

The Great Arizona Puppet Theater presents . . .



The Three Billy Goats Gruff Study Guide!



Who We Are

The Great Arizona Puppet Theater makes its home in Phoenix, Arizona. Established in 1983 we are Arizona's oldest professional puppet theater company. Our shows have been seen at our theater and at schools, libraries and festivals throughout the state. Most of the shows are written and directed by our Artistic Director, Nancy Smith, while all the puppets are designed by Ken Bonar. Together Nancy and Ken founded the theater and since then have created a repertoire of over sixty shows. Nancy and Ken still perform in many of the shows.

The Characters

Big Billy Goat
Middle Billy Goat
Little Billy
The Troll
The Storyteller/Musician

The Show

A Musician enters the stage and gets everyone ready for the story of "The Three Billy Goats Gruff." First she introduces Big Billy Goat who was, "mean and tough." Next is Middle Billy Goat who is, "too cool." Finally out comes the littlest billy goat who really likes to play. The Musician and Little Billy sing several songs with the audience and then begin to tell the story of the goats. One day the Three Billy Goats Gruff decide they must move to greener pastures because they have run out of grass in the meadow where they live. However, to get to the new pasture they must cross over a bridge. Under the bridge lives an ugly troll who is very hungry and would love to eat a billy goat for lunch. Little Billy crosses over the bridge first. The Troll tries to capture the goat for his lunch, but the goat convinces him to wait for his older brother, since he will be a much bigger and more satisfying meal. The Troll agrees and sends him on his way. Middle Billy comes trip-trapping across the bridge next, and tricks the Troll into waiting for *his* older brother. The troll lets him go

and the middle goat is off to graze in the green pasture. Finally, Big Billy Goat Gruff arrives. The Troll tells him that he is going to eat him and the two begin to struggle. Big Billy Goat finally bucks the Troll off the bridge. The Troll falls down into the water below and turns into a rock, never to bother the Three Billy Goats Gruff again!

The Puppets

The Goats in “The Three Billy Goats Gruff” are rod puppets, while the Troll is a hand puppet. The puppets are carved from Styrofoam that makes up the body pieces. The bodies are covered with paper mache. Once this is dry and sanded the puppets are painted or covered with fake fur. Their clothes are custom made for their bodies and are similar in construction to doll clothes. Finally, their mouths are operated by a spring and string mechanism that is operated by the rod the puppeteer holds. The Troll has a paper mache head which is painted with fake fur used for hair.

Arizona Arts Standards

The following activities for before and after the show correspond with the related Arts Standards. Use each activity to help your students explore our show while exploring all the standards.

- A1) Creating Art
- A2) Art in Context
- A3) Arts as Inquiry

ACTIVITIES FOR BEFORE THE SHOW

Discuss with students if they have heard the story of the “Three Billy Goats Gruff”. What are some of the different endings? How might they end the story? (A3)

Have students discuss other puppet shows they have gone to or seen on television and in the movies.

What did the puppets look like? How did they move? (A3)

Ask students to talk about theater audience behavior. Discuss why we must act differently watching a play than when we are at home watching television or at the movie theatre? Why must our behavior be different when the show is “live?” (A2)

ACTIVITIES FOR AFTER THE SHOW

Have students draw pictures of the puppet show. Have them share their pictures with the class describing the scene they have drawn and the characters in it. (A3)

Students can discuss what they thought about the performance. Which parts of the show did they like? Which parts did they not like? (A3)

Students can discuss what they think it would be like to be a puppeteer. Is it a job they would enjoy? What do they think are important things that a puppeteer can do?

Students can retell the story of the “Three Billy Goats Gruff” by making simple paper bag puppets. Have students come up with ideas of how to make scenery from materials found at home or in the classroom. They can divide up the scenes into characters and locations. Allow the students to come up with a different ending for the show. (A1)

Students can send their pictures and letters to the Great Arizona Puppet Theater. We love to hear from our fans!

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