

Alliance Theatre for Youth and Families presents

AUDIENCE GUIDE

Grades Kindergarten –3rd



Based on the story by E.B. White

Dramatized by Joseph Robinette

Dramatic Publishing

Directed by Rosemary Newcott

Study guide created by students and teachers participating in the

Dramaturgy by Students Program

Alliance Theatre Institute for Educators and Teaching Artists:

Clairemont Elementary 3rd grade LINKS students

The Museum School of Avondale Estates 3rd grade students

Miles Intermediate School

A note to educators and parents

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This Audience/Study Guide has been prepared by Nik Philmon's 3rd grade Links class of Clairemont Elementary, City Schools of Decatur, The Museum School of Avondale Estates and Miles Intermediate School. These students and partner teachers participated in the Alliance Theatre Institute for Educators and Teaching Artists **Dramaturgy by Students Program** under the guidance of Resident Teaching Artist, Kim Bowers-Rheay Baran and Teaching Artist, Ebony Tucker.

The intent of this Guide is to provide a starting point for further research and reading as the audience prepares and then reflects together upon the Alliance Theatre for Youth and Families' series production of *Charlotte's Web*.

Look at the top of each page designating pre and post play activities and information.

The questions, information and activities have been created with the student audience in mind. Please feel free to use/copy any or all of the pages as you reflect with your students about the play *Charlotte's Web* at the Alliance Theatre.

Bringing Charlotte's Web into the classroom: Theatre to Curriculum Connections

This Audience/Study Guide is targeted for students in grades K-3 with activities which extend knowledge in the core subject of Language Arts and additional knowledge in Life Science. It also provides experiences in the strands of creative thinking, critical thinking, communication and research as well as all levels of Bloom's Taxonomy.

Suggested curriculum areas of study the play covers: standards in Theatre, Language Arts (Vocabulary Development, Grammar), Social Studies (U.S. Geography), Science (animals, arachnids and lifecycles).

Core Curriculum Anchor Standards for Language Arts:

CCR17: Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

CCRS11: Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

Theatre Standards :

TAESK-3.10: Critiquing various aspects of theatre and other media using appropriate supporting evidence

TAESK-3.11: Engaging actively and appropriately as an audience member in Theatre or other media experiences.

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Cast of Main Characters

- Wilbur-** the runt of the pig litter
Charlotte- a spider who is Wilbur's friend
Fern- an eight year old girl who cares for Wilbur
Mr. Arable- Fern's father who is a farmer
Mr. Zuckerman- Fern's uncle who is also a farmer
Avery- Fern's older brother
Lurvy- helps Mr. Zuckerman on the farm
Templeton- a rat who lives on Zuckerman's farm
Goose/Gander- 2 birds who live on Zuckerman's farm.
Sheep- an animal who lives on Zuckerman's farm



Fern says "Where's papa going with that ax?"

Before the play: preparing the audience

Read the book *Charlotte's Web* by EB White.

Discuss good audience behavior. (look, listen, sit quietly (but laugh when it is funny!), clap/applaud at the end.

During the Play:

Look for how the animal characters are portrayed on the stage.

What do they look like? How does the actor bring them to life?

Look for how the adult characters are portrayed on the stage.

After the play: Time to reflect

Question from the director of *Charlotte's Web*, Rosemary Newcott:

Who is the Charlotte in YOUR life? How are YOU a Charlotte to someone?

Other reflection questions:

How is the play the same/different from the book? Make a Venn diagram to compare and contrast.

How did the actors bring the animal characters to life? Why do you think the Alliance Theater decided to make them circus performers? Note: Look on page 8 to learn more about the circus!

How were the adult characters portrayed on the stage?

Which character from the story/play do you identify with? Why?

How would you feel if you were Fern? Would you try to save Wilbur? If yes, how?

Now that you have seen the play, would you ever kill a spider? Why or why not?

Reflection Activity:

Be inspired by the student art throughout this Audience Guide! Draw and write about memorable characters and scenes from the play *Charlotte's Web* at the Alliance Theatre for Youth and Families.

