

2025-2026

Discovery Series RESOURCE GUIDE

Billy Goats Gruff

and Other Tales

Produced by Mermaid Theatre
of Nova Scotia



DAYTON LIVE

Your Home for Arts,
Culture & Entertainment

**Friday, Jan. 23, 2026
9:30 & 11:30 a.m.
Victoria Theatre**

Welcome to the 2025-2026 Discovery Series at Dayton Live. We are very excited to be your education partner in providing professional arts experiences to you and your students!

Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia's newest production, **BILLY GOATS GRUFF AND OTHER TALES**, presents a fresh and engaging reimagining of three cherished children's stories – *"Goldilocks And The Three Bears,"* *"The Three Little Pigs,"* and *"The Three Billy Goats Gruff."* Filled with adventure, humor, and heroism, the story follows a brave raccoon and clever mouse who are on a journey to collect treasure. Along the way, they unknowingly help the goats, bears, and pigs, preventing disaster – without any of the animals ever encountering a true villain. This imaginative retelling seamlessly interweaves three classic tales into a heartwarming adventure that celebrates friendship and courage. The information and activities in this guide have been carefully crafted to help you and your students explore the many ways a live theatre experience can create endless learning opportunities. Grade level icons will help you determine which activities are good for your students, too. Don't forget to take advantage of the local resources listed to extend the play-going experience and make even more curricular connections for you and your students. Thank you again, and welcome!



The Education & Engagement Team

Curriculum Connection

Grades
Pre-K-3

You will find these icons listed in the resource guide next to the activities that indicate curricular connections. Teachers and parents are encouraged to adapt all of the activities included in an appropriate way for your students' age and abilities. **BILLY GOATS GRUFF AND OTHER TALES** fulfills the following Ohio State Standards and Benchmarks for preschool through 3rd grades:



Learning Standards Related to **BILLY GOATS GRUFF AND OTHER TALES**

ELA: RL.K.2, RL.K.3, RL.K.9, RL.1.1, RL.1.2, RL.1.3, RL.1.7, RL.2.1, RL.2.2, RL.2.3, RL.2.5, RL.2.7, RL.3.1, RL.3.2, RL.3.3; W.K.1, W.K.2, W.K.3; SL.K.2, SL.K.5, SL.1.2, SL.2.2, SL.3.2

Fine Arts: Visual Arts: K.2CR, K.2CR, 1.1CR, 1.2CR, 2.1CR, 2.2CR; K.1RE, K.2RE, K.3RE, K.5RE, 1.1RE, 1.2RE, 1.3RE, 1.5RE, 2.1RE, 2.5RE, 3.1RE; K.1CO, K.3CO, 1.3CO, 2.3CO, 3.3CO, 3.5CO

SEL: C3.1a, C3.2.a, C3.1.b; D2.1.a, D2.3.a, D2.1.b, D2.2b

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CREDITS: Gogue PAC at Auburn University, Department of Education & Engagement

Pre-Show Conversation Starters

Get excited for your trip to the Victoria Theatre by checking out this video!

- 1 Pickle Jean, our Audience Etiquette Monitor, helped us learn about BRAVO. Do you remember what each letter stands for?
- 2 Based on this video, what are some ways you can be the best audience member you can be?
- 3 How can you as an audience member help the performers onstage do the best job they can for you?
- 4 Is this your first visit to a theatre? If so, what are you most looking forward to?



About the Show

BILLY GOATS GRUFF is a classic Norwegian folktale about three goats who must cross a bridge to a lush pasture while outsmarting a hungry troll that lives underneath. The tale is widely available in numerous illustrated books and is also part of a touring stage production that includes other stories.

BILLY GOATS GRUFF AND OTHER TALES is a contemporary stage production by the Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia that reimagines the classic tale alongside other stories. This production interweaves three classic children's stories:

- ▶ ***The Three Billy Goats Gruff***
- ▶ ***The Three Little Pigs***
- ▶ ***Goldilocks and the Three Bears***

In this version, a brave raccoon and a clever mouse go on a treasure hunt and unknowingly help the main characters of each tale, creating a heartwarming adventure about friendship and courage without a single main villain.



Vocabulary | The Creative Team

DIRECTOR – The director of the show is the person that makes the overall vision and helps the show come to life.

PRODUCER – They are responsible for helping to make sure the show happens at all! From the very beginning of supporting the team, ensuring funding, and setting up a smooth path for the director.

WRITER – This is the person who writes the story and/or the script for the show.

COMPOSER – Composers write or gather the music needed for a show.

