

Disney's
BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

BROADWAY'S SMASH HIT MUSICAL

TEACHER
STUDY GUIDE

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Disney's Beauty and the Beast Teacher Study Guide

No Child is fully educated or adequately prepared to live in an increasingly technological world without understanding the meaning and beauty transmitted by the Arts.

-J.P. Getty Trust,
Beyond Creating a Place for Art in America's School, 1985.

Section I

I. HOW TO USE THIS STUDY GUIDE

The Study Guide is a companion piece designed to explore many ideas depicted in the stage production of **Disney's Beauty and the Beast**. Although the guide's intent is to enhance the student's theatrical experience, it can also be used as an introduction to the elements of a play (in this case a musical play or play with music), and the production elements involved in the play's presentation. Although many students are familiar with the general storyline, this specific stage adaptation presents a wealth of new questions for this generation to answer. The guide has been organized into three major sections:

- **Elements of the story**
- **Elements of production**
- **Activities**

Teachers and group leaders will want to select portions of the guide for their specific usage. Discussion questions are meant to provoke a line of thought about a particular topic. The answers to the discussion questions in many instances will initiate the process of exploration and discovery of varied interpretations by everyone involved. This can be as rewarding as the wonderful experience of sight and sound that **Disney's Beauty and the Beast** creates on-stage.

It is recommended that the original Broadway cast recording, available on either cassette or compact disk, be used in conjunction with discussion of the musical elements. The lyrics and musical arrangements aid in discussion of various aspects of the production.

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A. THE STORY

A Prince, living in a shining castle, is disturbed one winter's night by an old beggar woman, who comes to his castle and offers him a single rose, in return for shelter from the bitter cold. He is repulsed by her appearance and turns the old woman away. The old woman's ugliness melts away to reveal a beautiful enchantress. Though the Prince is apologetic when he sees her beauty, the Enchantress turns the cruel, unfeeling Prince into a hideous Beast. His stubborn pride compels him to remain in his bewitched castle with Lumiere, the lovestruck candelabra, Cogsworth, the pompous clock, the kindly Mrs. Potts and an inquisitive teacup named Chip. To break the spell, the Beast must learn to love another and earn their love in return, before the last petal falls from the Enchanted Rose. If not, he will be doomed to remain a Beast for all time.

Belle is a beautiful and intelligent young woman who lives with her father, Maurice, in a small village. When her father is imprisoned by the Beast, Belle offers herself to the Beast in return for releasing her father from his prisoner's cell in the Beast's castle. The Beast accepts Belle's offer to exchange places. Later in the story, the Beast falls in love with Belle, but is afraid to tell her. He offers instead his Magic Mirror and her freedom to rejoin her father in the village. Belle unknowingly betrays the Beast to Gaston, who leads a frenzied mob to destroy the Beast. At the castle, the Enchanted Objects repel the mob, but Gaston manages to stab the Beast in the back. Gaston is thrown to his death.

The Beast, dying from his wounds, tells the weeping Belle that he is happy that he got to see her one last time. Belle tells him that she loves him. The last petal on the Enchanted Rose falls. A magical transformation changes the Beast into the Prince once again. The spell has been broken! All the servants are also now human again, and Beauty with her Beast, who is now a handsome Prince, live happily ever after.

B. WHAT IS A MUSICAL?

A musical is the presentation of a story using the elements of music, singing, dancing and theatrical production, all presented on a stage in front of a live audience. The musical has

many stage contentions that audiences must accept; for example, the characters talk, then break into song, and the orchestra and conductor may be visible throughout the show.

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C. BACKGROUND OF DISNEY'S *BEAUTY AND THE BEAST*

When Walt Disney Pictures' full-length, animated feature film ***Beauty and the Beast*** was released, critics praised its songs worthy of a Broadway musical. It was observed that Broadway is as vital to the film's staging and characterizations as it is to the songs themselves. ***Disney's Beauty and the Beast*** went on to win Academy Awards for Best Song and Best Original Score and made history as the first animated feature ever nomination for a Best Picture Oscar.

When the decision was made to actually bring it to the Broadway stage, everyone associated with the production knew it had to be extraordinary. It had to have that special magic that audiences have come to expect from the Walt Disney Company.

The creative team crafted a timeless story with roots deep in the classic fairy tale, filled with humor, magic, mystery, romance and suspense. They created a gallery of memorable characters, including enchanted servants who had the misfortune of being caught under the same spell as the Beast. The motherly cook, Mrs. Potts, has been transformed into a teapot; the stuffy head butler, Cogsworth, is a clock, and the faithful (and amorous) valet, Lumiere, is a candelabra. These characters provide comfort and hope for the heroine, Belle, as she adjusts to her new life, torn away from her father as a result of the bargain she made with the Beast.