Charlotte's Web Vocabulary

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ails	to be ill
Cavatica	a brown barn spider
ceremony	formal activities conducted
commotion	noisy activity
desperate	without hope
envy	a strong desire to have something
gander	a male goose
hog house	a home for pigs
humble	not proud
introduced	have met before
lonesome	lonely
paradise	a place of happiness.
miserable	very sad
raid	a sudden attack
radiant	enlightened
salutations	fancy way of saying hello
scheme	a plan, design, or program of action to be followed
slop	waste food used to feed pigs or other animals
spinneret	the part of the spider in the abdomen where silk comes out to make webs
surroundings	the area around someone or something
terrific	extremely good
trifle	a small quantity or amount of anything
tremendous	great in size
weaking	unusually weak.



Charlottz says 'Salutations'

Theatre Vocabulary

Alliance
Theatre at the Woodruff

- Actor** — A person who acts on stage, film or TV
- Audience** -- People who come to see the performance
- Backdrop** -- A painted canvas which creates a background, setting or scene in the play
- Backstage** -- The area behind and to the sides of the stage
- Choreography** -- Creating sequences of movements into a dance
- Costumes** -- The clothes created for the actors to wear during a performance
- Designer**— A person who creates the designs for the costumes, set or lighting of a play
- Director** -- Leader of a play
- Perform** -- Acting on stage
- Playwright** — A person who writes the play
- Rehearse** -- Practice time for actors and director before the performance
- Script**-- The text of a play
- Stage** -- The raised platform where people perform



Templeton the Rat says "You better not forget the friendship of old Templeton!"

The Source material for the play is the beloved children's book, *Charlotte's Web*

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About the Author: EB White

Elwyn Brooks White was born in Mount Vernon New York July 11, 1899. He served in the army and then went to Cornell University. He graduated in 1921 with a Bachelor of Arts degree. He became a reporter for the Seattle Times and also worked with Frank Seaman Advertising Agency as a production assistant and copywriter.

EB White met Katherine Sergeant Angell in 1929 while they both worked at the New Yorker magazine in and they married the same year. "I have no mistake in the choice of my wife," he said. They were married 42 years until Katherine's death in 1977.

EB White wrote *Charlotte's Web* when he was 51 in 1952. It won the Newberry Award.

He wrote 13 children's books, including *Stuart Little*, *The Trumpet and the Swan*, *One Man's Meat* and *The Lady is Cold, Too*.

EB White died October 1, 1985 at the age of 86.

EB White quotes

"All that I hope to say in books, all that I hope to say, is that I love the world"

EB White on the beach with his dog, Minnie.

"Always be on the lookout for the presence of wonder."



Story Starters

Post-play activity: group writing/discussion for grades K-1; Individual writing for grades 2-3

Could you be the new EB White? Use these story starters to inspire you!

1. Imagine if you woke up one morning and one of your family members was going to kill your favorite pet. What would you do?
2. Would you let a spider be your friend? If you did what would you do.
3. What would have happened if Wilbur had run away and joined the circus?
4. Write a about why you would have a pig as a pet instead of a dog.
5. Write what would happen after the story to add more.
6. Would you kill a spider after seeing this play. Why? Or why not?



Wilbur says, "Charlotte, you are my true friend."



