

Photo by Bill Jones

Charlotte's Web

Based on the book by E.B. White
Adapted for the stage by Joseph Robinette
Directed by Michael Haverty

Sept 30 - Oct 31, 2010

Performances Tuesday - Sunday

Call 404.873.3391 to book your group

CENTER FOR
PUPPETRY
Arts

The Center for Puppetry Arts is supported in part by:



Doris Duke Charitable Foundation/The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation



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The Center also serves as headquarters of UNIMA-USA, the American branch of Union Internationale de la Marionnette, the international puppetry organization.

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A note from our Education Director

Dear Educator,

Welcome to the Center for Puppetry Arts and our production of *Charlotte's Web* by E.B. White, adapted for the stage by Joseph Robinette and directed by Michael Haverty. Founded in 1978, the Center is a cherished cultural and educational resource in Atlanta. We value your patronage and are delighted that you have chosen us as a teaching resource. Your students are in for a big treat!

This study guide was designed to enhance student learning before and after your visit to the Center for Puppetry Arts. *Charlotte's Web* is a heartwarming tale of friendship brought to life through the magic of puppetry. This beautiful show is the perfect accompaniment to a thematic unit on the farm, spiders, animals, friendship, books by E.B. White or classic children's literature in general.

All three areas of programming at the Center for Puppetry Arts (performance, puppet-making workshops and Museum) meet Georgia Performance Standards (GPS). To access the Georgia Performance Standards that have been correlated to each programming area according to grade level, click the links below:

[Charlotte's Web, P-K & K](#)
[Charlotte's Web, Grade 1](#)
[Charlotte's Web, Grade 2](#)
[Charlotte's Web, Grade 3](#)
[Charlotte's Web, Grade 4](#)
[Charlotte's Web, Grade 5](#)
[Charlotte's Web, Grade 6](#)

To access a complete list of GA Performance Standards for all grades and subjects, please visit <http://www.georgiastandards.org/>.

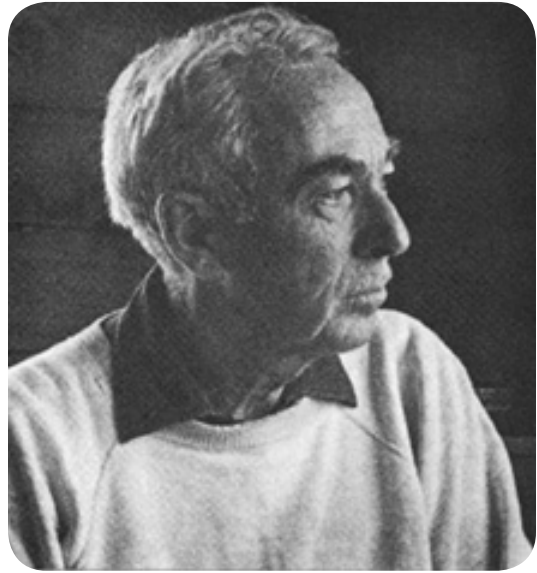
Thank you for choosing the Center for Puppetry Arts for your study trip. We hope that your students' experience here will live on in their memories for many years to come.

Sincerely,

Alan Louis
Director of Museum and Education Programs

About the Author

Elwyn Brooks White was born in Mount Vernon, New York, on July 11, 1899. He graduated from Cornell University in 1921. As a student, he wrote for the college newspaper *The Cornell Daily Sun* and though he found writing difficult, he persisted at becoming a better writer. After graduation he worked as a newspaper reporter and, in 1927, he became a writer for *The New Yorker*, a new magazine at the time. In 1929, he married Katherine Angell, a fellow editor at *The New Yorker*. A year later they had a son, Joel. White became well-known for his satirical sketches, poems, essays and editorials. His monthly essays from *Harper's Magazine* have been collected into a book entitled *One Man's Meat*. In 1938, White moved to a farm in Maine where he kept animals. Some of the animals on his farm made their way into his stories. He published *Charlotte's Web* in 1952. White said that he wanted to write a children's story that was true to the facts of nature. By making Charlotte the hero of the story, White wanted his readers to free themselves from their prejudices against spiders. In 1963, President John F. Kennedy named White a recipient of the Presidential Medal for Freedom. E.B. White died on October 1, 1985. He was 86 years old.