Simply staging a theatrical version of the film would have slighted both media. Disney focused on combining the strengths of the beloved story with the possibilities that only live theatre can offer. The directive: Maintain the essence of the movie, while developing a unique theatrical production.

This stage version of ***Beauty and the Beast*** was produced by Robert W. McTyre for Walt Disney Theatrical Productions. The Oscar-winning score by composer Alan Menken and the late lyricist Howard Ashman was not only expanded by Menken, but

lyricist Tim Rice added several new songs for the Broadway version. Author Linda Woolverton adapted her work into this new stage play. Choreographer Matt West then teamed up with costume designer Ann Hould-Ward to come up with a look for the Enchanted objects which would work on stage. Stan Meyer, scenic designer, and Natasha Katz, lighting designer, were challenged to create a unique fairy tale atmosphere for the stage. Director Robert Jess Roth ultimately brought all these elements together with the performers to create the finished piece.

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II. ELEMENTS OF THE STORY

In creating a musical, the first element is usually the book, or spoken word. The book contains the plot, characters, thoughts, dialogue, placement of songs and dances, and some stage direction. Another element of the musical is lyrics, the words which carry meaning in a song, and the score, which is the music of the show.

Since most theatre begins with the text, or book in this case, let's examine the elements of the text.

A. PLOT

The plot is the structure of the play. It is the action/events which make up the story. The plot was five parts:

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| Exposition: | The presentation of information that the audience needs to enter the play's action. |
| Rising action: | Central part of the story during which various problems and complications arise, which cause the characters to take action. |
| Climax: | The highest point or turning point in the action, which pits protagonist and antagonist against each other in a final confrontation that settles all their difficulties. |
| Falling action: | Contains the action or dialogue necessary to lead the story to a resolution or ending. |

Resolution: The end of the story in which the problems are solved and the story is finished.

Discussion Section:

The function of the exposition is to acquaint the audience with the characters in such a way that the audience becomes concerned with what happens to them. In **Disney's *Beauty and the Beast***, the audience learns about all the major characters in the story through exposition revealed both in dialogue and action, and also through song. Identify the following moments of exposition in the musical.

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An action that showed the Prince was arrogant and cruel
An action that showed the consequences of his act of cruelty
Dialogue that revealed what the Prince needed to do to alter his fate
A song that expressed what the village thought about Belle

Below are some of the important moments in the stage production of **Disney's *Beauty and the Beast***. Discuss with your class how these moments follow the five parts of the plot outline.

Belle expresses her desire to explore the world beyond her small village
Belle's father gets lost, is chased by ferocious wolves, and takes shelter in the castle
Belle, running from the castle, is attacked by wolves, and is rescued by the Beast
The mob attacks the castle
The Beast, weakened by his longing for Belle to return, is stabbed by Gaston
Gaston falls to his death
Belle declares her love for the Beast as he lies dying
The Beast, regaining his princely appearance, declares his love for Belle
The residents of the castle are restored to their former form

¥ Is there a subplot in **Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*** (a story within a story)?

- Read another version of *Beauty and the Beast*. Outline the plot of that version and compare it with Disney's version.
- The character of Gaston is unique to **Disney's *Beauty and the Beast***. Why do you think he was added? What function does he serve? How does the addition of this character affect the plot of the story?
- The characters Lumiere, Cogsworth, Mrs. Potts and Chip are not found in other version. What function do they serve in the Disney version?
- Compare this story with other works that involve an ugly man in love with a beautiful woman, i.e. Phantom of the Opera, The Hunchback of Notre Dame, Cyrano de Bergerac, Richard III, The Frog Prince, etc.

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STRUCTURE

Definition: The way the story is organized and presented. The order of the action and the placement of characters within it.

In the case of **Disney's *Beauty and the Beast***, the stage show would be an adaptation of an animated musical. It is important to note that the Disney screenplay and the musical's book were written by the same person, Linda Woolverton, who thus was able to make both versions compatible.

Discussion Section:

Is the structure of the play similar to or different from the movie? How?

SETTING

Definition: The time and place of the story. Geography, social eras and political events are all influential to a story's setting.

Disney's *Beauty and the Beast* is set in Fairy tale time. There are references to France as the geographic location, and the costumes and customs reflect life of several centuries ago. While there was an emerging middle class in this era, manual labor was still valued over learning by the masses.

Discussion Section

Describe the two settings in the story (the village and the castle). Would the story work in a different setting, (i.e. the city, modern-day France)?

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COMPLICATION

Definition: A complication is a force, and obstacle, a reversal, a sharply disappointing setback, or an unexpected event that changes the course of the play. There are numerous complications in **Disney's *Beauty and the Beast***.