DESIGNERS – There are many different designers that can be part of creating a show. Set designers create a set, (the scenery), for the show and make sure it aligns with the director's creative vision. Costume designers are responsible for designing and making or gathering what the actors will wear on stage. Lighting designers create the lights that help tell the mood of the story. Sound designers ensure all the actors and music are heard, and help create sound effects as needed.

NARRATOR – Not all shows have a narrator, but sometimes there is an actor on stage, or a voice off stage, who is helping to detail what is happening in the story.

Discussion Questions

- 1 If you were part of the creative team for a show, what role would you play and why?
- 2 If you could ask someone on the creative team of this show or another, what questions would you ask them?

What is a Story?

Very simply, a **story** is a narrative, a telling of events, either true or imagined, that is meant to entertain, inform and gain the interest of the listener or reader. A story must contain several of the following different elements.

- ▶ First, it needs **characters**. Characters are the people, talking animals or mythical creatures in the story.
- ▶ Next, a story needs a **setting**, the time and place that it happens.
- ▶ The story must also have a **plot**. The plot is the sequence of events or actions that drives the story. The plot has a beginning, middle and ending.
- ▶ A story also needs **conflict**. The conflict is the problem or struggle that one or more of the characters must overcome.
- ▶ Last, a story needs a **point of view**. Stories can be told from the point of view of a character, or, most commonly, by a voice outside the story, a narrator.

Copy adapted from Gogue PAC at Auburn University, Department of Education & Engagement

Fairy Tales & Fables

Fairy tales and fables are subgenres of folktales - stories that are passed down from generation to generation, usually orally (by verbally sharing). They typically share cultural experiences, have a moral or lesson, and often have fantastical elements like talking animals or magic. Other subgenres of folktales are legends, myths, and tall tales.

Fairy Tales – are short stories that have fantastical elements such as talking animals, magic, or imaginary creatures. The main themes are usually good vs. evil, finding courage, and acts of kindness. You might also see “once upon a time” at the beginning of a fairy tale. They are mostly meant for entertainment.

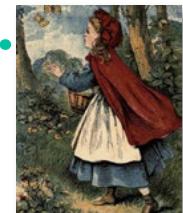
Fables – are short stories where animals or forces of nature are usually the main characters, and they teach a lesson or moral.

As a class or in groups, write or share as many fables and fairy tales as you can think of! Be sure to classify each story on your list as a fable or fairy tale.

Lessons from Famous Tales

FAIRY TALES

Little Red Riding Hood - Little Red Riding Hood learns from her story that it is wise to always be wary of strangers and to know who your trusted adults are. In what ways do you think trusting someone without knowing them is an important lesson?



The Frog Prince - In her story, the princess learns to not judge someone or something by their appearance. When the princess drops her golden ball in a pond and a frog retrieves it for her, but only after she promises to be his friend for helping her. She then runs back to her castle and doesn't think about the frog or his “silly” requests. He holds up his end of the bargain, and she is disgusted by the frog but soon begins to enjoy his company. When she finally sees him as a friend, he becomes a prince and the spell is broken. What is important about keeping promises you make to people? Why is it important to not think things about someone before you get to know them?



Beauty and The Beast – This classic tale teaches us that our inner qualities, kindness, and empathy are more important than outward appearances. When Beauty first meets the Beast, she is afraid of him and wants nothing to do with him. Eventually, she learns that they can be friends and begins to teach him about herself and learn more things about his past. When she falls in love with him, he turns into a prince and his spell is broken. What does judging someone by appearances first prevent you from doing? How can you be kind and use empathy to your friends and classmates?

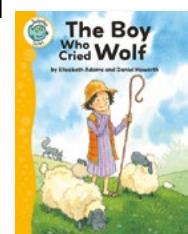


FABLES

The Tortoise and The Hare – You may have heard “slow and steady wins the race”? This is where that phrase comes from! The arrogance of the Hare assuming he would easily win against the tortoise was his downfall. The Tortoise choosing to persevere, maintain a steady pace, and focus on his goal is how he won in the end. How can you apply perseverance and focus to a goal you have?



The Boy Who Cried Wolf – In this story, the boy watching over a flock of sheep becomes bored and is looking to add some excitement to his day. He yells that there is a wolf coming and villagers come running to his aid. When they arrived to no wolf, the boy laughed – the villagers were clearly unhappy, especially after the boy played the trick again. Then one day, there really was a wolf! When the boy called for help, no one came to his aid, and all the sheep ran away. The boy learned that lying quickly teaches others not to trust you, honesty is the best policy for friendships and in communities. Why is it important to build trust with those in your life and community?



Story Elements

Story elements are the pieces and parts that make up a story. Think of them as building blocks that make a story come to life. Use this graphic organizer to help retell the story of **Billy Goats Gruff and Other Tales**, or a story you love.



