

RESOURCE GUIDE FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

Pennsylvania Youth Theatre
Presents



ROALD DAHL'S
Matilda
THE MUSICAL

BOOK DENNIS KELLY MUSIC & LYRICS TIM MINCHIN

Is presented through special arrangement with Music Theatre International (MTI).

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The Tony Award-winning Roald Dahl's "Matilda The Musical" is the captivating masterpiece that revels in the anarchy of childhood, the power of imagination and the inspiring story of a girl who dreams of a better life. Children and adults alike will be thrilled and delighted by the story of the special little girl with an extraordinary imagination!

Zoellner Arts Center • Bethlehem



123pyt.org
610-332-1400



Pennsylvania Youth Theatre receives state arts funding support through a grant from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, a state agency funded by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Dear Teachers,

The following resource guide is designed for you and your students to facilitate the integration of the performing arts into core curriculum areas. The activities in this guide support the PA State Educational Standards in several areas, develop critical and creative thinking and enrich the live theatre experience for your students.

Pennsylvania Youth Theatre is proud to present *Matilda* performed at Lehigh University's Zoellner Arts Center.

Thank you and enjoy the show!

Jill Dunn Jones
Artistic Director

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Contacting Us.....	Cover
Dear Teachers.....	2
PA State Learning Standard.....	2
About PYT.....	2
BEFORE THE SHOW.....	3
Synopsis.....	3-4
Cast of Characters.....	4
About the Author.....	5
About the Creative Team.....	5
What Did You Say? Vocabulary.....	6
PYT ACTIVITIES:	
My Favorite Book.....	7
My Superpower.....	7
Act It Out!.....	8
Bullying.....	9
PYT Quicktivity: Role on the Wall.....	10
Write a Review.....	11
Theatre Etiquette.....	12

Pre-Show and Post-Show In-School Workshops

If you would like to schedule a PRE or POST show workshop for your class for this particular production, please contact

Jill Dunn Jones
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CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Pennsylvania State Learning Standards: *Matilda, the Musical* Resource Guide covers the following areas:

Academic Standards for Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening:

- 1.1 Learning to Read Independently
- 1.2 Reading Critically in All Content Areas
- 1.3 Reading, Analyzing and Interpreting Literature
- 1.4 Types of Writing
- 1.5 Quality of Writing
- 1.6 Speaking and Listening
- 1.7 Characteristics and Function of the English Language
- 1.8 Research

Academic Standards for Arts and Humanities

- 9.1 Production, Performance and Exhibition of Dance, Music, Theatre, and Visual Arts
- 9.2 Historical and Cultural Contexts
- 9.3 Critical Response
- 9.4 Aesthetic Response

Academic Standards for History

- 8.1 Historical Analysis and Skills Development
- 8.2 Pennsylvania History
- 8.3 United States History
- 8.4 World History

Academic Standards for Civics and Government

- 5.1 Principles and Documents of Government
- 5.2 Rights and Responsibilities of Citizenship
- 5.3 How Government Works
- 5.4 How International Relationships Function

ABOUT PYT

Pennsylvania Youth Theatre (PYT) is a professional, non-profit performing arts organization whose mission is to educate, entertain, and enrich the lives of young people through the art of theatre. By bringing literature to life with theatre, PYT enhances the Language Arts curriculum for 12,000 community school students annually. Founded with the belief that children deserve the very best, PYT's Mainstage literature-based plays are professionally produced. Professional directors, choreographers, actors, dancers and musicians as well as lighting costume and set designers are hired to achieve the best possible presentation of children's plays. To keep our Mainstage productions available to all, we continue to offer these professionally staged shows to school groups for approximately \$.50 a ticket which is 57% below our break-even cost. PYT is happy to offer plays of this quality to the school children of our community for this reduced cost. We hope you and your class enjoy this performance!