Most plots are made up of a series of complications. The playwright introduces complications to create conflict in the play. An example of a complication or a sharply disappointing setback appears in the play when the Beast allows Belle to return to care for her father. Although prepared to ask Belle to marry him, he allows her to leave the castle because his love does not permit him to keep her prisoner. In setting her free, he jeopardizes his opportunity to return to his former princely shape. The servants of the castle, sensing the time has come for the spell to be broken, are shocked to learn that Belle is to leave the castle and return home.

Discussion Section:

What other complication can you identify in the story? What obstacles must all the major characters overcome?

FORESHADOWING

Definition: Foreshadowing is a device used by the playwright to build suspense and tension, and to prepare the audience for action that follows. *The Mob Song*, which Gaston sings, prepared the audience for this attack on the castle and on the Beast.

Discussion Section:

How does the song prepare the audience for his future action? Identify other elements of foreshadowing in the play. How are the wolves surrounding the castle an element of foreshadowing? How was music used to express the idea of foreshadowing? How was stage lighting used to express ominous things to come?

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B. THEME

The theme is the central idea, thought or meaning of the play. Sometimes it is referred to as the spine of the play, since like the spine of the body, it is the central core uniting and controlling all of the parts into a cohesive whole. It answers the question, What is the play about?

Disney's *Beauty and the Beast* explores the idea of **what is beauty**. It also explores the idea that love is learned. The most obvious message of the play is that beauty is but skin deep, and that one should look beneath the surface to search for the true meaning of beauty within. The incorporation of the character of Gaston in the musical underscores this point. He is very handsome man and at first glance appears to be a good match for the lovely Belle. It doesn't take the audience long to discover that his personality is as

ugly as his face is fair. During the scene in which he attacks the Beast, the question arises of who is the true animal.

Belle learns that when she has the opportunity to look below the surface of the Beast's appearance, she only then truly discovers what he is like. Looking deeper into another person leads to self-discovery and sometimes change as well. All the major characters are changed somehow through the action in the story.

In his treatise on fairy tales and fables, *The Uses of Enchantment*, Bruno Bettelheim makes the statement, Each fairy tale is a magic mirror which reflects some aspect of our inner world, and of the steps required by our evolution from immaturity to maturity.

Discussion Section:

- How is the story of **Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*** the story of the Beast's maturity, of his growing up? What does Belle discover about herself as she learns to look below the surface of the Beast's ferocious appearance?
- Discuss the phrase, "Beauty is in the eye of the beholder" in regards to Belle. When she sees the man behind the monster, what does she see? Does what she sees change during the course of the play?
- Belle is torn between her feelings for her father, Maurice, and for the Beast. How does she resolve the conflict?
- When Belle first sees the Beast, she is very much afraid. This fear eventually turns to love. When have you experienced having an emotion change from one extreme to another? Is it possible to love something/someone and have the emotion develop into fear or loathing? How/when does the media manipulate our emotions in this way?

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A secondary theme in **Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*** is the idea of **difference**. From the beginning of the play, the audience learns that Belle is considered different than the other people in the village. In the song *Belle*, the villagers sing:

*Look, there she goes
The girl is strange, no question
Dazed and distracted, can't you tell?
Never part of any crowd
Cause her head's up on some cloud
No denying she's a funny girl, that Belle,*

*Look, there she goes the girl is so peculiar
I wonder if she's feeling well
With a dreamy, far-off look
And her nose stuck in a book
What a puzzle to the rest of us in Belle*

*Now it's no wonder that her name
means beauty
Her looks have got no parallel
But behind that fair facade
I'm afraid she's rather odd
Very different from the rest of us
She's nothing like the rest of us
Yes, different from the rest of us is Belle.*

Discussion Section:

Why do you think the townspeople thought Belle was odd? Was it only because she liked to read so much? What ideas did Belle have that differed from the townspeople? What moments in the play reveal that Belle was bothered that others found her strange? Identify moments in the play when there was social pressure placed on Belle to think like the group/the crowd. Why do you think it took courage for Belle to retain her individualism? How were Belle and her father Maurice alike?

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Gaston used the idea of difference to arouse the emotions of the villagers. In *The Mob Song* Gaston sings:

*It's a beast! He's got fangs
Razor-sharp ones
Massive paws, killer claws for the feast
Hear him roar! See him foam!*

But we re not coming home till he s dead!
Good and dead! Kill the Beast!

Later, the mob responds:

We don t like what we don t understand
In fact, it scares us
And this monster is mysterious at least
Bring your guns, bring your knives
Save your children and your wives
We ll save our village and our lives
We ll kill the beast!

