



# The Reluctant Dragon

THE RELUCTANT DRAGON is a play based on a story written by Kenneth Grahame in 1898.

Please use this Study Guide to enhance the educational experience for your students.



## ALL ABOUT A.C.T. For Youth

A.C.T For Youth is an acclaimed professional touring theatre company based in Orlando, Florida.

Each year, the Atlantic Coast Theatre performs hundreds of shows for students throughout the U.S.

ACT For Youth's high-quality educational programming is recognized nationally by theatres, schools, art councils, libraries, and festivals- not to mention the thousands of children & families who see A.C.T. shows each year!



A.C.T. For Youth has been awarded placement on:

- ~Florida Artist Performances On Tour~
- ~Hillsborough County Artist Roster~
- ~SC Arts Commission Roster Of Approved Artists~
- ~Raleigh/Wake County, NC United Arts Roster~
- ~The Arts Council Of Fayetteville, NC Roster~



Visit Our Website!

[www.atlantic-coast-theatre.com](http://www.atlantic-coast-theatre.com)

# Kenneth Grahame

## 1859 - 1932

Kenneth Grahame was a famous British author. His most known work is his beloved 1908 children's book THE WIND IN THE WILLOWS.

10 years before, Mr. Grahame wrote DREAM DAYS-

The book contained a series of short stories for children. The most famous story from DREAM DAYS is "The Reluctant Dragon".

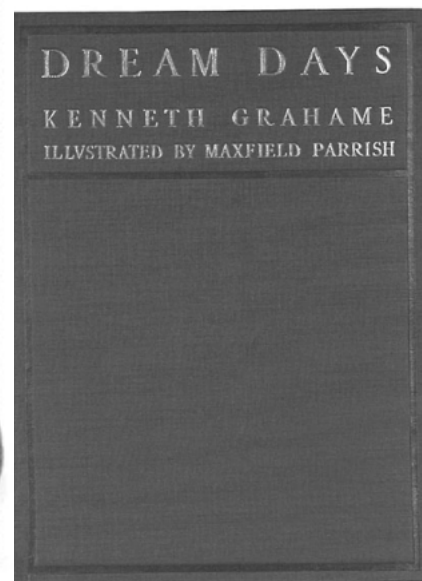
# The Reluctant Dragon

This beautiful picture was painted by the famous American painter, Maxfield Parrish (1870-1966).

Look at this illustration. What do you think the story of "The Reluctant Dragon" is about?

### FL STANDARDS CONNECTIONS:

VA.K.C.2 / VA.1.C.2 / VA.2.C.2 /  
VA.3.C.2 / VA.4.C.2 / VA.5.C.2



This is a picture of an old copy of DREAM DAYS.

How would you design the cover of the book?

# Dragons

Dragons are mythical (imaginary) creatures.  
They are not real.

Still, some of the most famous stories and fairy tales in our history contain these large and scary beasts.

*From the stories or fairy tales you have heard, write in the boxes some of the things dragons do?*

**Breathe Fire**








**FL STANDARDS CONNECTIONS: LAFS.K12.R.3.7**



## ***"Slay" The Dragon***

The word "slay" means to kill.

Often in fairy tales, the Brave Knight needs to save the town or the Fair Damsel (lady) from the Evil Dragon.

The Knight must "Slay The Dragon" in order to protect the people he cares about.



This is a famous painting by an Italian painter named Paolo Uccello. Uccello lived from (1397-1476). The dragon is being slain by the knight.

**How Does This Painting Make You Feel?  
 Who Do You Identify With?**

The Knight  
 The Fair Damsel  
 Or The Dragon?