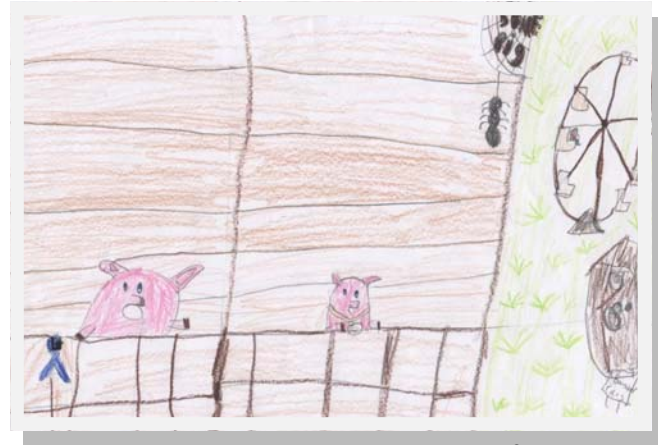
Timeline of the Play *Charlotte's Web*

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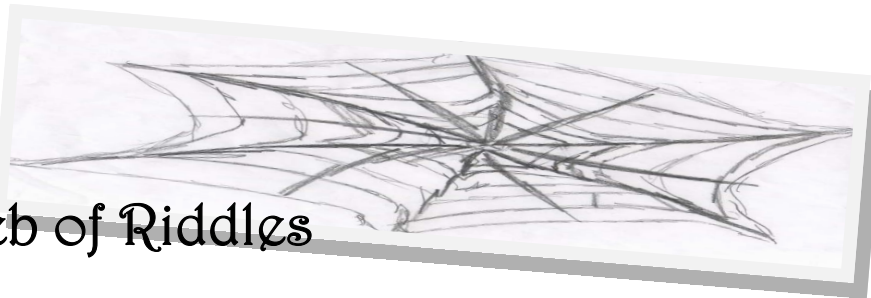
Post show activity

Work as a group or alone and remember the sequence of events of the play. Use numbers or letters.

- ___ Charlotte writes the word "Humble" in her web.
- ___ Fern saves Wilbur and takes care of him.
- ___ Wilbur is sold to Uncle Homer.
- ___ Charlotte's babies are hatched.
- ___ Wilbur meets the animals and Charlotte.
- ___ Charlotte dies.
- ___ Wilbur goes to the fair.
- ___ Wilbur is born.
- ___ Wilbur wins a medal at the fair.
- ___ Charlotte lays her eggs.
- ___ Charlotte writes the words "Some Pig" in her web.
- ___ Templeton finds the word "Radiant" for Charlotte to put in her web.
- ___ The baby spiders stay with Wilbur.



Wilbur wins a medal at the fair.



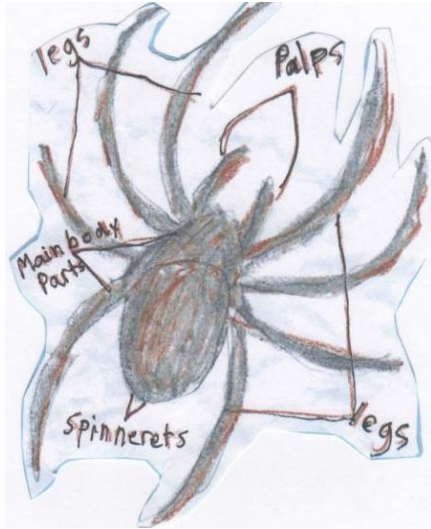
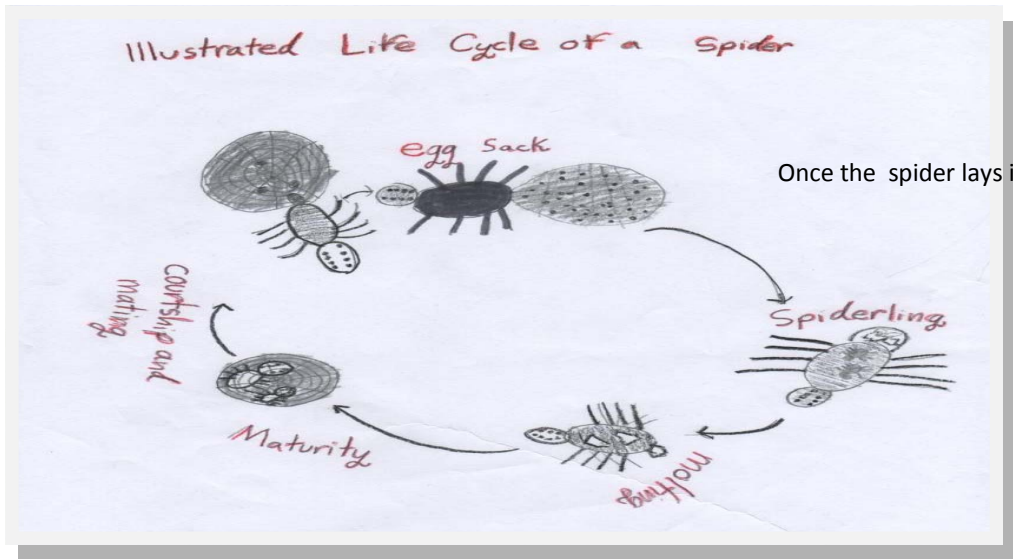
Web of Riddles