**WHO ARE THE CHARACTERS
IN THE STORY?**

**WHERE DOES THE STORY
TAKE PLACE?**

WHAT IS THE MAIN PROBLEM OR CHALLENGE?

HOW DOES THE PROBLEM GET SOLVED?

Puppetry

Apuppet is a figure that is moved by a human. A puppet can be another 'human', animal or abstract object. The puppet is often used in theatrical shows. The name of the human using the puppet is called a **puppeteer**. Puppet shows seem to have existed in almost all known civilizations and in almost all time periods.

There are different types of puppets that one can make. There are **hand or glove puppets**. These puppets



have a hollow cloth body that fits over the hand and the fingers can fit into the head and the arms to give motion

Rod puppets can be manipulated from below, but they are full length puppets supported by a rod running inside the body to the head.

Separate rods move the hands and legs. **Marionettes or string** puppets are worked full length, but they are controlled with threads or strings. These puppets have from nine or more strings that allow them to be moved vertically and horizontally. Marionettes are worked from above also. **Shadow puppets** are puppets of flat figures were found in Mesopotamia.



flat figures which are seen through a translucent screen. **Translucent** means that it is something that allows light to pass through.

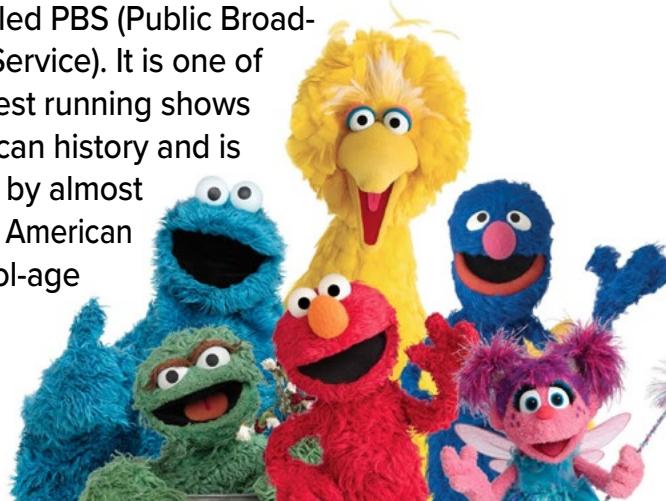
In Billy Goats Gruff and Other Tales, puppets are used to bring the stories' characters to life. The puppets feature soft-sculpture fabric bodies and cheese-cloth-mâché heads, loosely inspired by the Japanese

Bunraku (boon-rah-koo) tradition. Bunraku puppetry originated in Japan more than 400 years ago. In Bunraku, there are usually several puppeteers who manipulate the puppet directly and are visible throughout the play rather than being hidden.

In **Billy Goats Gruff and Other Tales**, there are two puppeteers who control all the puppets that you will see. (Gogue Center PAC)

Making a puppet and deciding how to make it move is fun, but being able to personify your puppet is where the true artistry comes into play. Puppeteers call this the puppet's **impersonality**. Puppets are typically character types very similar to the stock characters of ancient Greek and Roman drama. Audiences must work harder to connect with the puppets than if they were watching a human actor. Puppetry is not a simple form of theatre; quite the opposite. It is more complicated, can be more expensive in time and labor to create a puppet show, but once created, a puppet show can be lasting. Sesame Street, for example, first aired in 1969 on the National Educational Television Network later to be called PBS (Public Broadcasting Service). It is one of the longest running shows in American history and is watched by almost half of all American preschool-age children.