**FL STANDARDS CONNECTIONS:**

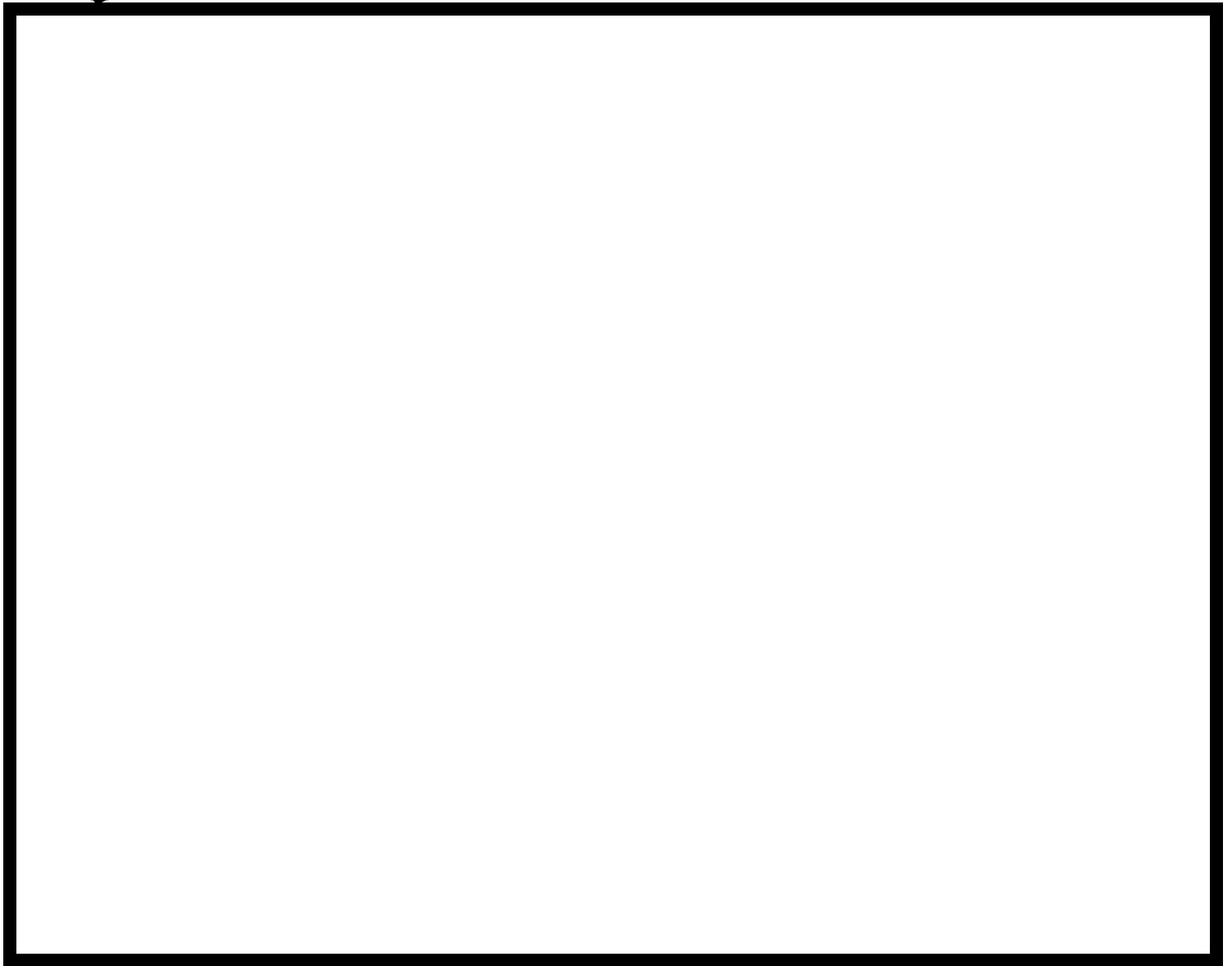
**VA.K,C,2 / VA.1.C.2 / VA.2.C.3.2 / VA.3.C.2 / VA.4.C.2 / VA.5.C.2**

# A PEACEFUL DRAGON

Often, when people think about Dragons—  
they imagine that they are mean monsters who want to fight.  
The Dragon in THE RELUCTANT DRAGON is a nice Dragon.  
She does not want to fight with others— she is peaceful.

