The Very Hungry Caterpillar and Other Eric Carle Favorites

Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia
Dear Teacher,

The State Theatre in New Brunswick, New Jersey welcomes you to the performance of *The Very Hungry Caterpillar and Other Eric Carle Favorites*. The production, by Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia, brings to life three popular children’s books by Eric Carle.

These *Keynotes* provide information and activities that will help you prepare your students for the performance and then reflect on what they’ve seen and heard in the show. With younger students, we encourage you to read the information to them and facilitate the activities. This guide also contains reproducible activity pages that can be used with even the youngest students.

See you at the State Theatre!

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*Keynotes* for *The Very Hungry Caterpillar and Other Eric Carle Favorites* created by Lian Farrer.

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The Heldrich is the official hotel of the State Theatre.
Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia’s *The Very Hungry Caterpillar and Other Eric Carle Favorites* has been touring continuously since 1999. To date, the company has presented more than 1,665 performances to more than 1,170,000 people in the U.S., Canada, Mexico, Singapore, Japan, Holland, Vietnam, Macau, Taiwan, and Hong Kong. To accommodate demand, the company has had to construct duplicate versions of the puppets and props so that the show can be performed simultaneously in different places across the globe. The show has been performed in English, Spanish, Japanese, and Korean!

*The Very Hungry Caterpillar and Other Eric Carle Favorites* employs a variety of styles of PUPPETRY—including rod and hand puppets—to tell the three stories. Amazingly, all of the puppets and scenic elements are manipulated by just two puppeteers!

Part of the visual magic of this production comes from the use of BLACK LIGHT, which allows only certain elements onstage to be seen by the audience. The puppets and scenery are painted with fluorescent paint, which glows in the dark under ultraviolet light (also called black light). Under black light, anything black becomes invisible. During the show, the puppeteers will be on stage as they work with the puppets. They wear black clothing and black masks and perform in front of a black wall. This makes them almost invisible to the audience and allows them to execute all kinds of visual illusions with the puppets.

The show also employs pre-recorded NARRATION of Eric Carle’s text to the three stories, and original MUSIC composed by Steven Naylor especially for this production.

### Resources

Visit Mermaid Theatre’s website:  
[www.mermaidtheatre.ns.ca](http://www.mermaidtheatre.ns.ca)

For more information about black light, check out  
[www.howstuffworks.com/question59.htm](http://www.howstuffworks.com/question59.htm)

If you’re interested in learning how to use puppets with your students, here are some useful resources:

*Making Puppets Come Alive*, by Larry Engler and Carol Fijan

*A Show of Hands: Using Puppets with Young Children*, by Ingrid M. Crepeau and M. Ann Richards
What’s the Story?

These are the three Eric Carle stories that you’ll see in the performance.

The Very Hungry Caterpillar

One sunny Sunday, a little caterpillar is hatched out of a tiny egg and he realizes he is very hungry! On Monday, he eats his way through one apple; on Tuesday, he eats through two pears—and he is still hungry. As the week continues, this very hungry caterpillar goes on an amazing journey and through a lot of foods! Full at last, he makes a cocoon around himself and goes to sleep. A few weeks later, he wakes up to find himself transformed into a beautiful butterfly!

The Mixed-Up Chameleon

As a small chameleon sits on a shiny green leaf, a brown tree, a red flower, and yellow sand, it changes colors and blends right in. One day the chameleon visits a zoo. When it sees all the animals, the chameleon wishes he could look just like them. The chameleon begins to change: parts of each animal become parts of its body. Because the chameleon is “a little of this and a little of that,” it is no longer able to catch a fly when it gets hungry. The unhappy chameleon wishes to be a chameleon again. When its wish comes true, the chameleon is once again able to catch a fly.