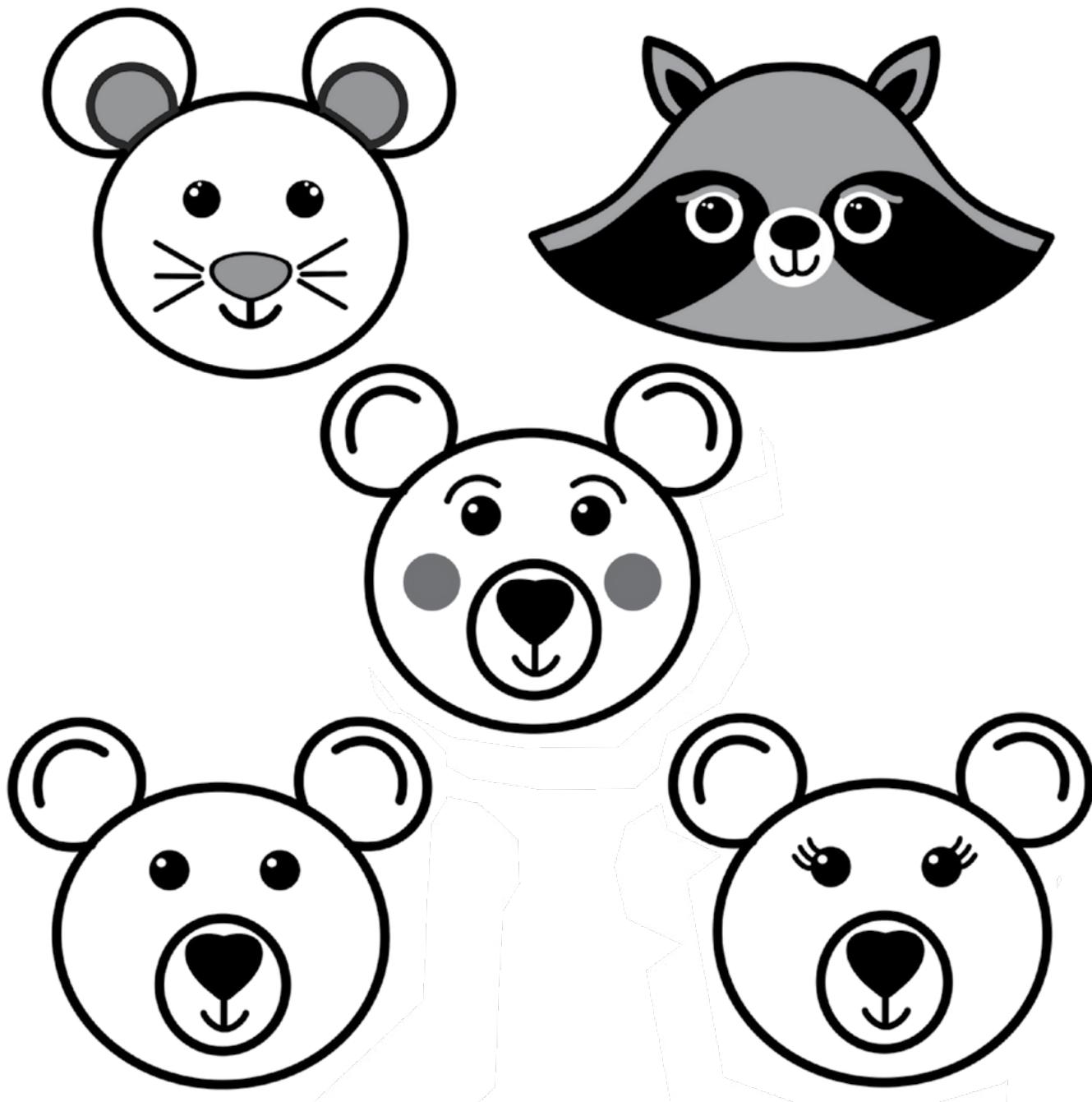




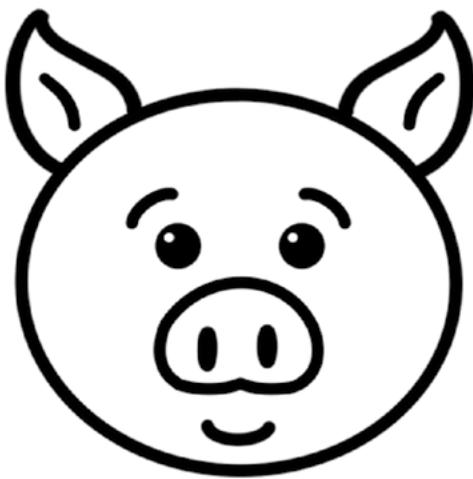
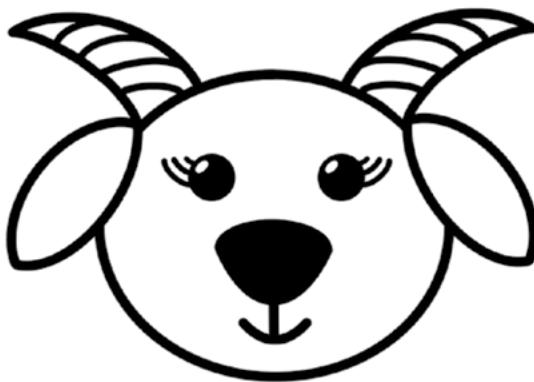
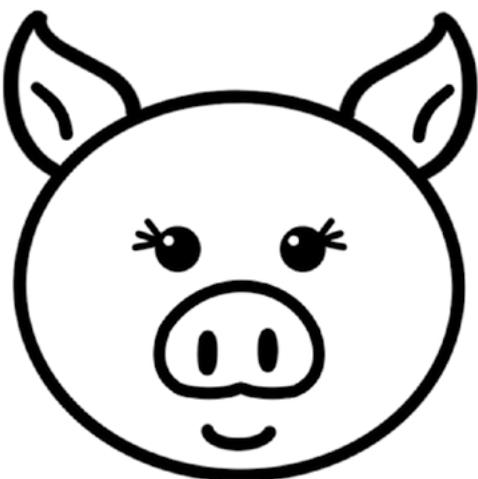
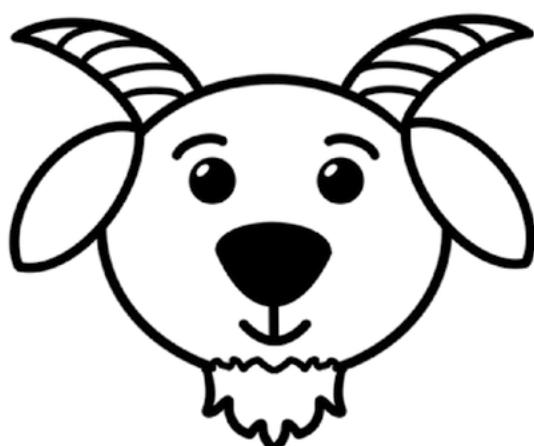
Make Your Own Stick Puppets