Draw your version of a good and peaceful dragon.

Share your drawings with your class.



# VOCABULARY WORDS

Here are a few words in the play that you might not know...

- Scourge-**      **A severe widespread problem affecting a community**
- Magnitude-**      **Greatness in size or importance**
- Muse-**      **Someone or something that inspires an artist to create**
- Barbaric-**      **Uncivilized, harsh, and cruel**
- Ferocious-**      **Used to describe something wild and fierce**
- Dagger-**      **A short sword**
- Breach-**      **A gap in a line of soldiers**
- Vile-**      **Very, Very, Very BAD**
- Improvise-**      **To act on the spur of the moment or to create without a plan**

## FL STANDARDS CONNECTIONS:

LAFS.K.L.3.4 / LAFS.1.L.3.4 / LAFS.2.L.3.4 / LAFS.3.L.3.4 / LAFS.4.L.3.4 / LAFS.5.L.3.4

**Can you write a sentence using at least three of these words?**  
**Can you write a short story using all of these words?**

## (FLORIDA STANDARDS CONNECTIONS:

LAFS.K.W.1.2, LAFS.1.W.3.8, LAFS.2.W.3.8, LAFS.3.W.1.2, LAFS.4.W.1.2, LAFS.5.W.1.2)

### THE WHITE DRAGON FLAG OF ENGLAND

During the play you will see this dragon  
on red flags hanging from the set.

The red flags with a white dragon painted  
on them have been carried and flown  
as proud emblems of English warriors  
since around 450 A.D.







# All About The Actors

*Noel Holland & Don Gruel*

You will be seeing professional actors!

That means they act for their jobs!

An interesting fact about the actors:

They started acting when they were YOUR age!



**NOEL HOLLAND**— I cannot remember a time when I was not singing. As a child, I would sing to anyone who would listen— if nobody was there to hear, I would sing to myself! I started acting and dancing because I loved performing on stage. My sister and I would put on plays for our parents in the living room! When I was in middle school and high school, I decided that I wanted to be a performer. After I graduated college with a degree in music, I became a professional actor- working for theatres all over the country. Now, I have my dream job— owning a theatre. I am so proud to be a part of the Atlantic Coast Theatre For Youth. It gives me all kinds of opportunities to sing, act, write songs, and use my imagination. I so enjoy creating shows that children love because I loved theatre and music so much when I was a child!



Noel & her little sister, Meredith, putting on a play for family.



Don as the Easter Bunny in his 3rd Grade School Play

**DON GRUEL**— I grew up in Beaufort, South Carolina. When I was little, I would make up plays using my “Star Wars” Action Figures as the actors. I started doing school plays when I was in Kindergarten, but my first play outside of school I was in the musical OKLAHOMA when I was 10 years old. I really liked the feeling of being able to pretend to become other people in other places. I kept doing plays throughout Middle School & High School and decided to study Theatre in college. I graduated from the University Of South Carolina in 1993 and have worked in professional theatre ever since. I have always loved using my imagination. As an actor, I get to be creative every single day.

You can try acting too!  
Get involved in a play at school or in your community!

# From The Story To The Stage

Every good play has to start somewhere.

Sometimes the idea for a play comes completely from the playwright's imagination.

Sometimes the idea is created from a book or a story.

The writer uses the original book or story as an inspiration.

## ADAPTATION

~A New Play Based On A Book Or A Story~

### THE RELUCTANT DRAGON

This play is based on Kenneth Grahame's story, "The Reluctant Dragon".

A.C.T. For Youth playwright, Don Gruel, read the story before creating an entertaining adaptation of this charming tale for the stage.

## “WRITE YOUR OWN PLAY” ADAPTATION ACTIVITY

### PLAYWRITING TIPS

1. Pick a story with characters that will make your play interesting. You can also create new characters. Remember it is *your* adaptation!
2. Make a 'Road Map'— outline the plan of how you want your play to be written. Don't be afraid to change your mind. Sometimes creativity needs to take a detour!
3. Write your dialogue (what the characters say). Try to write dialogue that is realistic— not too formal. It will sound closer to how people really talk.

