



**Great Arizona Puppet Theater
Presents**

THE ELVES & THE SHOEMAKER

Study Guide

Curriculum Links:

Language Arts (*read & write*)
Performing Arts
(*critique - arts standards tie-ins*)
Problem Solving
Math
Citizenship



The Elves and the Shoemaker is based on the Grimm's Fairy Tale. Your students will have a good time at the puppet show no matter what, but you can enrich the experience by using some of the activities from this Study Guide. Let us know the ones you find useful for your grade level, & have fun!

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ACTIVITIES FOR BEFORE OR AFTER THE SHOW

READ THE STORY:

Find one or more versions of the story and read out loud. Compare to the puppet show. How is the story told differently by different storytellers?

The Grimm Brothers

Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm were two brothers who began collecting German folk tales in the 18th century. People would tell them old stories and they wrote them down. Some other stories they recorded are RAPUNZEL, RED RIDING HOOD, THE BREMEN TOWN MUSICIANS, THE FROG PRINCE, RUMPELSTILTSKIN, HANSEL & GRETEL, TOM THUMB, SNOWDROP (Snow White), ASHENPUTTEL (Cinderella) and hundreds of others. Below is THE ELVES AND THE SHOEMAKER text, translated from German as told by the "Brothers Grimm".

THE ELVES

A shoemaker, by no fault of his own had become so poor that at last he had nothing left but enough leather for one pair of shoes. At evening he cut out the shoes which he intended to begin upon the next morning, and since he had a good conscience, he lay down quietly, said his prayers, and fell asleep.

In the morning when he had said his prayers, and was preparing to sit down to work, he found the pair of shoes standing finished on his table. He was amazed, and could not understand it in the least.

He took the shoes in his hand to examine them more closely. They were so neatly sewn that not a stitch was out of place, and were as good as the work of a master-hand.

Soon after a purchaser came in, and as he was much pleased with the shoes, he paid more than the ordinary price for them, so that the Shoemaker was able to buy leather for two pairs of shoes with the money.

He cut them out in the evening, and next day, with fresh courage, was about to go to work; but he had no need to, for when he got up, the shoes were finished, and buyers were not lacking. These gave him so much money that he was able to buy leather for four pairs of shoes.

Early next morning he found the four pairs finished, and so it went on; what he cut out at evening was finished in the morning, so that he was soon again in comfortable circumstances, and became a well-to-do man.

Now it happened one evening, not long before Christmas, when he had cut out some shoes as usual, that he said to his Wife, "How would it be if we were to sit up tonight to see who it

is that lends us such a helping hand?"

The Wife agreed, lighted a candle, and they hid themselves in the corner of the room behind the clothes which were hanging there.

At midnight came two little naked men who sat down at the Shoemaker's table, took up the cut-out work, and began with their tiny fingers to stitch, sew, and hammer so neatly and quickly, that the Shoemaker could not believe his eyes. They did not stop till everything was quite finished, and stood complete on the table; then they ran swiftly away.

The next day the Wife said, "The little men have made us rich, and we ought to show our gratitude. They were running about with nothing on, and must freeze with cold. Now I will make them little shirts, coats, waistcoats, and hose, and will even knit them a pair of stockings, and you shall make them each a pair of shoes."

The Husband agreed, and at evening, when they had everything ready, they laid out the presents on the table, and hid themselves to see how the little men would behave.

At midnight they came skipping in, and were about to set to work; but, instead of the leather ready cut out, they found the charming little clothes.

At first they were surprised, then excessively delighted. With the greatest speed they put on and smoothed down the pretty clothes, singing:

Now we're boys so fine and neat,
Why cobbler more for other's feet?

Then they hopped and danced about, and leapt over chairs and tables and out the door. Henceforward, they came back no more, but the Shoemaker fared well as long as he lived, and had good luck in all his undertakings.

VOCABULARY:

These words and expressions might be new to your students.

cobbler	sew
stitches	britches
in stock	shoemaker
leather	puppeteer
elf - elves	skills
charity - charitable	good luck in all his undertakings
pair	purchaser
gratitude	excessively delighted
henceforward	fared well

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

Topics for Discussion:

The Play

Had you heard the story of The Elves and the Shoemaker before? How was the puppet show similar to the way you have heard this story before? How was it different? (A3)

Did you like the changes made to the original story? Why or why not? Why do you think they were made? (A3)

In drama, we often speak of there being a protagonist or main character in the story. Who was the protagonist in the story? What problem did he have? How was it solved? (A3)

What characters were in the show? Did any of them remind you of anyone you know? Who? In what way? (A2)

How is a puppet play different from a play performed with human actors? (A2)

What special problems do the puppeteers have when they write and produce a show? (A2)

How do you think the puppets did the following? (A3)

- Open the door
- Knock on the door
- Make shoes
- Change their clothes
- Carry things

The passage of time is important to this story. How did you know if it was day or night in the show? How do you think that was done? What are some other ways to show the passage of time? (A2 & A1)

Below are some questions to help students assess the production and performance:

For **productions** as a whole, some important elements to consider are:

PUPPET DESIGN:

What types of puppets were used? Did their design fit their character? Did the design of the puppets seem to match each other in style? Was the size of each puppet appropriate for its character?