Little Cloud

Little Cloud is a small cloud. Little Cloud changes shape to resemble different animals and objects: first a giant cloud, then a sheep, an airplane, a shark, two trees, a rabbit, a hat, and then a clown. Eventually the other clouds call Little Cloud back, and they join together to make rain.
Meet Eric Carle

Eric Carle, the creator of brilliantly illustrated and innovatively designed picture books for young children, was born in Syracuse, New York in 1929 and moved to Germany when he was six. He returned to New York in 1952 and got a job as a graphic designer for The New York Times. A few years later, he met Bill Martin, Jr., who asked him to illustrate his first book—*Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?*—and Carle’s career in children’s literature was born. Since 1969, Eric Carle has written and illustrated more than 60 books. His most popular ones, such as *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, have been translated into more than 25 languages.

In these excerpts of an interview with Eric Carle, he discusses his artistic technique and the sources of inspiration for his books.

*My pictures are collages. I didn’t invent the collage. Artists like Picasso and Matisse and Leo Lionni and Ezra Jack Keats made collages. Many children have done collages at home or in their classrooms. In fact, some children have said to me, “Oh, I can do that.” I consider that the highest compliment.*

*I begin with plain tissue paper and paint it with different colors, using acrylics. Sometimes I paint with a wide brush, sometimes with a narrow brush. Sometimes my strokes are straight, and sometimes they’re wavy. Sometimes I paint with my fingers. Or I paint on a piece of carpet, sponge, or burlap and then use that like a stamp on my tissue papers to create different textures.*

*These papers are my palette and after they have dried I store them in color-coded drawers. Let’s say I want to create a caterpillar: I cut out a circle for the head from a red tissue paper and many ovals for the body from green tissue papers; and then I paste them with wallpaper glue onto an illustration board to make the picture.*

*When I was a small boy, my father would take me on walks across meadows and through woods. He would lift a stone or peel back the bark of a tree and show me the living things that scurried about. He’d tell me about the life cycles of this or that small creature and then he would carefully put the little creature back into its home. I think in my books I honor my father by writing about small living things. And in a way I recapture those happy times.*

Resources

At Eric Carle’s official website, find more information about the author, a list of his books, video of him at work, a teacher bulletin board for sharing ideas and activities, and more.

[www.eric-carle.com](http://www.eric-carle.com)

Here are some books that teachers will find useful:

*The Art of Eric Carle*, by Eric Carle

*You Can Make a Collage: A Very Simple How-To Book*, by Eric Carle

*Teaching with Favorite Eric Carle Books*, by Joan Novelli
Things to Do and Discuss

The Very Hungry Caterpillar

In the story, the very hungry caterpillar eats his way through a lot of different foods. With your students, create a list of all the foods the caterpillar eats. Then ask:

Were all of the foods that the caterpillar ate healthy foods?
What types of foods would you eat if you could eat anything you wanted to?
Were the foods that you picked healthy or unhealthy?

Discuss the food pyramid with your students and explain to them which foods they should eat to grow up healthy and strong. Have students create a healthy food book by drawing or cutting out and coloring pictures of foods that they should incorporate into their diet.

Discuss the life cycle of a butterfly: egg, larva (caterpillar), pupa, and butterfly.

The Mixed-Up Chameleon

A chameleon is a type of lizard that lives in trees. To eat, the chameleon shoots out its long tongue and grabs an insect. Chameleons can change their skin color to match the color of a tree, a rock, or the ground. This makes it hard for other animals to see them...and eat them!

Explain to your students that when the chameleon in this story visits the zoo, it wishes to be like each of the animals it sees there. Ask your students:

What animals parts would you like to have? A tail? Wings? Big ears?

Have students draw a picture of themselves with these parts and talk about what they could do if they really had them.

Little Cloud

After reading Little Cloud to your students, have them imagine the adventures Little Cloud would have visiting your classroom. Brainstorm a list of the things Little Cloud would turn into after seeing them in your classroom. Younger children can dictate a continuing class story as you take notes; older children can write their own stories.

Clouds come in different shapes and sizes, and are found at different levels in the sky. CUMULUS CLOUDS have flat bases with piled-up, puffy tops that look like balls of cotton. They are usually low in the sky. STRATUS CLOUDS are grayish clouds that often cover the entire sky at a low level. They resemble fog that does not reach the ground. CIRRUS CLOUDS are high-level clouds. They are thin, white, wispy clouds made out of ice crystals. NIMBUS CLOUDS are clouds that make rain.