123pyt.org

BEFORE THE SHOW: SYNOPSIS OF *MATILDA*



Act I: As an ensemble of children explain how “special” they are, Mrs. Wormwood, an amateur ballroom dancer, gives birth to a baby girl called Matilda. The self-obsessed new mother is more concerned about missing a dance competition than her newborn child. Mr. Wormwood, a used-car salesman, dismissed the child as ugly and cannot comprehend that Matilda isn’t a boy.

Five years later, Matilda, who has become an avid reader, lives unhappily with her parents and older brother, Michael, who verbally abuse and mock her. Matilda retaliates by pranking her father’s hair oil, turning his hair green. Matilda’s only retreat from her troubled home and family are the books that she finds at the local library, where she befriends the librarian, Mrs. Phelps. Matilda begins to tell her a fantastical story about a world-famous acrobat and escapologist whose only desire is to have children, but cannot. To distract themselves from their despair, the couple decides to perform a dangerous, new act.



The next day, Matilda starts school at Crunchem Hall, where her kind and compassionate teacher, Miss Honey, immediately recognizes Matilda’s exceptional intelligence and recommends she be placed with older children. The cruel headmistress, Miss Trunchbull, dismisses her suggestion and reminds Miss Honey of the rules of the school. Back home, Mr. Wormwood, frustrated by the loss of a sham-deal of worn-down cars with his rich Russian clients, destroys one of Matilda’s books. Matilda retaliates by adding glue to his hat.

At the library, Matilda continues her story about the acrobat and the escapologist to Mrs. Phelps. Matilda explains that the acrobat’s sister, a former world champion hammer-thrower, has arranged their performance. After discovering that his wife is finally pregnant, the escapologist cancels the life-threatening feat, enraging his sister-in-law who produces a binding contract to perform the act or go to jail.



Back at school, Matilda’s classmate, Bruce Bogtrotter is caught stealing a slice of Miss Trunchbull’s personal cake and is forced to eat the entire cake in front of the entire class. Even though the class rallies behind Bruce as he finishes the cake, Miss Trunchbull drags Bruce off to the Chokey.

At school, Matilda learns about Miss Trunchbull’s cruel punishments to disobedient children, including being locked in the Chokey, a small cupboard filled with sharp objects, and witnesses a girl being swung by her pigtails and thrown across a field. Miss Honey visits Matilda at home and attempts to explain to her parents about Matilda’s exceptional abilities. Mrs. Wormwood is too busy with her dance partner, Rudolpho, to listen and mocks Miss Honey and Matilda’s interest in books.



Act II: Matilda’s school-friend, Lavender, states that she is going to put a newt in Miss Trunchbull’s water pitcher. The children dream about what adulthood would be like and share their hopes about their future. Matilda vows to put an end to Miss Trunchbull’s cruelty.

Back in the library, Matilda continues to tell the tragic story of the acrobat and the escapologist to Mrs. Phelps and how after the birth of their child, the acrobat dies and her sister is invited to live with the grieving escapologist and his newborn daughter. The aunt is secretly cruel to the little girl. Mr. Wormwood returns home, having sold the broken-down cars to the Russians, and Matilda disapproves of her father’s deceit. Her father locks Matilda in her room and she finishes the story of the acrobat and the escapologist. After discovering the cruel truth about his sister-in-law, the escapologist vows to retaliate, but is never seen again.

BEFORE THE SHOW: ACT II AND CAST OF CHARACTERS

ACT II CONT.

The following day at school, Miss Trunchbull puts Miss Honey's students through a grueling physical education class. After Miss Trunchbull discovers the newt in her water pitcher, she starts to punish an innocent student. Matilda discovers she can move things with her mind and tips over the water and the newt onto Miss Trunchbull, scaring her away.



Miss Honey invites Matilda for tea and they both discuss the traumas from their childhood. Matilda realizes that Miss Honey is the real-life child of the acrobat and the escapist, and the cruel aunt is Miss Trunchbull.

