating and conceptualizing ideas



Career Readiness, Life Literacies, and Key Skills Information and Media Literacy

9.4.2.IML.3

Use a variety of sources including multimedia sources to find information about topics such as climate change, with guidance and support from adults (e.g., 6.3.2.GeoGI.2, 6.1.2.HistorySE.3, W.2.6, 1-LSI-2)

Science

K-LS1-1

Use observations to describe patterns of what plants and animals need to survive.

1-LS1-1

Use materials to design a solution to a human problem by mimicking how plants and animals use external parts to survive.

1-LS1-2

Read texts and use media to determine patterns in behavior that help offspring survive.

2-LS4-1

Make observations of plants and animals to compare the diversity of life in different habitats.

Theater

1.4.2.Cr3b

Identify similarities and differences in sounds and movements in a guided drama experience.

1.4.2.Re7a

Express emotional responses to characters to recall and recognize when artistic choices are made in a guided drama experience.

1.4.2.Cr3a

With prompting and support, contribute to the adaptation of plot and dialogue in a guided drama experience.

1.4.2.Re9a

With prompting and support, identify and explain preferences and emotions in a guided drama experience, or theatre performance.

additional resources

NJPAC

About NJPAC
njpac.org/about

NJPAC's Arts Education programs
njpac.org/arts-education

NJPAC's David G. Berger Master Class Series
njpac.org/berger

Velveteen: A New Musical

njpac.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/10/Velveteen_Activity-Sheets.pdf

Animals

Excerpt: The Emotional Lives of Animals | Nature | PBS

How Animals Communicate | San Antonio Zoo

The Emotion Zoo: Animals Show Emotions and Feelings

10 hopping fun rabbit facts! | National Geographic Kids

Moment of Rabbit | National Geographic Kids

How to Draw a Rabbit | PBS

Velveteen: A New Musical

Pre-Show Workshop

Velveteen: A New Musical | Holden Arts

Q&A with *Velveteen: A New Musical*'s composer Molly Andrews-Hinders | Playhouse Square

Aspects of Theater

What Does a Choreographer Do? | PBS

Prop Box Learning and Play! | Rowan University

Call and Repeat | GoNoodle

The Velveteen Rabbit

The Velveteen Rabbit | World Stories Bank

Watch *The Velveteen Rabbit* | Apple TV

The Velveteen Rabbit PDF | FlipBuilder

The Velveteen Rabbit: Read Aloud Picture Book | YouTube

Social Emotional Learning

How to Make a Friend:

Teacher and Caregiver Guide | GoNoodle

Self-Awareness: Courage and Confidence | GoNoodle

Being a Good Friend in Hedgehog Land

Child Mind Institute

Teaching Friendship Skills in Preschool | Edutopia

Seasons

From Season to Season | Time for Kids

Learn About the Four Seasons | *Sesame Street*



bring the arts to your school

In-School Residencies

NJPAC teaching artists come right to your school to teach the performing arts to your students. Our super-flexible in-person residencies are designed to meet your needs and you'll have a dedicated program manager to help you every step of the way. It's the perfect program to keep your students creating, connecting and expressing themselves through the magic of the arts.

Professional Development

Calling all educators! Expand your teaching skills, deepen your curriculum and give yourself a creative boost in NJPAC's forward-thinking professional development workshops. Our virtual PD programs are for teachers all the way from pre-K to high school and include hip hop, dance, storytelling, theater, music and more. Not only will you learn something ... you'll also have fun and be inspired.

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arts training for students

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 hip hop, jazz, theater, 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 our immersive programs that spark the creativity in every child through the study of music, dance and theater.

contact us!

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

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M&T Bank



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+ deceased