

# TWAS THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS

## STUDY GUIDE



*TEACHERS: Twas The Night Before Christmas is a very special type of show. This performance is the sequel to our highly popular show, The 12 Days Of Christmas. Like its predecessor, Twas The Night Before Christmas is completely interactive! By the end of the show every student will be 'doing' something to help the play come to life! It is a fantastic experience for your students as well as a thrill to watch. Our actors are trained to guide the audience into the activities- but we will need you to talk with your students before the show about being good listeners. Because it is so interactive- good audience manners are a must. If your students have seen The 12 Days Of Christmas, they are likely to be very excited about Jacques and Snowflake, the two elves in the show, returning to the school/theatre.*



### About A.C.T. For Youth

Since, 1999 the Atlantic Coast Theatre For Youth has been enlightening audiences across the United States with its entertaining and educational live theatre productions and workshop programs.

The Atlantic Coast Theatre For Youth is a professional touring theatre company, based in Orlando, FL.

**Atlantic Coast Theatre For Youth**

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

# 'Twas the Night Before Christmas History A Mystery

In the 1800's, a father wrote a long Christmas poem for his children entitled, "A Visit from St. Nicholas." He meant the poem to be a private gift for his family, but someone heard it read one night in 1822. This person thought the poem was so wonderful, he/she sent it to the paper- The Troy, New York Sentinel. The paper published it- with the author's name mentioned only as ANONYMOUS. It was an overnight sensation! The poem was printed in papers all over the country. Everyone wanted to know who wrote the fantastic poem!

15 years later, a professor of Greek and Asian Literature named Clement Clarke Moore, said that he was the author of the famous poem. He was reported to be quite shy about saying it was his. He had written books and essays for college students and adults before- but never anything for children.

Until recently, the majority of historians believed that Moore wrote the poem. Now there are a group of literary historians who believe that the poem was actually written in 1808 by the poet, Henry Livingston, as a gift to his children. At the time of Clement C. Moore's announcement, Livingston's children tried to make a case that their deceased father had indeed written the poem. No one would listen to them then. So this band of modern historians have delved into the poems of both writers and believe wholeheartedly that Livingston is the author of "A Visit From St. Nicholas" and not Moore.

Who knows who really wrote the poem, but we do know that it is loved all over the world. The poem is best known for its popular title, "'Twas The Night Before Christmas". Through the years, the poem is still cherished by children and adults. Many families have a tradition of reading the poem aloud on Christmas Eve.

## Pre-Show Activities!

- *Twas The Night Before Christmas* is a live theatrical production performed by live actors. Discuss the differences between watching a movie or television. What kinds of theatre manners are needed in a play?
- This show is a sequel to *The 12 Days Of Christmas*. If your school or venue saw this show in previous years, discuss what happened in that show. What part did you play? Share with your fellow classmates what the show was about- Here's a hint...there were two elves who had no props, costumes, or set for their production. The kids in the audience had to learn about how to put on a play and save the day!
- Read Clement Moore's "*Twas The Night Before Christmas*" as a class.
- Talk as a class about how each of your classmates celebrates holidays in their home- We all celebrate in different ways!

## After The Show Activities!

- ACT For Youth loves to get letters from our audience- Send pictures and letters to Jacques and Snowflake! We will make sure they get them!

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- Talk about how it felt to be a part of the play! As a class, discuss stories about this experience, other plays that students have been a part of, and how they can get involved in performing at the school or in the community.



- *Twas The Night Before Christmas* was inspired by a famous holiday poem by the same name. Read other holiday stories and poems. Act them out too!
- Have students give short speeches or perform their favorite part of the play!

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These vocabulary words should be reviewed AFTER the show. They will be taught to the children during the performance.

Audience-

The group of people who watch a play

Actors-

People who perform in a play

Stage Manager-

The person who helps the director during the rehearsal and the performance of a play- They are usually backstage and are not performing in the play

Director-

A person who supervises the creative aspects of a play and instructs the actors and stage manager

A Cappella Solo-

Singing a song all by yourself without accompaniment

Chorus-

First seen in Greek theatre, the chorus is a group of actors who do things together- they can sing, move, and speak as one

Props-

The items actors hold on stage

Choreography-

Dance moves that are put together

Box Step-

Also known as a "Jazz Square", this dance move allows the dancers to make a square with the steps their feet take

Cue-

The thing (another actor's line, the music starts, lights come up, etc...) that lets you know it is your time to perform

Upstage-

Stage direction where the actor is further away from the audience- In Greek theatre they were up because the stage was angled down to the audience and, being upstage, they would be close to the top

Downstage-

Stage direction where the actor is close to the audience- In Greek Theatre the actor was down on the angled stage