Back at school, Miss Trunchbull forces Lavender to the Chokey by making up words during a spelling test. The children rebel by misspelling simple words, believing they can't all be sent to the Chokey. The children discover that Miss Trunchbull has built many Chokeys, but Matilda uses her extraordinary ability to move the chalk, scaring Miss Trunchbull into believing that it is the ghost of Miss Honey's father, demanding

she give his daughter back her house or he will haunt her. The children celebrate as Miss Trunchull runs from the school terrified.

Miss Honey becomes the new headmistress of the school and receives her house back. The Wormwoods arrive in a panic, on-the-run from the Russians, who are part of the Russian mafia, and tell Matilda that they are fleeing to Spain. Miss Honey asks the Wormwoods if she can adopt Matilda, before Sergei, the head of the Mafia, catches up with them. He is so impressed with Matilda that he agrees not to harm the Wormwoods. Mr. Wormwood agrees to let Matilda live with Miss Honey.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Matilda Wormwood –An imaginative girl who is clever and wise far beyond her years. She has a thirst for learning that cannot be quenched and is a fantastic storyteller. Matilda must be small, mature, and ready to handle carrying the entire show. Strong singer and actor.

Matilda's Classmates: Bruce, Lavender, Amanda, Alice, Hortensia, Eric, Nigel, Tommy

Miss Agatha Trunchbull: The tyrannical headmistress at Matilda's school who despises children. Once a famous athlete, she is described as a "gigantic Holy terror", a "fierce tyrannical monster" who "marches like a storm trooper with long arms swinging" with an "aura of menace".

Miss Honey: Matilda's kindhearted teacher. She befriends Matilda. She is tired of living in fear under Miss Trunchbull. A mild, quiet person who never raises her voice and seldom seems to smile - yet possesses the rare gift of being adored by every small child under her care.

Mr. Wormwood: Matilda's uncaring father. A slimy, greedy used-car salesman. "A mean crooked crook."

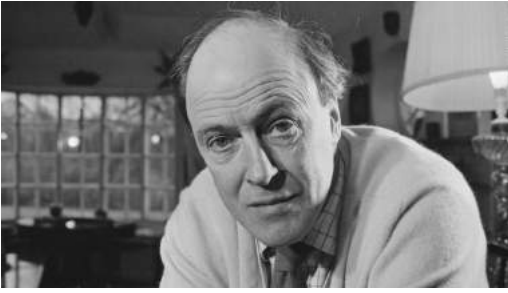
Mrs. Wormwood: Matilda's self-absorbed, negligent mother and an amateur ballroom dancer who is obsessed with her amateur Ballroom dancing partner and her looks. She has an over-the-top personality who resents Matilda and often berates her.

Michael Wormwood: Matilda's older brother. He is not very bright and favored by their parents.

Mrs. Phelps: The kind Librarian who takes a liking to Matilda.

Rudolpho: Mrs. Wormwood's ballroom dance partner.

BEFORE THE SHOW: ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Roald Dahl (1916-1990) was the author of *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, *Matilda*, *The BFG*, and many more of the world's best-loved children's stories. His work is celebrated annually by the world's biggest author-based event, Roald Dahl Day– which is recognized across the globe on the 13th of September. His first children's story, *James and the Giant Peach*, published in 1961, was a huge hit. Every subsequent book became a best-seller. Today, his stories are available in 59 languages and, by a conservative estimate, he has sold more than 250 million books. Many of these stories have also been adapted for the stage and screen, including the

1971 film classic *Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory*, Wes Anderson's acclaimed *Fantastic Mr. Fox*, and the Royal Shakespeare Company's multi-award winning production of *Matilda The Musical*.

BEFORE THE SHOW: ABOUT THE CREATIVE TEAM OF MATILDA THE MUSICAL: Tim Minchin and Dennis Kelly

Dennis Kelly is a London-born playwright who has written a number of plays including *Love and Money*, *Orphans*, *Debris*, *Deoxyribonucleic Acid*, *The Gods Weeps*. He is best known for *Matilda the Musical*, which won the Olivier Award for Best New Musical in 2012. Recognized for his 'dark-style of writing,' he has also written for film and television, including the British sitcom *Pulling and Utopia*.