E.B. White

Synopsis

Our story begins one morning on Mr. Arable's farm where the family awakes to find that a litter of pigs has been born during the night. Farmer Arable is pleased with the pigs, except for the runt of the litter, which he considers to be small and worthless. The farmer wants to kill the pig, but Mr. Arable's daughter, Fern, protests. Fern rescues the runt and names him Wilbur. Fern cares for Wilbur until he grows bigger and must be moved to her Uncle Homer's farm.

On Homer Zuckerman's farm, Wilbur, young and innocent, is confused and scared by the other animals on the farm. Wilbur misses the Arable farm - especially Fern - until he befriends Charlotte, a gray spider who lives above his pen in the barn. Charlotte is wise and teaches Wilbur about true friendship. When Wilbur finds out that he is being fattened up to be slaughtered, Charlotte uses her amazing ability to weave words into her web above Wilbur's pen. The words describe Wilbur as "Some Pig," "Radiant" and "Terrific." The miracle in Zuckerman's barn attracts the attention of the press. The news spreads quickly throughout the community about "Zuckerman's Famous Pig."

With Charlotte's help, Wilbur becomes a celebrity and is saved from the slaughterhouse. Soon afterward, the time comes for Charlotte to lay her egg sac. After she accomplishes this, Charlotte becomes weak and finally dies. Wilbur is greatly saddened, but pledges to care for the egg sac until the baby spiders hatch. As Charlotte's children emerge from the egg sac, Wilbur begins to understand that life is ongoing and ever-changing and that friends are never forgotten.

Style of Puppetry

Five skilled puppeteers work together very closely to bring the puppet characters in *Charlotte's Web* to life. Dressed in black from head to toe, the puppeteers remain in the shadows while manipulating their puppets in the lighted playing areas. This approach is commonly known as Czech Black technique as it originated in the Czech Republic of Central Europe. The puppets in this show are controlled by a mechanism in back of their heads that the puppeteers use to make the characters turn their heads, look up and down and focus on objects and other characters. The puppeteers use their own hands as the puppets' hands so that they can easily pick up and grip props throughout the show. Character voices are all performed live by the cast. Each puppeteer wears a cordless microphone to amplify her/his voice.

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Internet Resources

<http://www.harperchildrens.com/authorintro/index.asp?authorid=10499>

Visit HarperCollins Children's Books official E.B. White website.

<http://www.amonline.net.au/spiders/>

Check out the Australian Museum Online's *Spiders* page full of excellent arachnid information.

<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/nature/pigs/>

Find a wealth of information on pigs at the site of the PBS nature film, *The Joy of Pigs*.

<http://www.agr.state.il.us/kidspage/babies.html>

Learn the proper names for farm animals and their babies at this website.

http://www.valentinesperformingpigs.com/perf_nellie.html

Send an email to Nellie, the world's smartest pig!

<http://www.ext.vt.edu/resources/4h/virtualfarm/main.html>

Visit the 4-H Virtual Farm website to learn about many different types of farming.

Learning Activities

P-K & K: Mathematics Patterning Activity

Georgia Bright from the Start Pre-K Content Standards covered: Mathematical Development MD 2 b (Children will create and duplicate simple patterns). **Georgia Performance Standards covered:** Kindergarten, Mathematics (Geometry) MKG3B.