Discussion Section:

- Why do you think that everyone was willing to march to the castle and kill the Beast, although they had never met or spoken to him? What was it about the Beast that made everyone afraid of him? Why do you think Belle was unsuccessful at convincing the mob that the Beast was not threatening?
- What makes it difficult for an individual to take a stand against a crowd? When have you ever held an unpopular opinion and defended your right to maintain your beliefs? When have you actively sought to turn people s opinions around to share your point of view?
- Give examples of situations where individuals or groups of individuals have been feared, threatened or killed because of their apparent differences from the rest of society. Find examples where people have been compared to animals in order to instill fear in the rest of society. Give examples where this kind of thinking still occurs today.

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RELATIONSHIPS

There are a number of relationships that are explored in the story **Disney's *Beauty and the Beast***. The relationship between Belle and her father Maurice is explored very early in the play. This relationship is one that is very important to the story.

Another relationship that exists in the play is that between Belle and Gaston. It is a relationship that Gaston pursues despite the fact that he has little in common with Belle. When he recognizes her love of reading, he says that it is not right for a woman to read because she might get ideas. In the song *Me*, Gaston reveals what he thinks a relationship between husband and wife should be:

*Will you be a wife?
Will you be some he-man's property
Good news! That he-man's me!*

*This equation
Girl plus man
Doesn't help just you
On occasion
Women can
Have their uses too
Mainly to extend the family tree
Pumpkin, extend with me!*

*You'll be keeping house with pride
Each day gratified
That you are part of this idyllic scene*

Discussion Section:

- What moments in the play reveal Belle's great affection for her father?
- How is Maurice's love of inventing similar to Belle's love for reading?
- What does the song *Me* reveal about Gaston's attitude towards women?
- What does the song reveal about how Gaston thinks about himself?
- What is it about Belle that attracted Gaston?
- What was it about Gaston that Belle disliked?
- What are the similarities and differences between Gaston and the Beast?
- Why would Lefou be a friend to Gaston? How does he affect the action?

IRONY

Definition: Words, phrases, or actions used to mean the exact opposite of their normal meaning.

In Belle's opening song, she wishes to escape the ordinary life in her village and to find adventure. There is an old saying to be careful what you ask for which may prove true here. Her next solo is the song *Home* in which she resigns herself to a broader definition of what is home. Similarly, Gaston makes light of reading and knowledge in his avid pursuit of Belle, and yet that, and now a mere show of strength, turns out to be the key to her friendship. The Beast finds that when he finally speaks from the heart, he ends up giving something — freedom — to Belle, rather than asking for the thing he really wants. These are situations in which some opposites or contrasts are evident.

Discussion Section:

Who or what is ironic in this story? Give examples. Does irony add to the comedy of the story?

SYMBOLISM

Definition: A symbol is a concrete or real object used to present an idea.

When the focus turns to a symbolic object, something is about to change. A petal falls from the rose and anxiety rises as the realization of time passing becomes very real. A look in the mirror can inspire confidence, caring or fear, depending on what is revealed there. The Enchanted Objects symbolize their roles as well. Lumiere ignites lots of the action and is always bright and positive. Cogsworth is always working for order and control. Mrs. Potts is always calm and comforting.

Discussion Section:

- How is the symbol of the rose different in **Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*** from the original tale?
- Which use do you prefer? Why?
- What does the mirror symbolize?
- Would you consider both the mirror and the rose magical? Why?
- Why was a rose chosen to symbolize both beauty and despair?
- Would another type of flower have been more symbolic?
- What was the significance of the rose losing its petals?
- Choose and draw an object that would symbolize yourself.

C. CHARACTERIZATION

In presenting a play you need not only a story, but you need characters that carry out the action of the story. The characters are brought to life through the dialogue and thoughts created by the playwright and the action given to the character by the playwright. The audience comes to know a character by what he or she says, thinks, does, what others say about them, and how they act towards one another. This information tells the audience about the character's personality and motives.

In discovering a character's motive, one of the questions to be asked is, What does he or she want? In obtaining what they want, characters encounter a series of obstacles and complications. The complications result in an important climax for the major characters, which culminate in them either achieving or failing to achieve their goal.

Sometimes a playwright employs easily recognizable stereotypes, or characters that represent a conventional way of viewing individuals from the larger population. Stereotypes symbolize a particular type of person or one outstanding characteristic of human behavior to the exclusion of everything else.

One of the great strengths of the stage version of **Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*** is its unique and memorable characters. Although some are truly unusual, they still manage to connect with the audience through familiar personality traits. Rather than treat these characters as one-dimensional cartoons, the actions on stage are challenged to add more depth through gestures, tone of voice, and the pacing of the action.

Discussion Section:

- What character in the play do you respect the most? The least? Explain.
- What character do you relate to best? Why?
- Why did the characters in the castle turn into household items? How do these characters feel about the Beast?
- The great lesson of **Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*** is that a thing must love before it is lovable. What character is most affected by this lesson? How?

- What character in the play is considered a villain? A hero? A heroine? Why?
- Which characters in the play would you consider stereotypes? Justify your answer.