Tim Minchin is an Australian composer, lyricist, musician, comedian, actor, writer and director. Born in Perth, Western Australia, Minchin spent most of his early career writing music and playing in bands. In 2003, he debuted his first solo show at the Melbourne Fringe Festival called *Navel-Cerebral Melodies With Umbilical Chords*. His work was well-received and won the Perrier Best Newcomer Award at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. In 2009, he was commissioned by the Royal Shakespeare Company to write the music and lyrics for *Matilda*.

I wrote most of the songs for Matilda in a blurry seven-week period, wedged between an Australian tour and the birth of my son, Caspar, in the middle of 2009. I didn't at the time know whether the songs were any good... I still don't really. To be honest, I didn't feel qualified to be working on the adaptation of such a well-loved text, and I was very aware of the massive gap in theatre-making experience between the rest of the creative team and me. But there was something I felt pretty secure about: I knew I didn't have to worry about Dahl. I wasn't compelled to go back and read all his books, I didn't feel the need to examine other adaptations, I didn't search for academic analysis of his style. I could see no reason why any other songwriter would know what Dahl felt like better than I. I figured all I had to do was make sure my songs felt to me like Dahl felt to me.

An interview with Tim Minchin, "Tim Minchin: I'm Bringing Matilda the Musical Home". *The Sydney Morning Herald*, May 22, 2015.

BEFORE THE SHOW: WHAT DID YOU SAY?

Matilda Vocabulary Terms

De-rigueur (adj.) required by etiquette or current fashion.

Umbilical Cord (noun) a flexible cordlike structure containing blood vessels that connects a human fetus to the mother

Empirical (adj.) based on observation or experience rather than theory or pure logic

Supple (adj.) bending and moving easily and gracefully; flexible Tarantella (noun) a rapid whirling dance originating in southern Italy

Oblige (verb) to do as (someone) asks or desires in order to help or please them.

Gaol (noun) a place for the confinement or jail

Peal (verb) (of a bell or bells) to ring loudly

Squib (noun) a small, slight, or weak person, especially a child

Treacle (noun) a thick, sticky dark syrup made from partly refined sugar; molasses

Suppurate (verb) to undergo the formation of pus; fester

Carbuncle (noun) a severe abscess or multiple boil in the skin

Fiend (noun) a wicked or cruel person

Tardis (noun) a time machine

Muzzle (verb) to prevent (a person or group) from expressing their opinions freely

Dissent (verb) hold or express opinions that are different than those officially expressed.

Reek (verb) to smell strongly and unpleasantly; stink

Odiferous (adj) having or giving off a distinct, unpleasant smell

Defiance (noun) open resistance; bold disobedience

Coup (noun) a sudden and violent seizure of power from authority

Horde (noun) an army or tribe of nomadic warriors

Revolt [rə'vɒlt] (verb) 1. rise in rebellion. ▫ refuse to acknowledge someone or something as having authority. 2. cause to feel disgust. (noun) 1. an attempt to put an end to the authority of a person or body by rebelling. ▫ a refusal to continue to obey or conform.

MY FAVORITE BOOK

DIRECTIONS: Imagine that your favorite book has turned into a musical. What would that musical sound like? What would be the title of each song? Fill out your answers below and then share with the class!

Your Favorite Book:

Style of Music:

Musical Numbers:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

MY SUPER POWER

DIRECTIONS: Matilda is able to move things with her mind. If you had a magical power, what would it be? In the space below draw a picture of yourself using your magical power.

PYT ACTIVITY: ACT IT OUT!

DIRECTIONS: Act out the scene below with your classmates! Pay close attention to the italicized words. They are called *STAGE DIRECTIONS*. Stage directions are used to show you what the actors on stage should be doing while they are speaking! (HINT: They are not read out loud!)