Post Play activity for grades K-3 (hint: use the cast of characters on page 3)

1. I have vocabulary that is oh so neat. "Salutations" is how I greet. Who am I?
2. I am a fluffy white creature and I am very wise like a teacher. Who am I?
3. I have a very blood thirsty friend who stayed with me until the end. Who am I?
4. My brother tried to kill that spider but I saved her and she made things brighter. Who am I?
5. I don't do anything without a reward. It's always food, I never ignore. Who am I?
6. I can get jealous of my sister Fern, but my mom just says to wait my own turn. Who am I?
7. I work on the farm. I help hoof, paw and arm. Who am I?
8. We always repeat repeat our very last word. That is how we are usually heard. Who are we?

Answers are on page 14

Charlotte's Way of Life



Spider Facts:

- Spiders belong to a group called Arachnids. They are not insects.
- Not all spiders spin webs.
- Spiders have 8 legs and two body parts. They are invertebrates, and don't have a backbone
- A spider has palps which are used like a tongue. They look like antennae.
- A female spider can lay many eggs in the egg sac and then dies.

What type Common Grey Spider is Charlotte?

For help, look on page 81 in the book! Answer on page 14 of this Audience Guide)

- A. Garden Spider: A garden spider is yellow and black. It likes to spin its web where insects can be seen often flying, such as a flower garden or where there is man-made light.
- B. Wolf Spider: The wolf spider chases down its food instead of spinning a web to catch it.
- C. Trap Door Spider: The trap door spider spins a web in a hole and when an insect comes by, the spider lunges to catch its prey.
- D. Barn Spider: A barn spider is brown with hints of yellow. It can camouflage best when in a barn or wooden enclosed space and catches its insect prey in a web. It takes its web down and spins a new web every morning.
- E. Violin Spider: A small spider is found in the Southwestern part of the US and is nocturnal and tends to avoid humans.



The Alliance Theatre for Youth and Families production of *Charlotte's Web* is going to be a little different from the book.

One big difference to look for is the design theme of the play is CIRCUS!

Interesting facts:

- ◇ Did you know that performers like acrobats, contortionists or trapeze artists can make between 40,000 to 70,000 per year?
- ◇ Philip Astley is helped create the modern circus. In 1783, he was a performer who built the first real circus in France. The model used throughout the world is based on the pattern for circuses created by Astley.
- ◇ Abraham Lincoln was a fan of Dan Rice, the first famous clown in the US.
- ◇ The Unicycle was born from the popularity of penny-farthing, a high-wheeler bike with a large front wheel and a small rear wheel.

An Aerialist

An aerialist might remind you of a gymnast or an acrobat who performs in the air. There are three main categories of tricks: climbs, wraps and drops. The Alliance Theatre's production of *Charlotte's Web* will feature an aerialist on aerial silk.

Vaudeville Clown

A clown entertains crowds with magic tricks. They are sometimes dressed in silly clothes and make people laugh. Vaudeville is a style of variety entertainment popular in the United States and Canada between 1880s and 1930s. The New Vaudeville clown usually doesn't wear makeup and entertains by using audience participation. Their skills include juggling, mime, magic tricks and more.

Acrobats

An acrobat performs gymnastics and has great balance and coordination.