Special Note: Please see the activities section for a number of ideas on class exercises that explore characterization.

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MOOD

Definition: The feeling an audience gets from the play changes as the action progresses.

This is a result of the acting by the various characters on stage. The **mood** is this range of emotion that the audience moves through. The mood changes from scene to scene. Stage effects and music work together with the actors to reinforce the mood appropriate for various parts of the story.

Discussion Section:

- Describe Belle's feelings after she is locked up. How does the audience feel about the Beast at this point in the story?
- What is the mood in Gaston's pub? What about in the village after the Beast has been revealed in the mirror? How does the ensemble play into this mood?
- How do you feel about the Beast at the end of Act I?

DIALOGUE

Definition: The talking that goes on between characters on the stage is the dialogue.

The written version of a play is called the book. However, in a musical or opera, much of the normal dialogue is replaced by song to convey the important information. An audience has to listen very carefully to the lyrics or words in the songs as they enjoy the melodies. Since the events of several days often have to be condensed, dialogue helps move the action in new time frames. Listening is an important skill to maximize understanding. The words for spoken dialogue and lyrics are always carefully chosen.

Discussion Section:

- How does an actor's tone of voice influence the meaning of words?

- How does body language affect the communication between characters and reinforce the dialogue?
- What were the high points for you in the spoken word?
- What were the high points for you in the sung lyrics?

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POINT OF VIEW

Definition: The angle from which a story is told.

A narrator introduces the action as this play begins. Once the Storyteller has disappeared, the audience is quickly drawn into the action to follow with their own interpretation. The focus moves between Belle, Gaston, the Beast and the Enchanted Objects as the musical moves from scene to scene.

Discussion Section

- What point of view is **Disney's *Beauty and the Beast***? Is it effective? How would the story change if Belle told the story (first person point of view)? Or the Beast?
- Try to write a new opening for the play given from Belle's point of view.

SECTION III

III. ELEMENTS OF PRODUCTION

When you examine theatre as an art form, you discover that there are certain elements that are present whenever a theatre event takes place. Without them, the event would cease to be theatre. People are a key element. The ideas of writers and musicians move onstage with performers.

Another important element of theatre is the design aspect of the production. This includes visual aspects of design such as costumes, wigs, make-up, sets and lighting. Sound is a non-visual aspect of design. In the production of **Disney's *Beauty and the Beast***, these elements contribute immeasurably to the pleasure of viewing the production.

A. AUDIENCE

When you enter a theatre, you join other audience members who are there to enter the world of the play. Without you and the others in the auditorium, the performance of a play is incomplete. As the performance begins, the lights in the auditorium go down and the lights on the stage come up revealing a set that took many hours to design and build, costumes especially constructed to provide color, interest and information, props, light, music and much more. There are more people involved in a production of a play than just the actors on the stage. There are thousands of hours of work before the curtain even goes up! Without the audience there to respond to what has been prepared, the art of the theatre cannot take place.

To be involved in theatre requires a lot of dedication, but the rewards are many. Inspiring an audience to laugh, cry, shout, clap, or sigh is a theatre artist's reward. Theatre isn't like television; theatre is live every time. Each performance is unique. It is as if each show that is

performed has a life of its own, which can make your participation in it very special. You, the audience, add to the life of the performance. The more you pay attention and respond to what you see and hear, the stronger the performance becomes. The actors can feel how much you like or dislike the performance, even without listening to the applause. The combination of the actors and audience that has gathered to see the performance is something that has never happened before and will never happen again. It is truly a live performance.

Audiences differ from night to night, and they are different from place to place, country to country. In some societies, audiences watch performances that last all night for as many as nine hours. Audiences sometimes sleep during performances eat or drink, gossip with their friends, etc. What is common to all societies is that the presence of an audience is essential to the performance.

Discussion section:

- What are the characteristics of a good audience?
- What are the characteristics of a bad audience?
- What are the differences between a theatre audience and a movie audience?

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B. PERFORMERS

The performer or actor (meaning a male or female actor) is also essential to the art of the theatre. When a person stands in front of a group of people and begins to speak and move in a way that portrays a character that is not the performer, that person is acting.

Acting is a demanding profession which requires intelligence, a flexible body and voice, energy, stamina, sensitivity and imagination. In a musical, the actor needs to have all of these characteristics plus a well-trained singing voice and the ability to dance.

The performer playing the role of Belle has a most demanding role. Her role demands stamina since she is on stage more than all of the other characters. She sings more songs than any other character, and she dances in a variety of musical numbers. In the song *Me*, sung by the character Gaston, even though she doesn't dance, the role of Belle requires that she have a great deal of energy and a flexible body. In creating the character of Belle, the performer also shows a variety of emotional qualities: She is needed to be caring and thoughtful, funny, frightened, angry, lonesome, romantic, happy and sad, etc.