LAVENDER: Matilda, can I ask you a question? Do all those brains in your head give you a headache? I mean it's got to hurt, all squished in there.

MATILDA: No, it's fine. I think they just... fit.

LAVENDER: Right. Well look, I'd better hang around just in case. If they start to squeeze out of your ears you're going to need help. I'm Lavender. And I think it's probably for the best if we're best friends.

SHE holds her hand out. THEY shake. Suddenly NIGEL runs on, panicked, terrified. He runs one way. Then the other. But neither seems to offer the protection he needs.

NIGEL: Hide me! Someone poured a whole can of treacle onto Trunchbull's chair! She sat down and when she got up her knickers stayed stuck to the seat! Someone told her I did it but I never and now she's after me!

MATILDA: That's not fair! That's not fair at all!

BIG KID: You're done kid. You're finished.

BIG KID: Once Agatha Trunchbull decides you're guilty you are squished.

BIG KID: Yesterday she caught Julius Rottwinkle eating a licorice during science. She just picked him up, swung him around and threw him out the window.

MATILDA: Don't listen to them! That didn't happen, they're trying to scare us.

NIGEL: Oh Matilda... they're saying she's going to put me in Chokey.

The BIG KIDS suddenly gasp.

MATILDA: W... what's chokey?

NIGEL: They say it's a cupboard in her office that she throws children into. They say she's lined it with nails and spikes and bits of broken glass

PYT DISCUSSION: BULLYING

Bullying has become an important issue facing schools as the anger and resentment by tormented students who have been bullied for years, ends up manifesting itself in destructive ways. A bully wields his/her power over another person by intimidating the victim in various ways, either psychologically, verbally, or physically. Bullies pick on those who they see as being vulnerable and easily controlled. Matilda is an extremely gifted and smart little girl who lacks the physical power and the adult authority to free herself from the grips of adults who abuse their power. Matilda saves herself by developing special powers, her acute intellect, and by befriending someone who has been and is also being bullied, Miss Honey.

Discuss with students what they believe motivates Miss Trunchbull's bullying. Compelled by her greedy hunger for control, she manipulates her students by the brutal tactics to uphold her power. *Do school-yard bullies in your school possess the same desire for control and power? Even though Miss Trunchbull is an adult and appointed as an authority figure for the school, does that make her behavior acceptable? How is such tyranny overcome?*

Research shows that when adults respond quickly and consistently to bullying behavior they send the message that it is not acceptable. Teaching kids how to identify bullying and how to stand up to it safely can help stop bullying behavior over time. Parents, school staff, and other adults in the community can help kids prevent bullying by talking about it, building a safe school environment, and creating a community-wide bullying prevention strategy. They can:

- Help kids understand bullying. Talk about what bullying is and how to stand up to it safely. Tell kids bullying is unacceptable. Make sure kids know how to get help.
- Keep the lines of communication open. Encourage kids to speak to a trusted adult if they are bullied or see others being bullied. The adult can give comfort, support, and advice, even if they can't solve the problem directly. Check in with kids often. Listen to them. Know their friends, ask about school, and understand their concerns.
- Encourage kids to do what they love. Special activities, interests, and hobbies can boost confidence, help kids make friends, and protect them from bullying behavior.
- Model how to treat others with kindness and respect.
- Talk about how to stand up to kids who bully. Give tips, like using humor and saying "stop" directly and confidently. Talk about what to do if those actions don't work, like walking away.
- Talk about strategies for staying safe, such as staying near adults or groups of other kids.
- Urge them to help kids who are bullied by showing kindness or getting help.