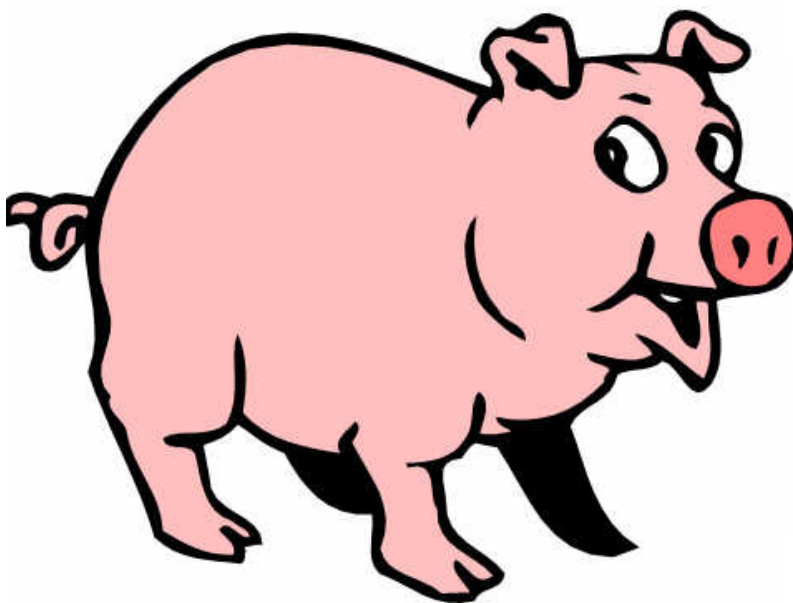
Objective: Students will use math manipulatives to create patterns.

Materials: Pig, rat and spider math manipulative sheets, scissors, crayons.

Procedure:

1. Photocopy one of each animal sheet for each student. If desired, photocopy onto card stock for sturdier manipulatives.
2. Have students color all of the pigs on their pig sheet pink, all of the rats on their rat sheet brown, and all of the spiders on their spider sheet grey.
3. After students have colored each of their three sheets, they should cut the pictures apart on the dotted lines to create a set of each type of animal.
4. Ask students to create equal sets with their pictures, such as three sets with one pig, one rat and one spider in each set. Have students invent their own sets. Have students create sets using all, some or none of a certain animal.
5. Have students create patterns that the teacher calls out such as pig, pig, rat, spider, spider. Ask students to invent their own patterns. Have students arrange one of each card in order from smallest to largest according to the actual size of the animal. Have students arrange one of each card in order from lightest to heaviest according to the actual weight of each animal.

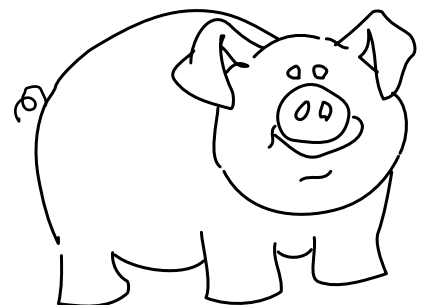
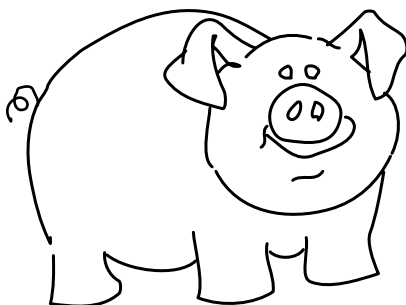
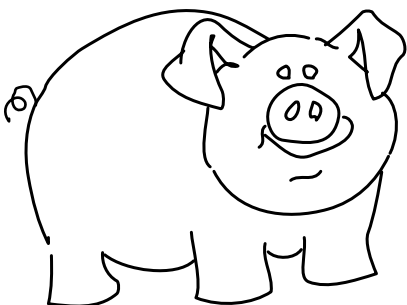
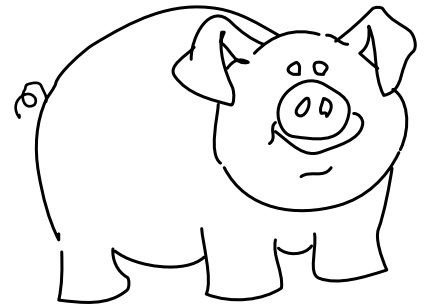
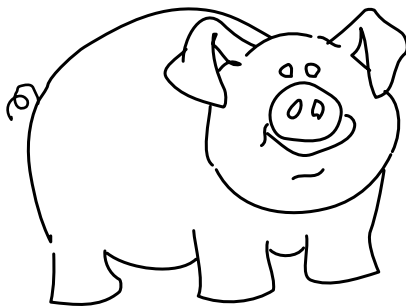
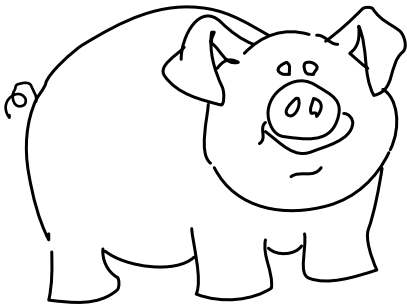
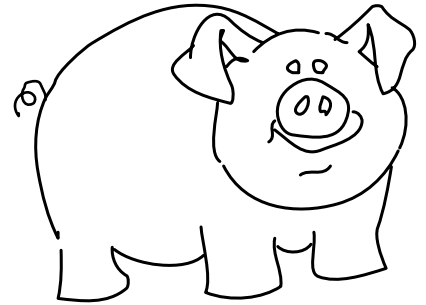
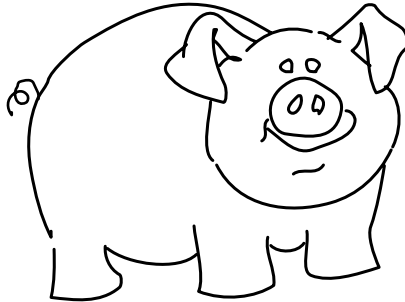
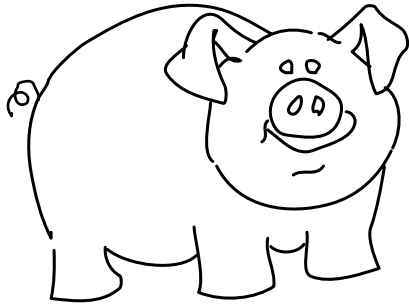
Assessment: Observe students for comprehension. Ask each student to demonstrate a pattern of their own using their manipulatives.