**Florida Standards Connections:** LAFS.K.W.1.3 / LAFS.1.W.1.3 /  
LAFS.2.W.1.3 / LAFS.3.W.1.3 / LAFS.4.W.1.3 / LAFS.5.W.1.3

# Write A Letter To The Actors Activity

A.C.T. For Youth loves to receive letters from our audience!



You will write letters all of your life—in school, to correspond with friends and family, and for your job one day.

It is very important to know how to write a good letter.

Your teachers may want you to write your letter in a proper letter-writing style or format. Here is an example of one style!

A.C.T. For Youth  
8297 Champions Gate Blvd. #188  
Champions Gate, FL 33896

Dear Audience:

The Atlantic Coast Theatre For Youth would like to thank all of you for showing us such fantastic audience manners during the show! Everyone was so respectful during the performance. You laughed when things were funny, but you were also able to quiet back down so that everyone could hear. I don't think that we heard anyone talking while the actors were on stage. That was great! You made our job so much fun.

Thanks so much! You were wonderful!

Sincerely,

*Don Gruel & Noel Holland*

**Send your letters to:**

**Atlantic Coast Theatre For Youth  
8297 Champions Gate Blvd. #188  
Champions Gate, FL 33896**

**Florida Standards Connections:**

**LAFS.K.W.1.1 / LAFS.1.W.1.1 / LAFS.2.W.1.1 / LAFS.3.W.1.1 / LAFS.4.W.1.1 / LAFS.5.W.1.1**



## Before The Show Activities

- Discuss as a class the differences between television/ movies and a live theatre production. How are you expected to behave at a play? What does it mean to have good theatre manners? (Florida Standards Connections: TH.K.S.1.1, TH.1.O.3.1, TH.1.S.1.1, TH.2.C.2.2, TH.2.S.1.1, TH.3.O.3.1, TH.3.S.1.1, TH.4.S.1.1, TH.5.H.3.2, TH.5.S.1.1)
- Familiarize yourself with the vocabulary words listed in the study guide. They may help you understand parts of the show better. (Florida Standards Connections: LAFS.K.L.3.4, LAFS.1.L.3.4, LAFS.2.L.3.4, LAFS.3.L.3.4, LAFS.4.L.3.4, LAFS.5.L.3.4)
- Talk about the folklore of dragons throughout history. What do you expect to see in a show that has a dragon in it? (Florida Standards Connections: LAFS.K.SL.1.1, LAFS.K.SL.1.2, LAFS.1.SL.1.1, LAFS.1.SL.1.2, LAFS.2.SL.1.1, LAFS.2.SL.1.2, LAFS.3.SL.1.1, LAFS.3.SL.1.2, LAFS.4.SL.1.1, LAFS.4.SL.1.2, LAFS.5.SL.1.1, LAFS.5.SL.1.2)