Step 1 Color your puppets any way you like with crayons, markers or colored pencils. You might also decorate the puppets with glitter or bits of colored paper, but you may want to wait to decorate the puppet with glitter until after you have cut it out. When cutting, stay as close as possible to the black outline.

Step 2 Put the puppet right-side-down on the table. Position the craft stick with the end up near the center of the puppet. Cut one or two 1" lengths of tape. Tape the stick to the puppet.



Make Your Own Stick Puppets (continued)



Meet the Mammals

The stories in **Billy Goats Gruff and Other Tales** have many things in common. For one, they all involve animals—and not just any animals, but specifically mammals. Mammals are warm-blooded animals that breathe air, have backbones, grow hair (at least at some point in their lives) and have highly developed brains. All female mammals can produce milk to feed their young.

While most mammals live on land (whether aboveground, in trees, or even underground), some live on both land and in water, and a few even live exclusively in water. Mammals can walk, run, crawl, swim and even fly as they move through their lives. For example, a bat is a mammal with wings. It lives on land and can fly.

Mammals come in many shapes and sizes, from tiny rodents to enormous whales. In fact, the blue whale is the largest animal on Earth!

Mammals can be carnivores (meat eaters), herbivores (plant eaters) or omnivores (meat and plant eaters). What type of eater are you?

There are more than 5,000 kinds of mammals on Earth, including humans. Let's talk about a few that you might see in the show.

Goats.....

- ▶ There are three types of goats, used for dairy, food, or fibers like yarn for clothing.
- ▶ Goats can have long, short, straight, or curly hair!
- ▶ Goats are herbivores and mainly eat plants.
- ▶ They are very social creatures, and are from the same family as sheep and cows.



Bears.....

- ▶ There are three types of bears found in North America: the black bear, the brown or grizzly bear, and the polar bear. The black bear is the most common.
- ▶ Bears are omnivores, which means they eat plants, insects, fish, and other mammals.
- ▶ Most bears hibernate in winter. Hibernation is a way that some animals handle the harshness of winter. They curl up in a very deep sleep until winter ends.
- ▶ Bears that live further south don't actually hibernate because food is available all year long.



Mice.....

- ▶ There are 38 different species of mice, with the house mouse being the most common in North America.
- ▶ The house mouse is mostly nocturnal, which means it is most active at night and sleeps during the day.
- ▶ They are covered in soft brown fur with a white belly, and their ears are mostly hairless.
- ▶ House mice can grow up to 4 inches long, and their tail is often just as long as their body!



Pigs.....

- ▶ Here in North America, there are three kinds of pigs: domestic, feral, and wild boar.
- ▶ Domestic pigs are pigs you would find on a farm.
- ▶ Feral pigs are pigs that have been released into the wild.
- ▶ Wild boar are pigs that are native to a particular area; they were born and live in one part of the world.
- ▶ Farm-raised pigs eat feed and corn. Other pigs are omnivores and eat plants and smaller animals.
- ▶ Pigs are some of the smartest animals! They don't have the best eyesight, but have a great sense of smell.