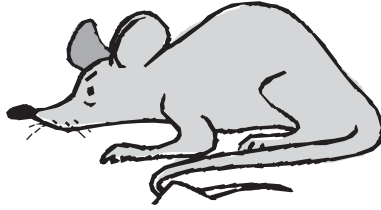
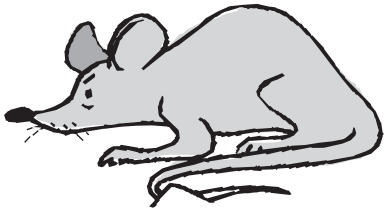
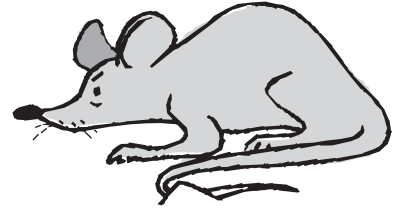
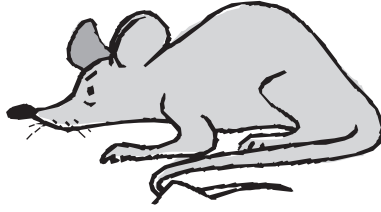
Math Manipulative Sheet 1



Math Manipulative Sheet 2



Math Manipulative Sheet 3



Learning Activities

1st & 2nd Grade: Language/Visual Arts: **New Adjectives for Charlotte’s Terrific Web**

Georgia Performance Standards covered: **Grade 1**, English Language Arts and Reading, Reading (Concepts of Print): ELA1RI a; (Listening/Speaking/Viewing): ELA1LSV d; (Writing – Response to Literature): ELA1W2 b. **Grade 2**, English Language Arts and Reading (Writing – Response to Literature): ELA2W2 c; (Listening/Speaking/Viewing): ELA2LSV1 e.

Objective: Students will create a spider web picture naming an appropriate adjective to describe *Charlotte’s Web* by E.B.White.

Materials: Black construction paper, white crayons, individual bottles of glue, silver glitter (or bottles of silver glitter glue), newspaper.