### After The Show Activities

- **PUTTING ON A PLAY**– The characters in “The Reluctant Dragon” put on a grand performance of the battle. The theatre terms used during the play were: REHEARSE, SCRIPT, LINES, STAGE DIRECTION, COSTUME, COMEDY, TRAGEDY, STAGE FRIGHT, PROLOGUE, and IMPROVISE. See if you can remember as a class what each word meant. Perhaps your class will be inspired to create a play too– just like the Dragon and Sir George! (Florida Standards Connections: LAFS.K.L.3.4, LAFS.1.L.3.4, LAFS.2.L.3.4, LAFS.3.L.3.4, LAFS.4.L.3.4, LAFS.5.L.3.4)
- **A PEACEFUL DRAGON**– The dragon in the play was a peaceful and loving dragon. You cannot ‘judge a book by its cover’. She was kind, caring, and smart– very different from the stereotypical idea of what a dragon would be like. How can the show’s moral relate to real life? Talk with your class about a good time when you discovered someone to be different than what you expected. What did you learn from that person? Discuss how the performance made you feel about each of the characters. (FL Standards Connections: TH.K.C.2.1. / TH.K.C.3.1 / TH.1.C.2.2 / TH.1.C.3.1 / TH.2.C.1.1 / TH.2.C.1.2 / TH.2.C.3.1 / TH.3.C.1.2 / TH.3.C.3.1 / TH.4.C.3.1 / TH.4.C.3.3 / TH.5.C.2.3 / TH.5.C.3.1 / TH.68.C.1.3 / TH.68.C.2.4)
- **WHAT IS IN A NAME?**– Good playwrights choose their words very carefully. Often things like *names* are used for a specific reason. The name of the village in the play is called **Alleyn Upon Burbage**. Edward Alleyn and Richard Burbage were two of the most famous actors who worked with William Shakespeare. Use the internet to research Shakespeare’s company. Imagine what performing on stage was like back then. (FL Standards Connections: TH.K.H.2.1. / TH.1.H.1.1 / TH.2.H.1.1 / TH.3.H.2.1 / TH.4.H.2.1 / TH.5.H.1.1 / TH.68.H.2.3 / TH.68.H.2.7)
- **UNLIKELY FRIENDS**– Sir George and the Dragon became friends even though they were different from each other. Often we have things in common with our friends, but we don’t have to be the same. In fact, our differences make our friendships more interesting and unique, because we learn from one another. Pick one of your friends to make a list about. List the things you have in common and how you are different. Compliment your friend by creating a poster about your friendship. On the poster celebrate your similarities and differences– show what makes your friendship special. (Florida Standards Connections: LAFS.K.W.1.3, LAFS.1.W.1.3, LAFS.2.W.1.3, LAFS.3.W.1.3, LAFS.4.W.1.3, LAFS.5.W.1.3)

## **FL STANDARDS CONNECTIONS:**

- **LAFS.K.L.3.4/ LAFS.1.L.3.4 / LAFS.2.L.3.4 / LAFS.3.L.3.4 / LAFS.4.L.3.4 / LAFS.5.L.3.4**
  - LAFS.K.L.3.4 Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on kindergarten reading and content.
  - LAFS.1.L.3.4 Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 1 reading and content, choosing flexibly from an array of strategies.
  - LAFS.2.L.3.4 Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 2 reading and content, choosing flexibly from an array of strategies.
  - LAFS.3.L.3.4 Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning word and phrases based on grade 3 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.
  - LAFS.4.L.3.4 Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 4 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.
  - LAFS.5.L.3.4 Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 5 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

### **ACTIVITIES:**

- Vocabulary words, Page 5
- Before The Show Activity, Vocabulary Words, Page 9
- After The Show Activity, Putting On A Play, Page 10

- **LAFS.K12.R.3.7**  
Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

### **ACTIVITIES:**

- Dragon Mythology, Page 3

- LAFS.K.SL.1.1, LAFS.K.SL.1.2, LAFS.1.SL.1.1, LAFS.1.SL.1.2, LAFS.2.SL.1.1, LAFS.2.SL.1.2, LAFS.3.SL.1.1, LAFS.3.SL.1.2, LAFS.4.SL.1.1, LAFS.4.SL.1.2, LAFS.5.SL.1.1, LAFS.5.SL.1.2

- LAFS.K.SL.1.1 Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about kindergarten topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.
- LAFS.K.SL.1.2 Confirm understanding of a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media by asking and answering questions about key details and requesting clarification if something is not understood.
- LAFS.1.SL.1.1 Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about grade 1 topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.
- LAFS.1.SL.1.2 Ask and answer questions about key details in a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.
- LAFS.2.SL.1.1 Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about grade 2 topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.
- LAFS.2.SL.1.2 Recount or describe key ideas or details from a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.
- LAFS.3.SL.1.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 3 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
- LAFS.3.SL.1.2 Determine the main ideas and supporting details of a text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.
- LAFS.4.SL.1.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 4 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
- LAFS.4.SL.1.2 Paraphrase portions of a text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.
- LAFS.5.SL.1.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 5 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
- LAFS.5.SL.1.2 Summarize a written text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