Stage Right-

Stage direction to the actor's right hand side

Stage Left-

Stage direction to the actor's left hand side

Rehearsal-

Practicing the play

Keeping the Rhythm-

Maintaining the beat to the song

# Twass The Night Before Christmas

## *Florida Sunshine State Standards: Pre-K-2<sup>nd</sup> Grades*

(By participating in the Study Guide activities, watching the performance, and encouraging classroom discussion of the play, your students can meet aspects of several Sunshine State Standards)

### TH.A.1.1

#### *The student acts by developing, communicating, and sustaining characters in improvisation and formal or informal productions*

- Creates imagined characters, relationships, and environments using basic acting skills
- Creates individually and in groups, animate and inanimate objects through the movement of the human body

### TH.C.1.1

#### *The student understands context by analyzing the role of theatre, film, television, and electronic media in the past and present*

- Expresses remembered ideas, feelings, and concepts of daily activities through dramatic play
- Understands how we learn about ourselves, our relationships, and our environment through forms of theatre
- Understands characters, situations, and dramatic media from the stories and dramas of various cultures

### TH.D.1.1

#### *The student analyzes, criticizes, and constructs meaning from formal and informal theatre, film, television, and electronic media*

- Portrays imaginary sensory experiences through dramatic play
- Gives reasons for personal preferences for formal and informal performances
- Understands appropriate audience responses to dramatic presentations
- Understands how theater communicates events of everyday life
- Understands the similarities and differences between play acting, pretending, and real life

### TH.E.1.1

#### *The student understands applications of the role of theatre, film, television, and electronic media in everyday life*

- Understands the similarities and differences among how emotions are expressed in theatre, dramatic media, music, dance, and visual art
- Cooperates with others to create formal and informal theatrical works and to solve the problems inherent in simple scenes

### MU.A.1.1

#### *The student sings, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music*

- Sings simple songs with appropriate tone, pitch, and rhythm, with and without accompaniment

### MU.D.1.1

#### *The student listens to, analyzes, and describes music*

- Understands how music can communicate ideas suggesting events, feelings, moods, or images

### MU.E.2.1

#### *The student understands the relationship between music and the world beyond the school setting*

- Knows appropriate audience behavior in a given music setting

### L.A.C.1.1

#### *The student uses listening strategies effectively*

- Listens for a variety of informational purposes, including curiosity, pleasure, getting directions, performing tasks, solving problems, and following rules
- Recognizes personal preferences in listening to literature and other material
- Retells specific details of information heard, including sequence of events

### L.A.E.1.1

#### *The student understands the common features of a variety of literary forms*

- Identifies the story elements of setting, plot, character, problem, and solution/resolution

# Twas The Night Before Christmas

## *Florida Sunshine State Standards: 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> Grades*

(By participating in the Study Guide activities, watching the performance, and encouraging classroom discussion of the play, your students can meet aspects of several Sunshine State Standards)

### **TH.A.1.2**

#### **The student acts by developing, communicating, and sustaining characters in improvisation and formal or informal productions**

- Creates imagined characters, relationships, and environments using basic acting skills

### **TH.C.1.2**

#### **The student understands context by analyzing the role of theatre, film, television, and electronic media in the past and present**

- Understands how theatre is an interpretation of actual events in history and everyday life
- Understands how theatre reflects culture through universal characters and dramas from various cultures and historical time periods

### **TH.D.1.2**

#### **The student analyzes, criticizes, and constructs meaning from formal and informal theatre, film, television, and electronic media**

- Knows how theatre uses visual elements (e.g. set design and costuming), sound (e.g. sound effects and vocal inflection), and movement (e.g. staging and character portrayal) to communicate
- Understands the similarities and differences between real life and the theatre's representation of life (e.g. the meaning of the concept, "willing suspension of disbelief")
- Articulates emotional responses to the whole, as well as parts of, dramatic performances

### **TH.E.1.2**

#### **The student understands applications of the role of theatre, film, television, and electronic media in everyday life**

- Understands theatre as a social function and theatre etiquette as the responsibility of the audience
- Collaborates in the construction of formal and informal productions

### **MU.A.1.2**

#### **The student sings, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music**

- Sings songs maintaining own part and using proper breathing techniques and a pleasing tone with and without accompaniments

### **MU.E.2.2**

#### **The student understands the relationship between music and the world beyond the school setting**

- Knows and applies appropriate audience behavior in various musical settings

### **LA.C.1.2**

#### **The student uses listening strategies effectively**

- Listens and responds to a variety of oral presentations, such as stories, poems, skits, songs, personal accounts, and informational speeches
- Identifies specific personal listening preferences regarding fiction, drama, literary nonfiction, and informational presentations

### **LA.E.1.2**

#### **The student understands the common features of a variety of literary forms**

- Identifies the distinguishing features among fiction, drama, and poetry and identifies the major characteristics of nonfiction
- Understands the development of plot and how conflicts are resolved in a story