Procedure:

1. Explain to students that adjectives are words that describe nouns. The words that Charlotte wrote in her web to describe Wilbur like “radiant” and “terrific” were adjectives. After attending a performance of *Charlotte’s Web* at the Center for Puppetry Arts (or after reading the book), ask students to think of an adjective to describe the story. You may want to bring in an ad from the movie section of the newspaper where critics have used descriptive words to describe a contemporary film.
2. Distribute black construction paper and white crayons. Ask students to think of an adjective to write on the construction paper in white crayon. Tell them to make sure that the word is spelled correctly.
3. After they have written their word, show them pictures of spider webs and ask them to draw a spider web around their word with their crayon (so it looks like Charlotte wrote it).
4. Spread newspaper on desk or tabletop. Have students outline all of their crayon lines with glue. Sprinkle glitter on the wet glue. Pick up construction paper and carefully shake off excess glitter. Let dry. (Bottles of silver glitter glue work beautifully and are less messy). Create a bulletin board display of student’s work.

Assessment: Observe students to make sure they complete the activity. Take anecdotal notes on each student’s personal interests.



Learning Activities

3rd & 4th Grade: Spiders and Scorpions: Comparing Two Arachnids

Georgia Performance Standards covered: **Grade 3**, Science: SC3S4 a; C3CS8 c.
Grade 4, Science (Life Science): S4L2 a.

Objective: Students will go online to read about two types of arachnids and compare and contrast the characteristics of each.

Materials: Computers with Internet access, printers, pencils, paper.

Procedure:

1. Explain to students that spiders and scorpions are not insects, but belong to a class of animal known as arachnids. You may want to compare and contrast insects and arachnids first.
2. Have students go to <http://www.enchantedlearning.com/subjects/arachnids/spider/Spiderprintout.shtml> and read the information contained there about spiders.
3. Students should then go to <http://www.enchantedlearning.com/subjects/arachnids/scorpion/Scorpionprintout.shtml> and read the information contained there about scorpions. They may want to print each page.
4. After they have studied the information on both Web pages, ask students to write down as many similarities and differences between spiders and scorpions as they can. They should use two pieces of paper, one labeled “Similarities” and one labeled “Differences.”

Similarities:

- Both have eight legs, seven segments on each leg, tiny claws on each leg
- Both come in different colors
- Both are carnivores (eat other animals)
- Both have hard exoskeletons
- Both have pedipalps
- Both can be poisonous to humans

Differences:

- Spiders have feelers (pedipalps), scorpions have large, pincer-like pedipalps (claws for trapping prey)
- Scorpions live longer than spiders
- Scorpions do not spin webs like spiders do; they do not have spinneretes like spiders do
- Scorpions eject poison from tail, spiders eject poison from jaw

5. Discuss findings with students.

Assessment: Observe students to see if all are participating. Repeat this activity throughout the year in connection with other subjects.

Learning Activities

5th & 6th Grade: E.B.White Discusses the Theme of Charlotte's Web

Georgia Performance Standards covered: **Grade 5**, English/Language Arts, Reading, ELA5R3 a,b,c,d,e,f; **Grade 6**, English/Language Arts, Reading, ELA6R2 a,b,c,d.