Resources

Caterpillars & Butterflies

Chameleons

Chameleon's Colors, by Chisato Tashiro. Beautiful illustrations highlight this story of a chameleon who is asked to decorate the other animals in the jungle in bright colors.

Clouds

Clouds (Let's-Read-and-Find-Out Science 1), by Anne Rockwell, illustrated by Frané Lessac. An easy-to-read picture book about clouds, including simple instructions for making a cloud of your own.
What Happens When?

Do you remember what happens in *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*? Color the pieces below and then cut them out. Put all the pieces in the same order as the story!

At the performance of *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, listen for these words:

“But he was still hungry.”

How many times did you hear them?_____
Use the clues to fill in the puzzle with the words from the list. One word has been filled in to get you started.

1. On _____, the very hungry caterpillar ate five oranges.
2. On _____, the very hungry caterpillar ate three
3. This story is about a very hungry _____.
4. On _____, the very hungry caterpillar ate some cake, cheese, ice cream, pickle, sausage, and more!
5. On _____, the very hungry caterpillar ate two pears.
6. On Thursday, the very hungry caterpillar ate four
7. On Monday, the very hungry caterpillar ate one _____.
8. On Sunday, the very hungry caterpillar ate one
9. Soon the very hungry caterpillar will turn into a beautiful _____.

APPLE   SATURDAY   BUTTERFLY   FRIDAY   LEAF
SUNDAY   STRAWBERRIES   CATERPILLAR   WEDNESDAY
TUESDAY
Directions:
1. Color the caterpillar body and face.
2. Carefully cut out the body and face along the solid **BOLD** lines.
3. Fold the body accordion-style along the *dotted* lines (see the picture below).
4. Glue the head to one end of the body.
5. Take 2 pencils and tape one at each end under the caterpillar body.
6. Hold a pencil in each hand and see if you can make your puppet move like a real caterpillar!
A chameleon is an animal that can change the color of its skin to match whatever it happens to be sitting on, such as a rock, a leaf, or a branch.

Why would a chameleon want to do that?

In the picture on the right, can you find the 2 chameleons hiding on the flower?

*The Mixed-Up Chameleon* is a story about a chameleon who goes to the zoo.

Have you ever been to the zoo?

What animals did you see there?

What did they look like?

How did they move?

What kinds of noises did they make?

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Circle the correct answer for each animal named below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Animal</th>
<th>Feathers</th>
<th>Fur</th>
<th>Puppies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A LION</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A BEAR</td>
<td>winter</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An ELEPHANT</td>
<td>purple</td>
<td>big</td>
<td>shiny</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A FLAMINGO</td>
<td>fish</td>
<td></td>
<td>bird</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A GIRAFFE</td>
<td>spots</td>
<td>wings</td>
<td>stripes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A TURTLE</td>
<td>tree</td>
<td>tent</td>
<td>shell</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Cloud Shapes

Little Cloud can make many different shapes. What are some of the shapes that Little Cloud makes? Can you make your body into any of the shapes?

Copy the letters to write out the names of the shapes Little Cloud makes.

sheep

hat

airplane

shark

clown

How Many Things?

In the story, Little Cloud becomes a giant cloud, a sheep, an airplane, a shark, two trees, a rabbit, a hat, and a clown. Count them!

1 giant cloud + 1 sheep + 1 airplane + 1 shark + 2 trees + 1 rabbit + 1 hat + 1 clown + ____
Going to see a play at a theater is not the same as watching TV. When you are sitting in audience at the State Theatre, the actors will be in the same room as you. They will be able to hear and see everything that goes on in the audience. Use the key to find out what your job is at the performance.

When I go to a [performance], I am part of the [audience]. This is a very important job. I have to [look] and [listen] carefully.

If I talk or move around, the actors and the [audience] will have a hard time paying attention to the [performance].

When the [performance] is over, it’s okay for me to [clap].