Unicycle

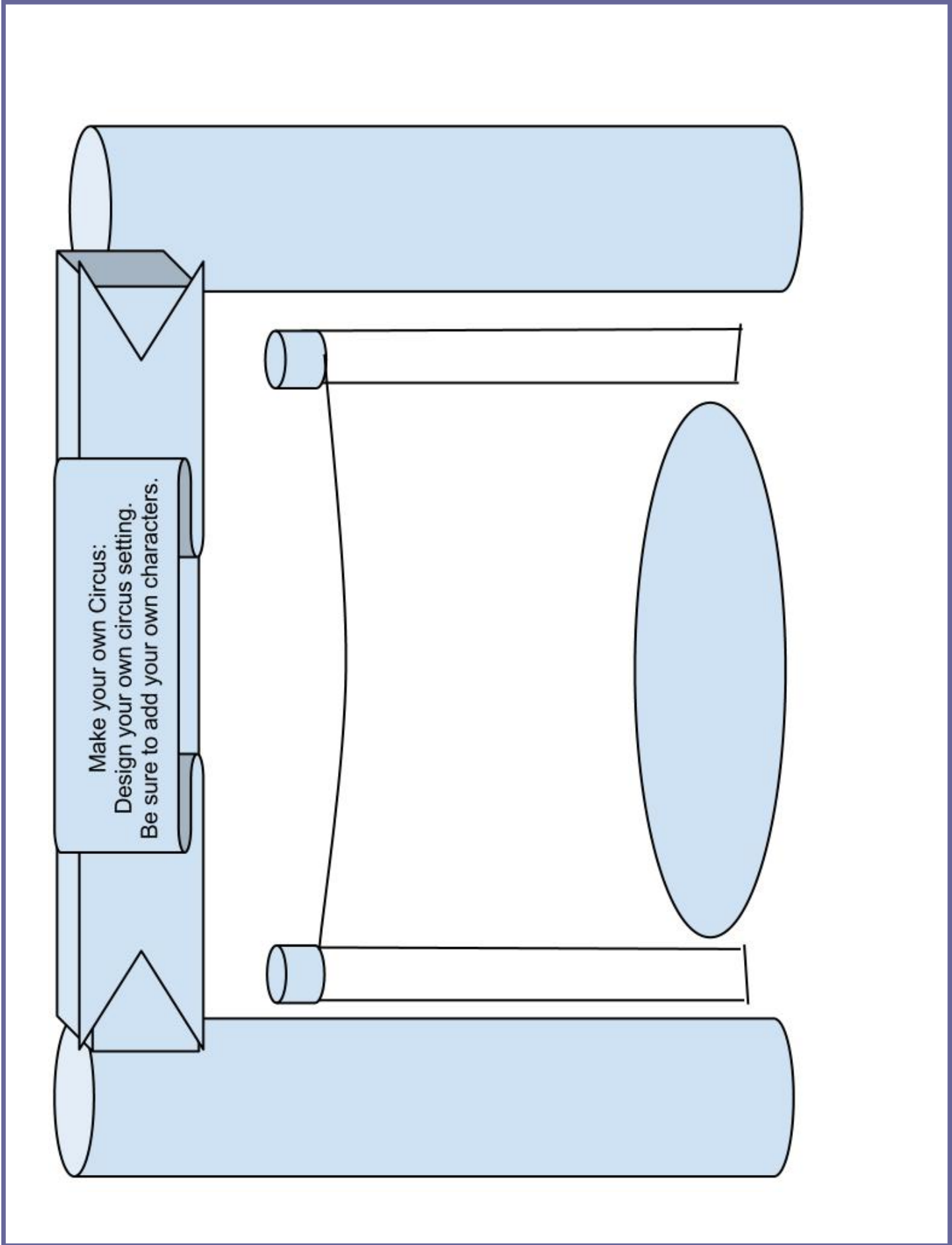
A Unicycle is like a bike but it doesn't have handles and it has one wheel. The performer that uses this must be able to balance to keep from falling.

Post show discussion starter:

- ◇ What circus performers did you see? Use the list above to match the animal character to the circus performer.
- ◇ How did using circus performers as the animals help tell the story?
- ◇ Compare what you know about the circus and farms to what you saw on stage.



The Sheep imagined as a Vaudeville Clown.

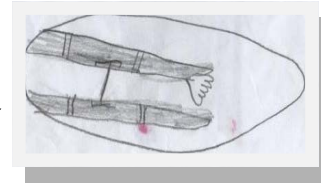


Classroom Costumes!

Explore the themes of *Charlotte's Web* in character!