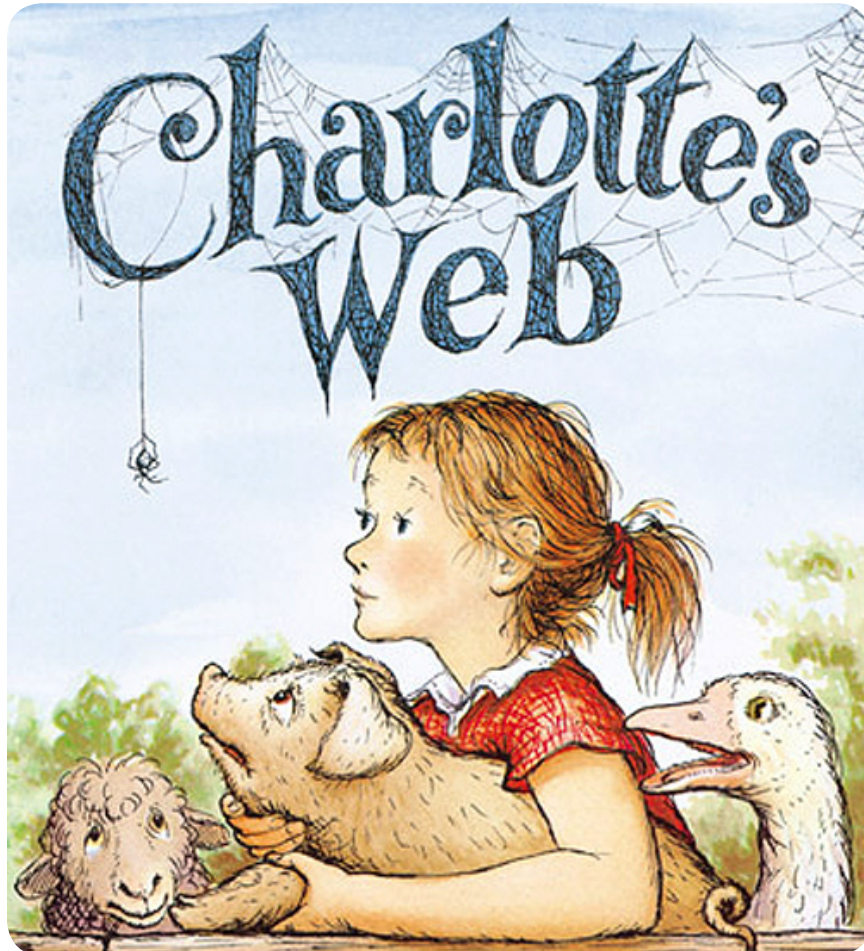
Objective: Students will study a quote from E.B.White and then answer comprehension questions about the passage.

Materials: Handouts, dictionaries.

Procedure:

1. After reading the book or attending a performance of *Charlotte's Web*, ask students to read the quote from E.B.White on their handouts and answer the reading comprehension questions that follow. Discuss the passage with your class while reminding students that all authors have an intention to communicate ideas when writing a story or an essay. This intention reflects the author's personal values.

Assessment: Collect handouts and check for comprehension. Retain for Language Arts student portfolios.



E.B. White on the Theme of *Charlotte's Web*

Directions: Read the following quote from E.B.White and answer the questions below. You may want to consult a dictionary.

“A farm is a peculiar problem for a man who likes animals, because the fate of most livestock is that they are murdered by their benefactors. The creatures may live serenely but they end violently, and the odor of doom hangs about them always. I have kept several pigs, starting them in the spring as weanlings and carrying trays to them all through the summer and fall. The relationship bothered me. Day by day I became better acquainted with my pig, and he with me, and the fact that the whole adventure pointed toward an eventual piece of double-dealing on my part lent an eerie quality to the thing. I do not like to betray a person or a creature, and I tend to agree with Mr. E.M. Forster that in these times the duty of a man, above all else, is to be reliable. It used to be clear to me, slopping a pig, that as far as the pig was concerned I could not be counted on, and this, as I say, troubled me. Anyway, the theme of *Charlotte's Web* is that a pig shall be saved, and I have an idea that somewhere deep inside me there was a wish to that effect.”

- E.B.White

1. What is *fate*?
2. What is a *benefactor*?
3. Is the *odor of doom* the author talks about really a smell? Why would he compare a sense of doom to an odor?
4. What is *double-dealing*?
5. Why is farm life a peculiar problem for someone who loves animals?
6. What is the theme of *Charlotte's Web*? Why did E.B.White choose this theme?



Study Guide Feedback Form

The following questions are intended for teachers and group leaders who make use of the Center for Puppetry Arts' study guides.

1. In what grade are your students?
2. Which show did you see? When?
3. Was this your first time at the Center?
4. Was this the first time you used a Center Study Guide?
5. Did you download/use the guide before or after your field trip?
6. Did you find the bibliography useful? If so, how?
7. Did you find the list of online resources useful? If so, how?
8. Did you reproduce the grade-appropriate activity sheet for your class?
9. Additional information and/or comments:

Please **fax** back to the Center for Puppetry Arts at **404.873.9907**.
Your feedback will help us to better meet *your* needs. Thank you for your help!