#### **ACTIVITIES:**

- Before The Show Activity, Dragons in folklore, Page 9

- **LAFS.K.W.1.1, LAFS.1.W.1.1, LAFS.2.W.1.1, LAFS.3.W.1.1, LAFS.4.W.1.1, LAFS.5.W.1.1**

- LAFS.K.W.1.1 Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to compose opinion pieces in which they tell a reader the topic or the name of the book they are writing about and state an opinion or preference about the topic or book (e.g., My favorite book is...).

- LAFS.1.W.1.1 Write opinion pieces in which they introduce the topic or name the book they are writing about, state an opinion, supply a reason for the opinion, and provide some sense of closure.

- LAFS.2.W.1.1 Write opinion pieces in which they introduce the topic or book they are writing about, state an opinion, supply reasons that support the opinion, use linking words (e.g., because, and, also) to connect opinion and reasons, and provide a concluding statement or section.

- LAFS.3.W.1.1 Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons.

- LAFS.4.W.1.1 Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.

- LAFS.5.W.1.1 Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.

**ACTIVITIES:**

- Write a letter to the actors, Page 8

- **LAFS.K.W.1.2, LAFS.1.W.3.8, LAFS.2.W.3.8, LAFS.3.W.1.2, LAFS.4.W.1.2, LAFS.5.W.1.2**

- LAFS.K.W.1.2: Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to compose informative/explanatory texts in which they name what they are writing about and supply some information about the topic.

- LAFS.1.W.3.8: With guidance and support from adults, recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.

- LAFS.2.W.3.8: Recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.

- LAFS.3.W.1.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

- LAFS.4.W.1.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

- LAFS.5.W.1.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

**ACTIVITIES:**

- Using vocabulary words in writing, Page 5

- LAFS.K.W.1.3, LAFS.1.W.1.3, LAFS.2.W.1.3, LAFS.3.W.1.3, LAFS.4.W.1.3, LAFS.5.W.1.3)

-LAFS.K.W.1.3 Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to narrate a single event or several loosely linked events, tell about the events in the order in which they occurred, and provide a reaction to what happened.

-LAFS.1.W.1.3 Write narratives in which they recount two or more appropriately sequenced events, include some details regarding what happened, use temporal words to signal event order, and provide some sense of closure.

-LAFS.2.W.1.3 Write narratives in which they recount a well-elaborated event or short sequence of events, include details to describe actions, thoughts, and feelings, use temporal words to signal event order, and provide a sense of closure.

-LAFS.3.W.1.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.

-LAFS.4.W.1.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.

-LAFS.5.W.1.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.

#### ACTIVITIES:

-After The Show Activities, Unlikely Friends, Page 10

-Write Your Own Play, Page 7

- TH.K.C.2.1. / TH.K.C.3.1 / TH.1.C.2.2 / TH.1.C.3.1 / TH.2.C.1.1 / TH.2.C.1.2 / TH.2.C.3.1 / TH.3.C.1.2 / TH.3.C.3.1 / TH.4.C.3.1 / TH.4.C.3.3 / TH.5.C.2.3 / TH.5.C.3.1 / TH.68.C.1.3 TH.68.C.2.4)

-TH.K.C.2.1. Respond to a performance and share personal preferences about parts of the performance

-TH.K.C.3.1 Recognize that individuals may like different things about a selected story or play

-TH.1.C.2.2 Identify elements of an effective performance

-TH.1.C.3.1 Share opinions about selected plays

-TH.2.C.1.1 Describe a character in a story and tell why the character is important to the story

-TH.2.C.1.2 Respond to a play by drawing and/or writing about a favorite aspect of it

-TH.2.C.3.1 Identify important characteristics to discuss when sharing opinions about theatre