Discussion Section:

- Have the class identify scenes in which Belle showed the emotions mentioned above. How did the performer express the emotions using her voice, her body movements, or her facial expression?

- Discuss with the class some of the demanding movements required of the performers in the following dance numbers:
 - **Be Our Guest**
 - **Gaston**
 - **Human Again**
- What were some of the skills needed by the actors playing the parts of the Beast, Gaston and Lefou?
- Which performers had the most/least physically-demanding roles in the play?
- Which performers had the most/least vocally-demanding roles in
- the play?
- Which performers needed skill in comic timing? Identify scenes/characters in which comic timing was essential to the scene.

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C. MUSIC AND SOUND

The original animated film score was expanded to include *No Matter What*, a love song showing the strong bond between father and daughter. *Home* is Belle's song of determination. *Me* tells you everything you might need to know about Gaston. *If I Can't Love Her* is the Beast's way to show his yearning and loneliness. *Human Again* conveys the passage of time and continued hope. All the new songs are integrated so as to appear both familiar and new. The audience can relate to the characters through the music.

A design element that is not visual is sound. Sound effects include special effects like thunder, the sound of wind and falling rain. Sound effects also include the clink of the cups in *Gaston*. Every time Lefou was hit, pounded, tripped or thrown by Gaston was accompanied by sound effects. Incidental music that was frequently played to underscore the action of the play, setting a tone or mood for the action, is also considered a sound effect. The performers also wore body microphones so that their voices could easily be heard by everyone in the large auditorium. Augmentation of stage voices is actually more difficult than it appears and the task falls to the sound designer.

Discussion Section:

- Listen to the music from **Disney s *Beauty and the Beast***. Which instruments signal different characters, moods or feelings? Which instruments were used to express sorrow, laughter, mystery, excitement, happiness, terror, love, loneliness or frustration?
- Chart the musical program of **Disney s *Beauty and the Beast***. Pick a character and show how a particular song reveals his/her deepest desires. Do specific songs focus on specific character?
- Do the songs move the story ahead? How?
- Do some of the characters sing their thoughts and feelings? What do they sing about?
- Are there any comedy songs in the play? Why are they funny?

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D. COSTUMES AND WIGS, MAKE-UP AND PRESTHETICS

The clothes, or costumes, that the performers wear communicate information to the audience about the character. The costume not only includes the clothes but the make-up, hairstyles and wigs, masks and prosthetics that the character wears as well. All work together so that when a character walks on stage, the audience immediately knows something about the character. The clothes tell us if the character is male, female or, in **Disney s *Beauty and the Beast***, animal. The clothes also indicate the nature of characters in the play: Their stations in life, their age, occupations and personalities. Clothes indicate the historical period the play as well as the locale in which the action occurs.

The costumes also need to meet the needs of the individual performer, making it possible for an actor to move or dance freely, make a quick change from one costume to another, or to make a change/transformation on stage in front of the audience.

Discussion Section:

- How did the Beast s costume tell you that he had become more animal than human?

- How did the costume also tell you that he was still a Prince?
- Many of the characters in the Beast's castle appeared in costumes that indicated they had been turned into enchanted objects. Describe the costumes of the following characters and explain what objects they were meant to represent.
 - **Cogsworth**
 - **Lumiere**
 - **Mrs. Potts**
 - **Madame de la Grande Bouche**
 - **Babette**
- How do the costumes reflect a time period and place?
- Costumes also should indicate something of the personality of the character. What are the personality traits of Gaston? How is that reflected in his costume? Look at the color, fabric choices (Gaston does not wear silk or velvet), the line of the costume (fabric does not drape on his body: he is poured into the costume), and the costume accessories such as his wig. In designing the Beast's costume, the costumer had to consider the fact that the actor needed to undergo a magical transformation.
- Examine the costume designs of Lumiere and Babette. By looking at the colors, line and fabric, explain how the costumer indicated that there was a relationship between these two characters.

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- Write down a list of adjectives that would describe the character of Belle. Using a picture of Belle's costume, how are the adjectives expressed through the design? Compare her dress to those of the silly girls of the village.
- Imagine that the story of **Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*** was placed in the 19th Century American Wild West. Design costumes for Belle that would accurately portray her character in that place and time period.
- Imagine that an object in your bedroom became enchanted and brought to life. Design a costume for an actor portraying that object. What does it look like? How is it constructed? What problems does the actor have in moving in the costume?

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FUN FACTS

The spectacular world of **Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*** is a world filled with elaborate costumes, wigs, lighting, prosthetics and pyrotechnics.