# Twas The Night Before Christmas

## National Standards: Kindergarten – 4<sup>th</sup> Grade

(By participating in the Study Guide activities, watching the performance, and encouraging classroom discussion of the play, your students can meet aspects of several National Education Standards)

### NA-T.K-4.2

#### ACTING BY ASSUMING ROLES AND INTERACTING IN IMPROVISATIONS

- Students imagine and clearly describe characters, their relationships, and their environments
- Students use variations of locomotor and nonlocomotor movement and vocal pitch, tempo, and tone for different characters
- Students assume roles that exhibit concentration and contribute to the action of the classroom dramatization based on personal experience and heritage, imagination, literature, and history

### NA-T.K-4.6

#### COMPARING AND CONNECTING ART FORMS BY DESCRIBING THEATRE, DRAMATIC MEDIA, AND OTHER ART FORMS

- Students describe visual, aural, oral, and kinetic elements in theatre, dramatic media, dance, music, and visual arts
- Students compare how ideas and emotions are expressed in theatre, dramatic media, dance, music, and visual arts
- Students select movement, music, or visual elements to enhance the mood of a classroom dramatization

### NA-T.K-4.7

#### ANALYZING AND EXPLAINING PERSONAL PREFERENCES AND CONSTRUCTING MEANINGS FROM CLASSROOM DRAMATIZATIONS AND FROM THEATRE, FILM, TELEVISION, AND ELECTRONIC MEDIA PRODUCTIONS

- Students identify and describe the visual, aural, oral, and kinetic elements of classroom dramatizations and dramatic performances
- Students explain how the wants and needs of characters are similar to and different from their own
- Students articulate emotional responses to and explain personal preferences about the whole as well as the parts of dramatic performances

### NA-T.K-4.8

#### UNDERSTANDING CONTEXT BY RECOGNIZING THE ROLE OF THEATRE, FILM, TELEVISION, AND ELECTRONIC MEDIA IN DAILY LIFE

- Students identify and compare similar characters and situations in stories and dramas from and about various cultures, illustrate with classroom dramatizations, and discuss how theatre reflects life
- Students identify and compare the various settings and reasons for creating dramas and attending theatre, film, television, and electronic media productions

### NA-M.K-4.1

#### SINGING, ALONE AND WITH OTHERS, A VARIED REPERTOIRE OF MUSIC

- Students sing expressively, with appropriate dynamics, phrasing, and interpretation

### NA-M.K-4.9

#### UNDERSTANDING MUSIC IN RELATION TO HISTORY AND CULTURE

- Students demonstrate audience behavior appropriate for the context and style of music performed

# Twas The Night Before Christmas

## National Standards: 5<sup>th</sup> Grade

(By participating in the Study Guide activities, watching the performance, and encouraging classroom discussion of the play your students can meet aspects of several National Education Standards)

### NA-T.5-8.2

#### ACTING BY ASSUMING ROLES AND INTERACTING IN IMPROVISATIONS

- Students demonstrate acting skills to develop characterizations that suggest artistic choices
- Students in an ensemble, interact as the invented characters

### NA-T.5-8.6

#### COMPARING AND CONNECTING ART FORMS BY DESCRIBING THEATRE, DRAMATIC MEDIA, AND OTHER ART FORMS

- Students describe characteristics and compare the presentation of characters, environments, and actions in theatre, musical theatre, dramatic media, dance, and visual arts
- Students incorporate elements of dance, music, and visual arts to express ideas and emotions in improvised and scripted scenes
- Students express and compare personal reactions to several art forms
- Students describe and compare the functions and interaction of performing and visual artists and audience members in theatre, dramatic media, musical theatre, dance, music, and visual arts

### NA-T.5-8.7

#### ANALYZING AND EXPLAINING PERSONAL PREFERENCES AND CONSTRUCTING MEANINGS FROM CLASSROOM DRAMATIZATIONS AND FROM THEATRE, FILM, TELEVISION, AND ELECTRONIC MEDIA PRODUCTIONS

- Students describe and analyze the effect for publicity, study guides, programs, and physical environments on audience response and appreciation of dramatic performances

### NA-T.5-8.8

#### UNDERSTANDING CONTEXT BY RECOGNIZING THE ROLE OF THEATRE, FILM, TELEVISION, AND ELECTRONIC MEDIA IN DAILY LIFE

- Students describe and compare universal characters and situations in dramas from and about various cultures and historical periods, illustrate in improvised and scripted scenes, and discuss how theatre reflects a culture

### NA-M.5-8.1

#### SINGING, ALONE AND WITH OTHERS, A VARIED REPERTOIRE OF MUSIC

- Students sing accurately and with good breath control throughout their singing ranges, alone and in small and large ensembles

### NA-M.5-8.7

#### EVALUATING MUSIC AND MUSIC PERFORMANCES

- Students develop criteria for evaluating the quality and effectiveness of music performances and compositions and apply the criteria in their personal listening and performing