For more information about how to prevent bullying in your community or school, visit: www.stopbullying.gov

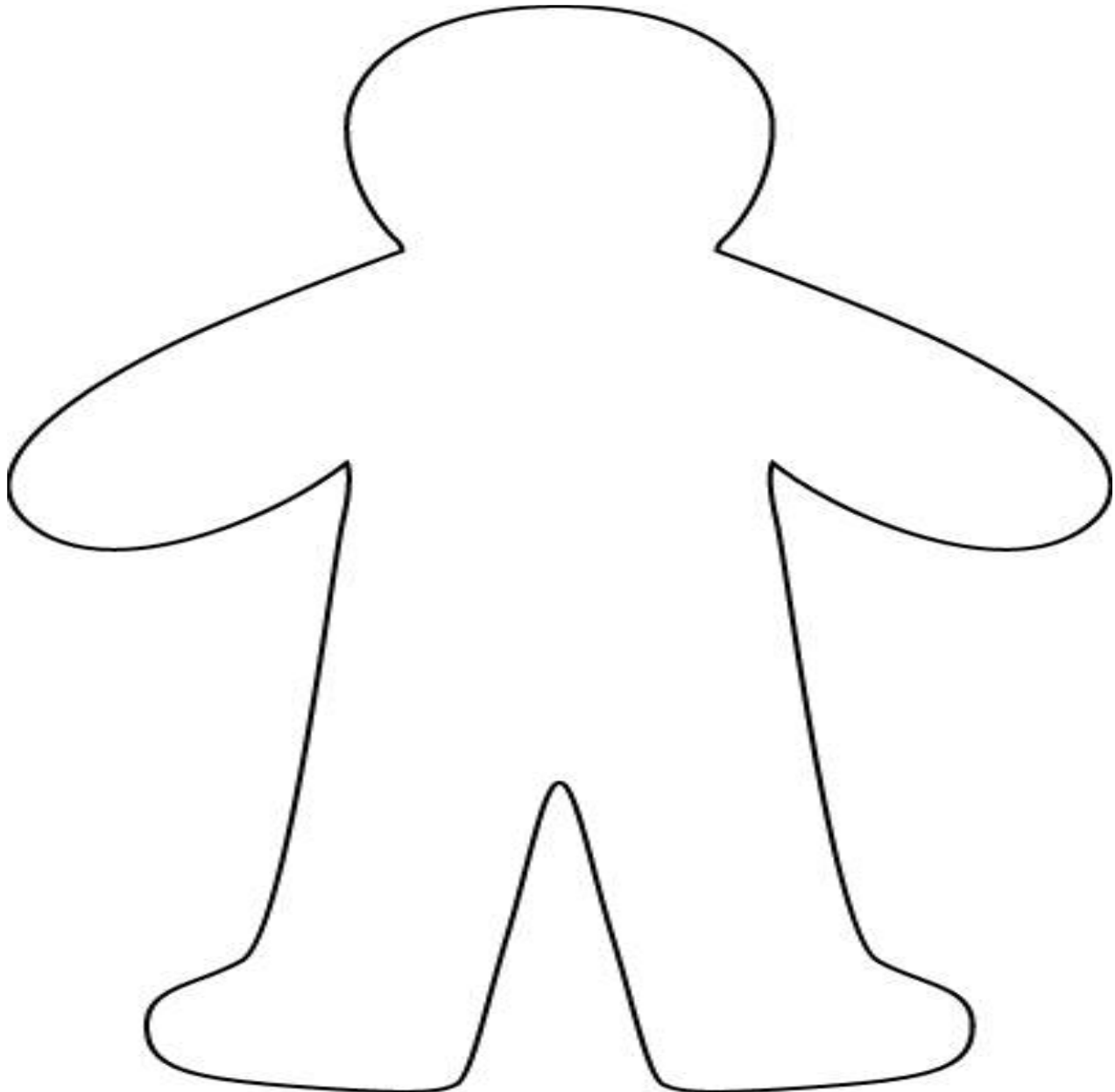
PYT QUICKTIVITIES

This activity can be done BOTH before and after the show. If you are able to, find a copy of the book or film to show your students before PYT's production. Compare and contrast those to each other, then to the play you will see at Zoellner Arts Center

The **ROLE ON THE WALL** outline is drawn on a piece of chart paper around an important character. Information and feelings about the character are written into the shape. It can also be enriched by being written from different perspectives, for example, the space outside the outline can contain comments about the character as they are seen from an observer's viewpoint and the interior space can contain the characters own thoughts and point of view. This is useful for building a deeper understanding of a character and the play. Use this outline below to record information about each character. This can be done with both older and younger students. With older students, you can assign a different character to groups and they can collaborate and share their work with the class.