Raccoons

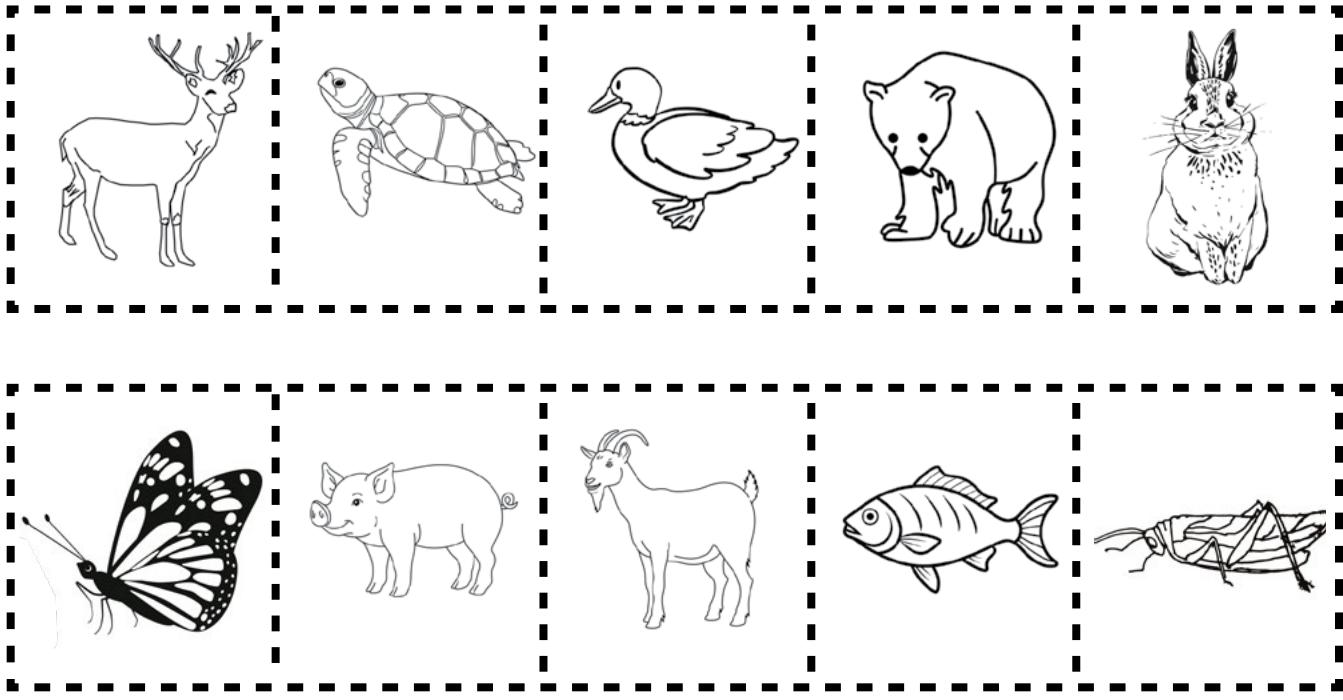
- ▶ There are seven different raccoon species! The most common is the North American raccoon. They live in Canada, the United States, and some even into South America.
- ▶ Raccoons are omnivores, and tend to be opportunistic eaters. They mostly eat fruit and plants and smaller animals, but they will happily find tasty treats in a garbage can!
- ▶ The North American raccoon is the biggest type found in North America. They can measure up to 33 inches long and 20 pounds.



Adapted text from Gogue Center PAC

Is it a Mammal?

Cut along the dotted lines and place all the animals that are mammals in the box below.
Remember all the information you learned about mammals on page 9.



MAMMALS

Activities

INTRODUCTION

1. Begin by retelling “The Three Little Pigs.” As you are narrating the story, be sure to emphasize how the wolf blew down (or attempted to blow down) each pig’s house.
2. When you have finished with the story, ask students what they think made the straw and stick houses fall.
3. During your discussion, guide students to the idea of force - an action that changes an object’s motion or shape. (In “The Three Little Pigs,” force is the wolf’s huff-and-puff or blowing.)

GUIDED PRACTICE

1. Copy and distribute the “Forces: Push and Pull” worksheet on the page 12.
2. Ask students to carefully examine the children on the worksheet and determine whether they are pushing or pulling the objects shown.
3. As directed, ask students to circle in red the children pulling an object; circle in blue the children pushing an object.

MOVEMENT ACTIVITY

1. Standing in front of the class, act out pushing an object. Have students decide whether your movement represents pushing or pulling.
2. Now act out pulling an object. Again, have students decide whether your movement represents pushing or pulling.
3. Have students work in pairs to act out pushing and pulling objects and allow them to identify which movement their partner is using.