COSTUMES:

What were the puppets wearing? Did their costumes fit their character? Was it appropriate for the time and place? What did the characters' costume make you think about each character? How did it affect the show?

SET DESIGN:

What did the set look like? Did it try to create a sense of "realism"? Did it set the play in a time or place? What impression did the set create?

LIGHTING:

Are the puppets lit well so you can see them? Are there spotlights? Does the lighting change during the show? Are colored lights used? How does this affect the show?

For **individual performances**, you can consider how they might have been done on a different day or for a different audience. Some elements to consider are:

PUPPETEER PERFORMANCES:

Voices:

Was the voice of each puppet appropriate to its character? Could you hear and understand what the puppets were saying? Were their lines spoken in a believable fashion? Did the singing voices fit with the speaking voices? How did the voices of the puppets affect the performance?

Manipulation:

Manipulation is the way that the puppet is moved, and can be used to assess the performance of a puppeteer.

Were the puppets moved in a way that made them seem "alive"? What did an individual puppet's movement tell you about how it felt? Did the way that the puppet move fit with its character? How did the puppets enter and exit the stage? Were entrances and exits appropriate for the characters and believable? Was the height of each puppet consistent throughout the performance? Were puppets with moving mouths in sync with their voices? Did the puppets move in ways that are impossible for humans? If so, was this appropriate for the production? How did the movement of the puppets affect the production?

AUDIENCE REACTION:

Were audience members respectful of each other and the performers? Was there applause? How did the audience affect your impression of the show?

CHARITY

The Shoemaker and his Wife sing of the "spirit of joy and charity". What is charity? Discuss giving of time, money and things that will make someone's life better.

Who was charitable in the story?

Why is charity a good thing?

Have you ever helped someone or given something to someone who needed help? How did it make you feel?

Make a list of how your class could help others - this could include canned food drive, clothing and toy donations, etc.

MATH

Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm were the brothers who first wrote down the story about the elves and the shoemaker. Jacob Grimm was born in 1785 in Frankfurt, Germany. His brother, Wilhelm was born in 1786. Their first volume of collected tales, titled NURSERY AND HOUSEHOLD TALES was issued in 1812. The second volume followed in 1814.

How old was Jacob when the first book came out?

How old was Wilhelm when the second volume was published?

Who was older, Jacob or Wilhelm?

How old would Jacob be if he was alive today?

Is that older or younger than your teacher?

How many shoes did the elves make the first night in the puppet show?

How many shoes did they make the next night?

How many shoes did they make all together?

WRITE ABOUT THE PUPPET SHOW:

We love to get letters and pictures! Please send to:

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ROD PUPPETS

The puppets in THE ELVES AND THE SHOEMAKER are called rod puppets, because they are operated from below with rods (sticks or poles). The puppets in this show are quite old. The shoemaker's wife, Ingrid, and the Lady in Pink were originally built for LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD, the first show that puppeteers Ken Bonar and Nancy Smith did together in 1976. The puppets have different costumes to be different characters.

The puppets' heads were modeled in clay and covered with a material called celastic. The technique is similar to using papier mache. After it was dry, the head was cut in half, the clay removed, and then the head was put back together. A thin layer of wood putty was applied to the head. When it was dry, it was sanded until smooth and then painted. The jaws are separate from the heads and are made to fit inside the head, and held in place with a stiff wire. The mouth is held closed by a piece of elastic that stretches to allow the mouth to open.