MATILDA, MISS HONEY, THE TRUNCHBULL, MR. AND MRS. WORMWOOD, ETC: *How does he/she see him/herself? (Record these traits on the inside of the Role on the Wall.) How do other people view him/her? (Record these descriptions on the outside of the character.*

You may do this activity before the show, based on your students prior knowledge, then compare and add to after the show. Hand out the outline below and have your students begin the process.



WRITE A REVIEW

After the show, write a review and send it to PYT!

I liked *Matilda* because:

My favorite part was:

The scene I remember most was:

The character I liked best was because:

The character I did not like was because:

Overall, I think *Matilda* was:

DRAW A REVIEW! We love seeing your creations!

Teachers, you can mail these reviews to: PYT 25 W 3rd St, Bethlehem, PA 18015

THEATRE ETIQUETTE

The audience is a very important part of any live theatre performance. Without the audience, there would be no one to laugh when the show is funny, to gasp when it is scary or to applaud in the end.

- Enter the theatre quietly. Listen to the directions from the ushers and sit where they direct you.
- There is no intermission, so you may want to use the bathroom before the show begins.
- You will help others enjoy the show when you keep your feet on the floor and your hands to yourself.
- Save your comments or questions for later in class. Do no talk during the show.
- Food and drinks are NOT allowed in the theatre. Enjoy your snacks, gum or candy after the show.
- A live play is different than a movie or a football game. Talking to the actors is not appropriate and can be distracting.
- Please turn off your cell phones, and no texting during the show.
- No photographs or video taping, please. This is for the actor's safety.
- Show your appreciation by applauding at the end of the show.
- When the show is over, our ushers will give you directions to leave the theatre in an orderly manner.
- Enjoy the show! We're glad you came to a production by Pennsylvania Youth Theatre!

Thank you for bringing your students to this PYT production!



PYT ADVENTURE CAMPS

Age 3 years to 2nd Grade

The ADVENTURE CAMP is an all-day or half-day camp for children age 3 years through 2nd Grade. These one-week camp opportunities are the perfect fit for those campers who want to explore a variety of activities.

Full-day (9:00 AM – 4:00PM) or Half-day (9:00 AM – 12:15PM), Monday-Friday camp will occur during eleven consecutive weeks and will be a broad-based performing and visual arts experience.

Featuring all of the engaging, creative activities our kids love (acting, singing, movement and visual arts), as well as special performance opportunities, organized games and outdoor playtime, not to mention special guests and projects!

Register for one week, two weeks or any number of weeks up to the full eleven. The adventure is yours!

PYT SHOWTIME CAMPS

For campers entering 3rd – 12th grades
from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM.

PYT's SHOWTIME CAMPS are performance camps for young performers going into 3rd Grade through 12th Grade. These one- OR two-week camps include three different productions, an intensive acting camp, two musical marathons, and much more!

OVERVIEW:

June 13 - 25: Production Camp: *Peter Pan, Jr*

June 27 - July 1: Acting and Improv Lab
NO CAMP July 4-8

July 11 - 15: Musical Theatre Marathon: *Stranger Sings: The Parody Musical (Stranger Things)*

July 18 - July 30: Production Camp: *Oliver, Jr.*

August 1 - 5: Musical Theatre Marathon: *The Greatest Showman*

August 8 - 20: Production Camp: *Legally Blonde, Jr.*
August 22 - 26: Triple Threat