Charlotte

- Supplies:
Black clothes
Black paper
Yarn or String
Tape/Safety pins



How to: Roll up paper and attach with strings to make the 8 arms (your arms count as 2!)
Attach to your clothes with tape or safety pins.

Life lesson and themes of *Charlotte's Web*

Discover your own ideas about the themes of *Charlotte's Web*. Here are some to get you started:

- * No matter how small you are, you can still make a difference.
- * Don't judge a spider by its exoskeleton.
- * Not everyone looks like a friend at first, but once you get to know them, they can turn out to be your best friend.
- * *Charlotte's Web* show us about friendship, courage and hope.

Draw a picture to go with the theme.



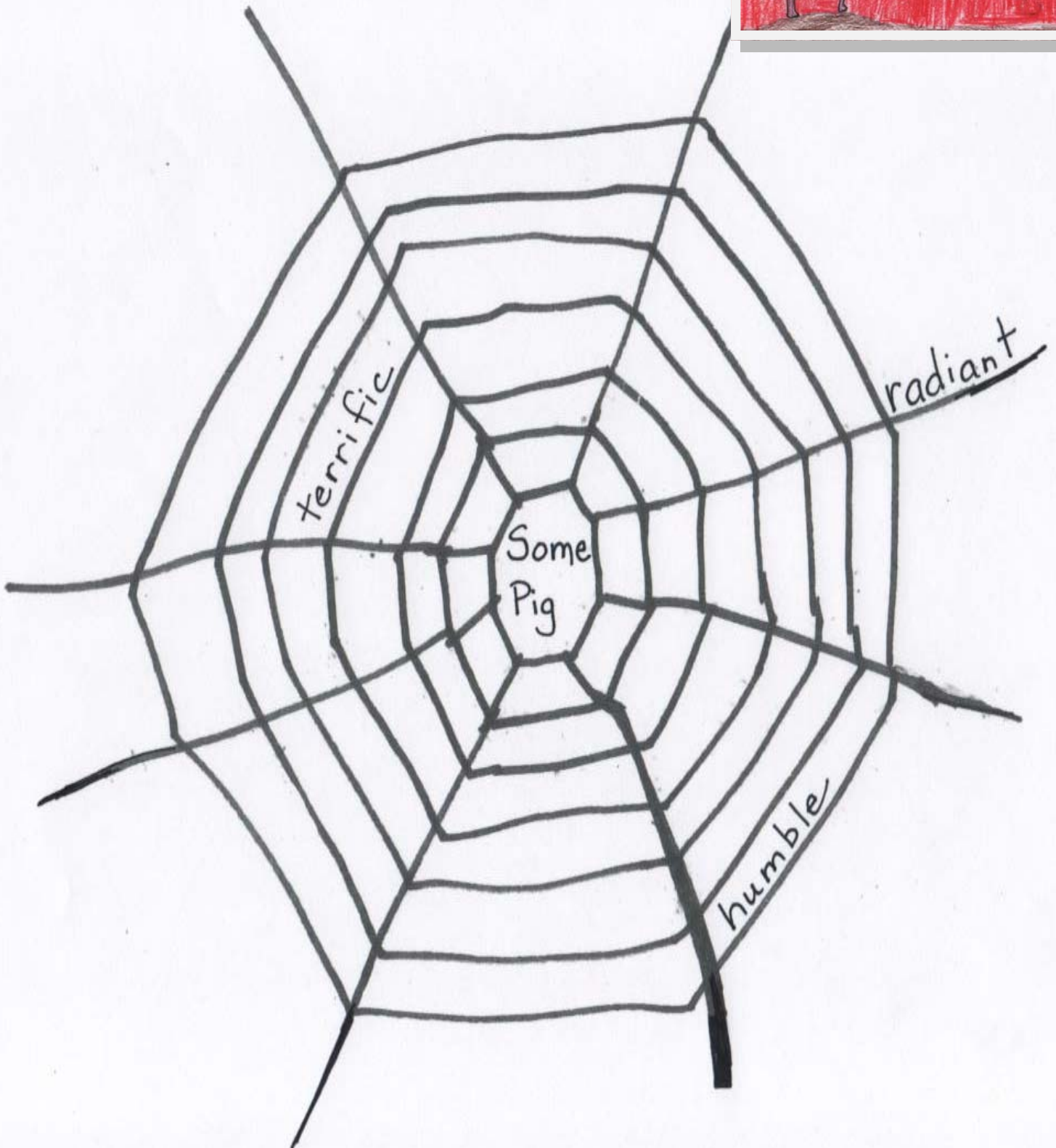
Everybody needs a friend.