EXPERIMENTATION

1. Have students revisit the story by completing “The Three Little Pigs: Exploring Materials” worksheet on pages 13-14.
2. Divide students into small groups and ask them to build three mini-houses using a different craft material for each.
 - a. Try to use different craft building materials from those used in the exploration activity. Be sure to offer materials in a range of weights. Some will need to be light and flimsy, while others should be heavier.
 - b. Using spray bottles or small fans to simulate the wolf’s blowing, have students direct air at each mini-house to see which ones stand and which fall.
 - c. Once the mini-house experiments are complete, discuss with the class their observations.

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ▶ Which materials moved or changed shape?
- ▶ What material was the strongest? Why?
- ▶ How do the properties of hardness, shape and weight affect strength?

Forces: Push and Pull

Name _____

Date _____

Use the color **RED** to circle examples of **Pushing**. Use the color **BLUE** to circle examples of **Pulling**.



The Three Little Pigs: Exploring Materials

Name _____

Date _____

STORY RECALL: MATCH THE PIG TO ITS HOUSE

Draw a line from each pig to the house it built.



WHICH HOUSE IS THE STRONGEST?

Circle the house that you think is the strongest.



Straw House

Stick House

Brick



Why do you think the house you chose is the strongest?

MATERIAL PROPERTIES: TRUE OR FALSE

Write **True** or **False** next to each sentence.

The brick house is hard and strong.

Bricks can hold a ton of weight.

Straw is soft and light.

Straw and sticks break easily.

Sticks are heavy and very hard.

The Three Little Pigs: Exploring Materials (cont.)

Name _____

Date _____

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU BLOW?

Draw a picture of what happens to each house when the wolf blows.



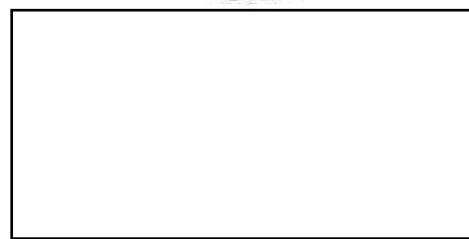
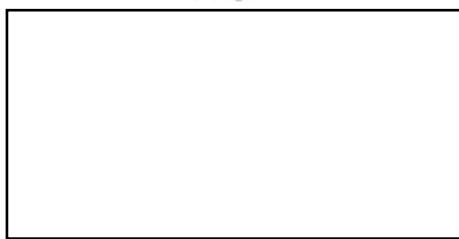
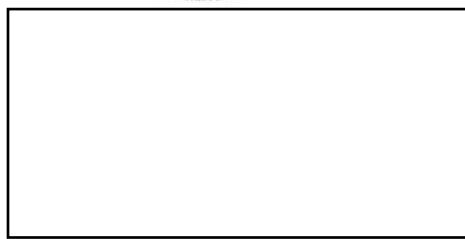
Straw House



Stick House



Brick House



MATERIALS AROUND US: SCAVENGER HUNT

Find one object made from each material, then write or draw it below.

1. Something made of straw:

2. Something made of sticks or wood:

3. Something made of brick or stone:

MATERIALS SORTING

Consider each of these objects: **cotton ball**, **metal spoon**, **paper**, **plastic cup** and **wooden block**. In the chart below, write the name of each object by the word that you think best describes it.

Hard	
Soft	
Heavy	
Light	
Flexible	
Rigid	

BUILD YOUR OWN STRONG HOUSE (HANDS-ON)

Using crafting materials you have available, build a small house. Then, answer the questions below.

What materials did you use? _____

Is your house strong or weak? _____

What makes your house strong or weak? _____

Dear Dayton Live

Thanks for coming today! We would love to hear about your experience at the show. Use the lines and boxes below to write and/or draw about your trip.

Dear Dayton Live,

My favorite part of the show was _____

I really loved when _____

I wish that _____

Thank you for _____

My favorite part of the show was

I really loved when

I wish that

Thank you for

Email your surveys to
discovery@daytonlive.org

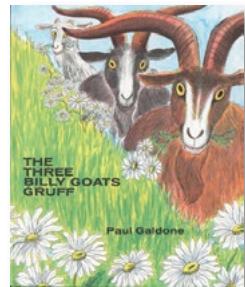
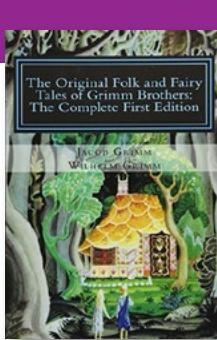
or mail to: **Dayton Live**
Attn. Discovery
138 N. Main Street
Dayton, OH 45402

Resources for Students and Teachers

Books for Students

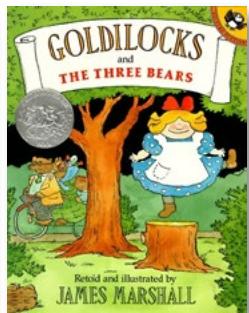
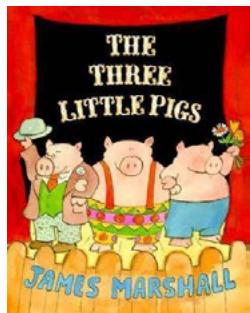
- **The Original Folk and Fairy Tales of Grimm Brothers: The Complete First Edition**

– written by Jacob Grimm and Wilhelm Grimm. Create Space Independent Publishing Platform, 2014.