COSTUMES

One of the most extensive costumes belongs to the Beast. The Beast's hair, made from both real and synthetic hairs, is from National Hair Technologies. The synthetic hair is fed into a one-of-a-kind loom according to the designer's color and texture specifications. The designer then fashions it into a hair suit, the hair designer grooms it, and skilled artists paint it to create the final look.

The Beast needs three people to help him into make-up, prosthetics, hair and finally wardrobe to transform him into the Beast. At the beginning, it took over three hours to transform the actor into the beast. With practice, it now usually takes about 90 minutes.

PROSTHETICS

- There are over 80 prosthetic pieces used weekly in the show.
- 2,000 pounds of plaster and 1,000 pounds of clay were used to create the molds that make the fantasy features of the Enchanted Objects.

WIGS

- It took 20 pounds of human hair and 400 man hours to create the first Beast.
- There are over 140 wigs on stage each night.
- There are 50 pounds of hairpins backstage ready to go.
- There are seven notebooks of information just for the wig department alone.
- The 30-inch length human hair needed to build Belle's wig was specially imported from India.
- There are seven yards of human hair wefting in the Beast's tail.
- The average number of wig changes for each ensemble member is eight per performance.

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E. SETS, LIGHTING AND SPECIAL EFFECTS

Like the costumes, the set also presents visual information to the audience. A stage setting establishes the locale and period in which the play occurs. Is the location a village? A castle? A forest? Is the time period the Roaring Twenties? Is it in the 1960's in the United States or in the 1960's in China? The setting also tells the audience what kinds of characters the play is about. The scenery depicting a palace immediately suggests that the play is about kings and other royalty. A farmhouse porch suggests the play is about an ordinary rural family. A set design can

also indicate whether the play is realistic or non-realistic, both in the way the elements of design are visually presented and how they move in and out of view of the audience.

The element of scenic design was a very important element in the staging of **Disney's *Beauty and the Beast***. Visually, the stage design very much followed the film version of the story in its use of line, color and texture to help set the tone and style of the production. The vibrant use of color together with the two-dimensional look of the set appropriately conveys the fairy tale origin of the story.

The scenery works together with all production and performance elements to create artistic consistency throughout the play. For example, the bright reds, orange and yellow of the early village scene are consistent with the happy, playful upbeat songs and dance numbers presented early in the play. Spurred on by Gaston, the mood of the villagers turns ugly in Act II, and they attack the Beast's castle. This mood is reflected in a change of costume consisting of dark, somber colors, diffused shadowy lighting, and sharply angular sets that elicit a sense of foreboding.

Discussion Section:

The mood of the play begins in a very happy, upbeat way. At what point does the mood begin to change? How is the mood expressed through the change of the set?

The set of the Beast's castle is large and grandiose with curved arches, flights of stairs, chandeliers many rooms and libraries, etc. What does such visual information tell you about the place and characters in this setting? The castle also has gargoyle statues and is cast in darkness. What does this visual information add to the understanding of place and character? When the spell of enchantment was broken in the end, how was the setting of the castle affected? How did the set and lighting designers accomplish those changes through color, texture and light?

Set changes need to be made quickly and efficiently. Sometimes this requires that changes be made in full view of the audience. In **Disney's *Beauty and the Beast***, villages, houses, castles and forests appear and disappear rapidly as if by magic. This smooth transition from place to place reinforces the fairy tale origin of the story. What staging technique was used for Belle's house to appear and disappear? After Belle and the Beast danced in the garden, what staging technique was used when a bench suddenly appeared so the two could sit and talk?

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How did the visual aspects of light, color, line (vertical, horizontal, circular, etc.) and texture (smooth, rough, etc.) affect the mood of the musical dance number called *Be our Guest*? What was the mood just before the musical dance number? What visual elements changed to affect the mood? Were the changes in keeping with the overall artistic concept of the play?

PYROTECHNICS

- There are currently over 37 pyrotechnical and special effects articles in the show.
- Most of the effects in the show have been custom blended and tested hundreds of times before being put into the show.
- The Enchantress fireball is the first known throwable hand-held device of its kind. She can hold the ball of fire in her hand until it burns out without any physical damage. It was over a year in development.
- Lumiere uses approximately one ounce of liquid butane fuel per show per arm. This translates to four pounds of butane per month. With the addition of ten torches, the show will use at least six pounds of fuel per month.

LIGHTING

- There are over 600 lamps and/or instruments in Natasha Katz's design.
- There are three miles of cable needed to connect all the lights.
- The design is 1,200,000 WATTS, enough to light a football stadium.
- There are 120 gobos (cut metal pieces that make lighting effects and patterns on the set) used in the design.
- There are over 350 lighting cues called by the stage manager per performance.