"It is not very often that someone comes along who is a true friend and a good writer. Charlotte was both." Wilbur

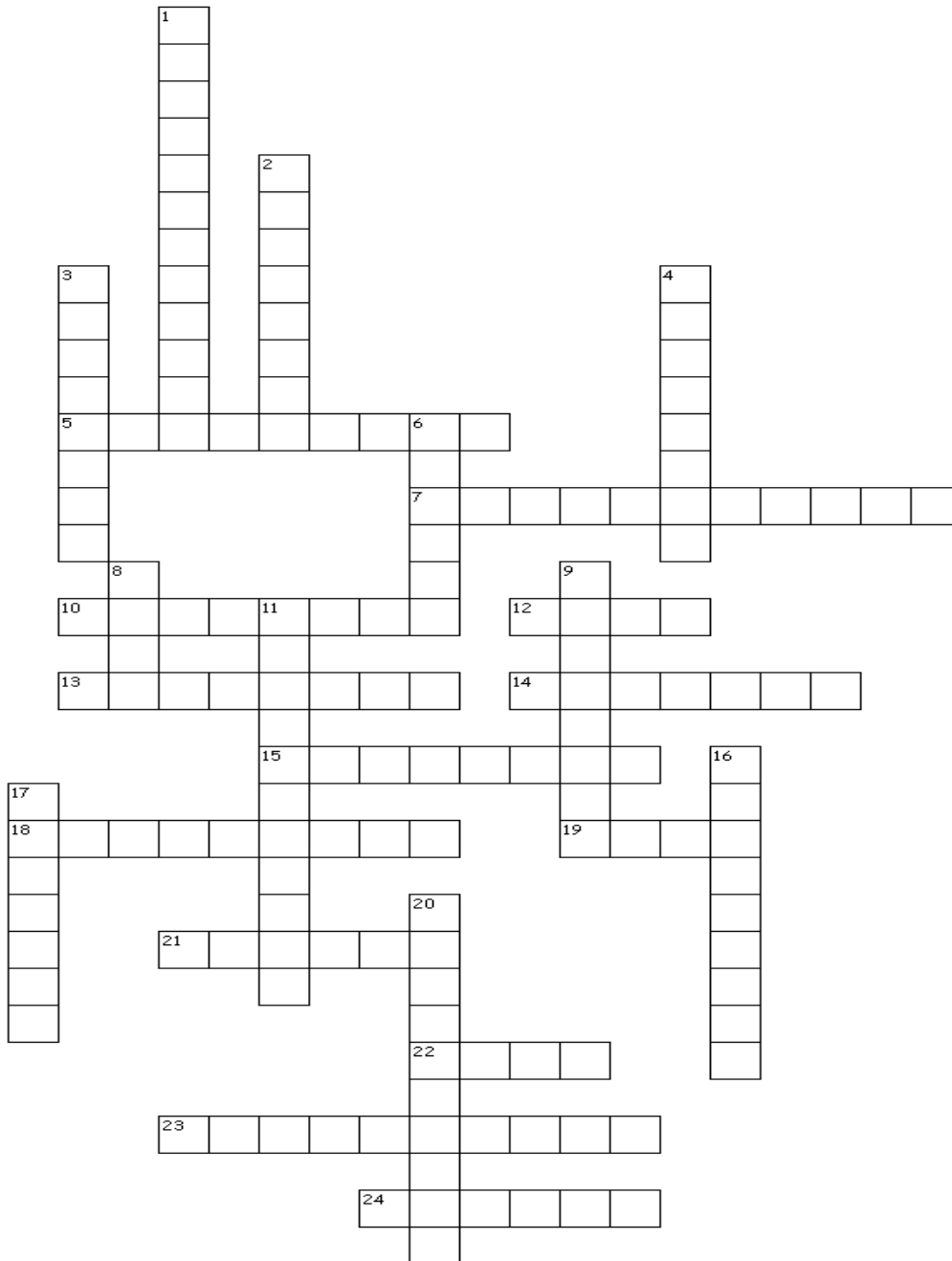
Charlotte's Web of Adjectives

Help Charlotte save her friend Wilbur by adding adjectives to her web that describe Wilbur.



Wilbur's Big Words

2nd grade and up (use vocabulary on the right for help)



- ceremony
- paradise
- schemer
- tremendous
- salutations
- humble
- weaking
- miserable
- hoghouse
- imagination
- gander
- introduced
- envy
- commotion
- desperate
- surroundings
- raid
- trifle
- lonesome
- cavatica
- ails
- dose
- terrific
- radiant

Across

- 5. without hope.
- 7. the ability of the mind to form pictures
- 10. lonely
- 12. a sudden attack
- 13. unusually weak
- 14. enlightened
- 15. extremely good
- 18. noisy activity
- 19. to be ill
- 21. a male goose
- 23. a strong desire to have
- 23. have met before
- 24. not proud

Down

- 1. the area around someone or something.
- 2. a home for pigs
- 3. a place of happiness.
- 4. formal activities conducted on some
- 6. a small quantity or amount of anything
- 8. a amount taken at one time
- 9. a brown barn spider
- 11. a fancy way of saying hello
- 16. very sad
- 17. a plan, of action to be followed
- 20. great in size

Charlotte's Web of Words

Kindergarten and up

These words are either used by or describe the character Charlotte:

INTRODUCED LONESOME RADIANT SALUTATIONS