-TH.3.C.1.2 Watch a play and describe how the elements of light, costumes, props, and sound influence the mood of the production

-TH.3.C.3.1 Discuss the techniques that help create an effective theatre work

-TH.4.C.3.1 Identify the characteristics of an effective acting performance

-TH.4.C.3.3 Define the elements of a selected scene that create an effective presentation of an event or person

-TH.5.C.2.3 Defend an artistic choice for a theatrical work

-TH.5.C.3.1 Discuss alternate performance possibilities of the same character in the same play

-TH.68.C.1.3 Determine the purpose(s), elements, meaning, and value of a theatrical work based on personal, cultural, or historical standards

-TH.68.C.2.4 Defend personal responses to a theatre production

#### ACTIVITIES:

-After The Show Activities, A Peaceful Dragon, Page 10



- **TH.K.S.1.1 / TH.1.O.3.1 / TH.1.S.1.1 / TH.2.C.2.2 / TH.2.S.1.1 / TH.3.O.3.1 / TH.3.S.1.1 / TH.4.S.1.1 / TH.5.H.3.2 / TH.5.S.1.1**

- TH.K.S.1.1 Demonstrate appropriate audience behavior at a live performance.
- TH.1.O.3.1 Compare a play to an animated movie that tells the same story.
- TH.1.S.1.1 Exhibit appropriate audience etiquette and response.
- TH.2.C.2.2 Describe how an actor in a play, musical, or film creates a character.
- TH.2.S.1.1 Exhibit the behavior necessary to establish audience etiquette, response, and constructive criticism.
- TH.3.O.3.1 Compare the characteristics of theatre to television and movies.
- TH.3.S.1.1 Demonstrate effective audience etiquette and constructive criticism for a live performance.
- TH.4.S.1.1 Exhibit proper audience etiquette, give constructive criticism, and defend personal responses.
- TH.5.H.3.2 Compare theatre to other modes of communication.
- TH.5.S.1.1 Describe the difference in responsibilities between being an audience member at live or recorded performances.

#### **ACTIVITIES:**

- Before The Show Activity, Theatre Manners, Page 9

- **TH.K.H.2.1. / TH.1.H.1.1 / TH.2.H.1.1 / TH.3.H.2.1 / TH.4.H.2.1 / TH.5.H.1.1 / TH.68.H.2.3 / TH.68.H.2.7**

- TH.K.H.2.1 Identify how the elements of place and time can change a story
- TH.1.H.1.1 Identify characters and stories from various cultures
- TH.2.H.1.1 Read and dramatize stories with similar themes to show developing knowledge of, and respect for, cultural differences
- TH.3.H.2.1 Identify geographical or cultural origins of stories
- TH.4.H.2.1 Discover how the same idea or theme is treated in a variety of cultural or historic periods
- TH.5.H.1.1 Research and describe the context in which a specific playwright wrote a particular dramatic work
- TH.68.H.2.3 Analyze Theatre History and dramatic literature in the context of societal and cultural history
- TH.68.H.2.7 Define Theatre genres from different periods in history giving examples of each

#### **ACTIVITIES:**

- After The Show Activities, What's In A Name, Page 10

- **VA.K.C.2 / VA.1.C.2 / VA.2.C.2 / VA.3.C.2 / VA.4.C.2/ VA.5.C.2**  
**-Enduring Understanding 2 : Assessing our own and others' artistic work, using critical-thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making skills, is central to artistic growth.**

**ACTIVITIES:**

- Analyze Maxfield Parrish Illustration, Page 2**
- Analyze Paolo Uccello painting, Page 3**

- **VA.K.S.3/ VA.1.S.3 / VA.2.S.3/ VA.3.S.3 / VA.4.S.3 / VA.5.S.3**  
**Enduring Understanding 3 : Through purposeful practice, artists learn to manage, master, and refine simple, then complex, skills and techniques.**

**ACTIVITIES:**

- Drawing a peaceful dragon, Page 4**