- **The Three Billy Goats Gruff: An Introduction to the Classic Fairy Tale** – adapted and illustrated by Paul Galdone, Peter Christen Asbjornsen. Clarion Books, 1981.

- **Goldilocks and the Three Bears** – Retold and Illustrated by James Marshall. Published by Puffin Books, 1998.
- **The Three Little Pigs** – Retold and Illustrated by James Marshall. Published by Puffin Books, 1996.



Resources for Educators & Students

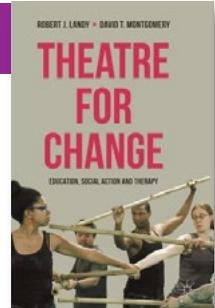
- **Wild Kratts | Bears Around The World:**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lcm2XoLL_y0

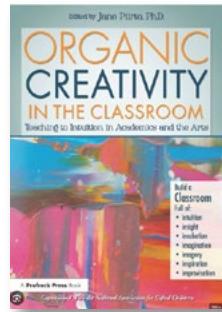
Publications for Educators

- **Theatre for Change: Education, Social Action and Therapy –**

by Robert Landy and David T. Montgomery. Palgrave Macmillan: 2012.



- **Organic Creativity in the Classroom: Teaching to Intuition in Academics and the Arts** – by Jane Piirto. Prufrock Press: 2013.



Local Resources



Check out some BTS of Dayton Live! Learn about our venues, theatre terminology, and more.
https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLIQVJBI1Wj9BfJ_AvnJg4ngz8jO9ZzWS9&si=8UTFLphxXyz1ynvd

Brought To You By

DAYTON LIVE

138 North Main Street Dayton, OH 45402

DAYTON LIVE DISCOVERY

The Education and Engagement programs of Dayton Live are made possible through the support and commitment of the following sponsors and donors whose generosity have opened the door of live theatre to the students of the Miami Valley:

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The Berry Family Foundation

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Troy Foundation

Government Sponsors

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Ohio Arts Council

FUELING EDUCATION

Greater Dayton Regional Transit Authority

DAYTON LIVE CREATIVE ACADEMY

Interested in learning more about theatre?!

The Dayton Live Creative Academy offers a variety of professionally curated performing arts experiences for all ages. From classes for beginners, and summer camps for the adventurous, to Broadway after-school intensives for the curious, there are year-round activities for everyone in the family. Join us for fun, for adventure, and to develop your own creativity. This is performing arts education for **EVERYONE!**

EDUCATION AND BROADWAY PROGRAMS

Broadway Camps and Intensives

Broadway Master Classes

Background on Broadway

Bagels & Broadway

<https://www.daytonlive.org/education>

Dayton Live is an ACE Qualified Education Service Provider! Find out more about ACE funds: <https://education.ohio.gov/ohioace>

MERMAID THEATRE OF NOVA SCOTIA

Mermaid Theatre has been in continuous operation since it was founded in 1972 in Wolfville, Nova Scotia. Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia is located in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq. The company is privileged to work on unsurrendered lands of the Mi'kmaq People and continues to prioritize and create opportunities for Indigenous artists and underrepresented voices.

Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia's mandate is:

- to introduce to family audiences, at home and abroad the excitement of innovative performing and visual arts.
- to promote the art of puppetry through live performance, digital programming and instruction.
- to serve as cultural ambassadors for Windsor, Nova Scotia, and Canada.
- to provide a touring and digital showcase for Atlantic Canada's artists.
- to encourage literacy, storytelling, and the love of reading.

Mermaid regularly crosses Canada and the United States, and has represented Canada in more than a dozen countries. Recorded narration featuring outstanding international artists facilitates performances in English, Spanish, Korean, Japanese, French, Cantonese and Mandarin. The Institute's imaginative curriculum-based touring programs entertain and inform students and teachers throughout the region, as well as encourage educators to incorporate the performing arts in the teaching of science. Our MIPAC Performing Arts Series attracts audiences of all ages.

<https://mermaidtheatre.ca/mission-and-mandate>



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