SPIDER TERRIFIC HUMBLE CAVATICA SCHEMER

L	F	M	S	H	U	L	N	A	B	F	G	B	N	G
X	X	T	L	B	U	R	O	C	B	C	R	E	K	O
U	J	I	R	R	D	M	A	N	R	Z	E	K	X	P
U	L	E	N	R	I	V	B	A	E	F	N	A	K	X
S	N	O	I	T	A	T	U	L	A	S	E	F	Q	Z
X	G	U	B	T	R	K	E	Q	E	L	O	A	T	G
V	I	Z	I	J	L	O	Y	R	V	S	C	M	R	V
H	O	C	T	N	A	I	D	A	R	P	W	W	E	N
H	A	V	L	Y	C	J	F	U	C	I	Q	M	S	Q
U	G	G	R	X	N	W	R	H	E	D	F	I	Y	D
W	S	C	H	E	M	E	R	R	G	E	M	I	G	L
X	T	B	I	D	N	D	Q	S	F	R	N	H	C	M

Resources

Books:

Berger, Melvin. Spinning Spiders. NY, NY: HarperCollins, 2003
Bowman, Natalie. The Canada Geese. New York, NY: Cobblehill Books, 1989
Falconer, Ian. Olivia, NY, NY: Simon and Schuster Children's Publishing, 2000
Humphries, Tudor. Are You a Spider?. London; Kingfisher Publications, ,2002
National Geographic Readers: Spiders
Peet, Bill. Chester the Worldly Pig. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1965
White, EB. Charlotte's Web, NY, NY: HarperCollins, 1952

Videos/DVD

Babe 1995 Director: Chris Noonan; Universal Pictures
Cirque du Soleil : Alegria 1996
Dralion 2001
Cirquedusoliel.com

Websites:

Spider life cycle: www.spiderroom.info/lifecycles
Family farms: www.localharvest.org/organic-farms



Answers

Page 6:

Answers to Riddles:

1. Charlotte
2. Sheep
3. Wilbur
4. Fern
5. Templeton
6. Avery
7. Lurvy
8. Goose and Gander

Page 7:

Answer: D- A Barn Spider



The

main setting for Charlotte's Web is a farm.

Another setting is the County Fair.