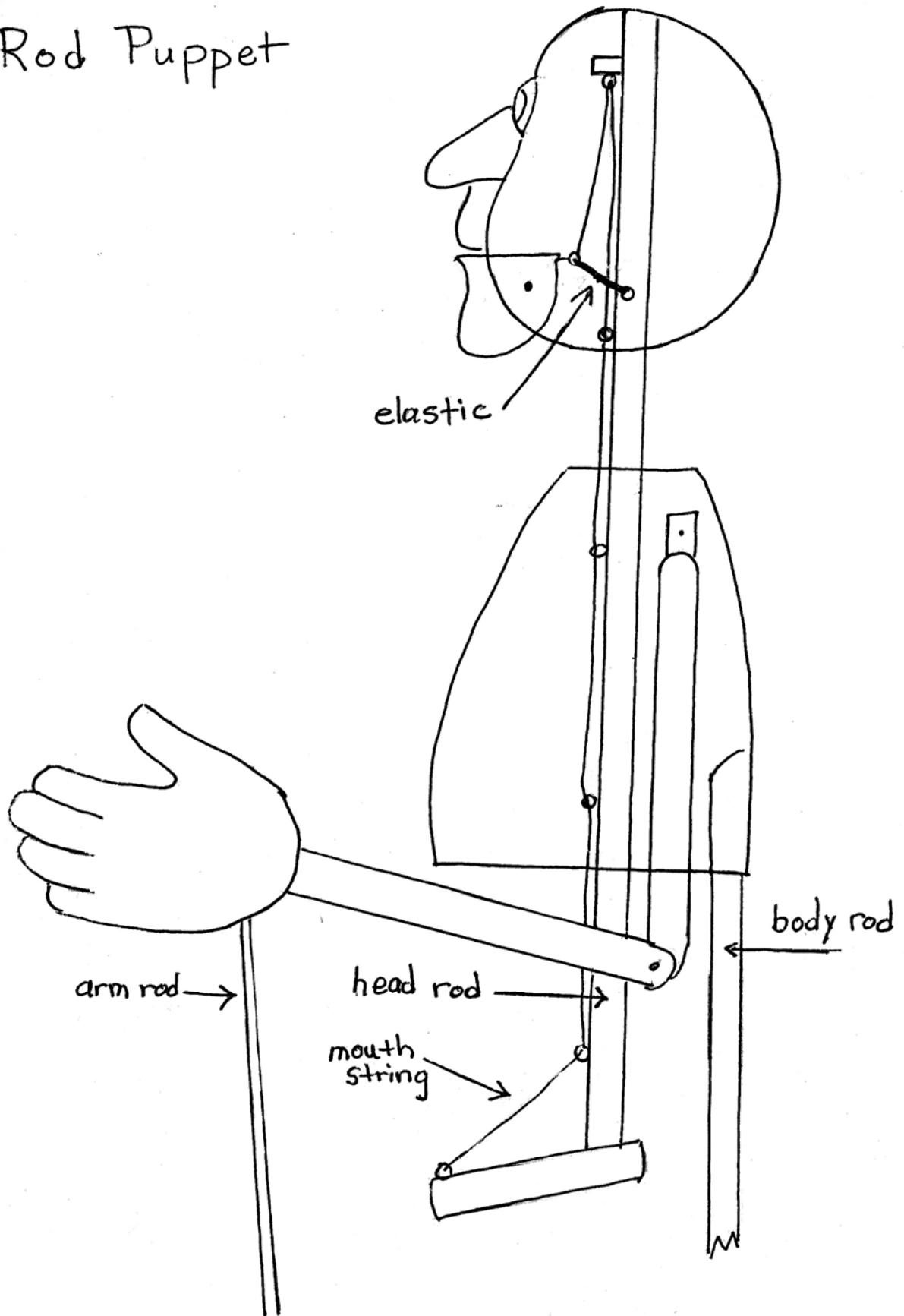
The bodies were made in a similar fashion, but do not have a covering of wood putty. Arms are made of wood or stuffed cloth and attached to the body with rubber or leather so the shoulder joints will be flexible. The hands were carved from wood. The larger rod puppets were designed to only be seen from the hip up, so do not have legs. Legs and feet for the little elves were carved from wood. Care was taken in carving the knees to be sure that the puppets' knees could bend back, but not forward.

The larger rod puppets have a rod for the body and a separate rod for the head. The smaller elves have one rod that goes through the body up to the head. The mouth string runs from the base of the head control rod, through the body, through a wire loop at the inside top of the head and down to the back of the jaw. When the string is pulled, the back of the jaw is pulled up and the mouth opens. When the puppeteer releases the string, the elastic pulls the mouth shut again.

Rods on one or both arms allow the puppeteers to control the arms of the puppets. Most of the time one puppeteer operates one puppet at a time. Sometimes the body rod is put into a harness around the puppeteer's neck to help support the body of the puppet.

The puppeteers stand up and are hidden behind a wall during the show. A small shelf at the front of the stage, called a playboard, is useful for setting props, such as the shoes in the story. All of the scenery must be elevated above the puppeteers' heads so the audience can see it. The script is memorized. The puppeteers speak and sing for their puppets as they are operating them. The puppeteers also open and close the curtain and control the light changes and sound cues from backstage.

Rod Puppet



A SPOON PUPPET

Take a wooden spoon and paint or glue a face on it. Glue on hair (cover the back, too!), and a costume. Cut holes in the costume for your fingers to fit through. Decorate the costume.