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F. THEATRE, THE COLLABORATIVE ART

Ultimately, theatre is a collaborative art. All of the production elements that have been described above must be coordinated and brought together to create an artistic, cohesive whole. The work of the actors and musicians must be coordinated with scene changes, lighting and sound cues, costume changes, make-up, and special effects experts in an attempt to create the illusion of the world of the play. The actors, those individuals whom the audience see, are only a part of the creative team that brings a single production together.

Below is a list of the different kinds of expertise that nurtures the development and execution of a musical like **Disney's *Beauty and the Beast***.

| | |
|--------------------------|------------------------|
| producer | electrician |
| lyricist | sound operator |
| composer | props master |
| musical director | dresser |
| musician | tailor |
| casting agent | rehearsal pianist |
| production manager | lawyer |
| choreographer | graphic designer |
| director | house program designer |
| costume designer | accountant |
| sound designer | sponsorship manager |
| set designer | marketing manager |
| lighting designer | house manager |
| actor/understudies | publicity manager |
| stage manager | group sales manager |
| company manager | payroll supervisor |
| wig designer | box office manager |
| puppet master | merchandise manager |
| special effects designer | fire marshal |

Discussion Section:

- Identify two duties associated with each of the positions listed above.
- Use the **Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*** program to identify the individual/s who served the positions listed above.
- Smaller companies with smaller financial resources do not provide all the employment opportunities listed above. Identify those positions that are always most essential to the staging of a play. Which jobs may be combined in a smaller company?

SECTION IV

IV. ACTIVITIES

Special thanks to Dr. Patricia Harter, UCLA School of theatre, Film & Television,

The following activities are designed to aid you in exploring theatrical concepts. These can be modified in numerous ways to suit the needs of your classroom and the ages of your students. The first group of preshow assignments are easy ideas to get students thinking before they go on a field trip and to keep them focused while they are in the audience. The next group of activities are intended for classroom applications to reinforce curriculum in various areas. It is up to individual teachers to select what is relevant for their particular students.

A) PRESHOW PREPARATORY ASSIGNMENTS

1. If you have already seen the animated video, pay special attention and note the six new songs you haven't heard before, when listening to a recording of the Broadway cast or as you watch a stage performance.
2. Before the show starts, look at your program, paying special attention to the cast pictures. In the opening ensemble number look closely at the various faces and pick out a particular member of the chorus that you noticed in the program. Maybe have some of your friends look for another person in the ensemble case. As the show progresses, keep watching for your selected cast member as they appear in various costumes. Whenever there is a really big dance number, you may be surprised at all different looks that can be created for the same people.
3. Make a list of the various locations in the movie version of **Beauty and the Beast**. Before seeing the stage show, write down or sketch how you might depict such places on a stage (i.e.: What pieces of furniture are essential to use? What can be three dimensional and what would have to be a painted backdrop?). When you see the show, compare your notes with what the set designer actually created for this stage.
4. Think about the clothes you wear today. How are they different from garments used in other times and places? Look for unusual garments or accessories in the theatrical costumes. How do these add to the feeling of the show?
5. Think about a theatre building and what functions must take place inside. Make your list of what you would expect to find there. Consider the public areas as well as backstage. Don't forget very practical things like directional signs, bathrooms, storage areas. What are other nice things you might like to find, such as large waiting

areas, fancy lighting fixtures, and comfortable seating. Compare your before and after lists once you have visited your local theatre.

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B. A REAL YARN!

Objective: Develop concentration, listening skills, encourage storytelling skills, foster group cooperation.

Activity: Seat the students together in one large circle. The teacher begins the activity by introducing an idea for a story (exposition), setting the place and introducing a character. As the teacher begins to tell the story, he/she unwinds a ball of yarn. When he/she comes to a knot in the yarn, the teacher stops his/her storytelling, and passes the ball of yarn to the student on his/her right. The student picks up the story where the teacher left off, adding details and action to the story until she/he comes to a knot in the ball of yarn. The yarn and the story are passed along the circle until the story of the ball of yarn reaches an end.

Evaluation: Examine the story that was passed around the circle for elements of exposition, rising action, climax, etc. Which elements made the story exciting? Which elements are omitted? What could have been added to make the story more interesting? Replay.

Preparation: A large ball of yarn with knots randomly added.

C. SNOW WHITE AND THE FROG PRINCE

Objective: Develop improvisational dialogue skills, explore storytelling skills, foster group problem-solving skills.

Activity: Bring a picture/book of a well-known fairy tale and present it to the class. Outline the plot of the story. Discuss how the story would change if a major character was eliminated from the story; what changes would occur if another character was added?

Divide the class into four or five small groups. Give each group a card with the title of a well-known fairy tale, i.e. *The Three Pigs*, *Cinderella*, *The Frog Prince*, *Snow White*, *Sleeping Beauty*. Also, give each group a name of a well-known character from another story i.e. Rumpelstiltskin, a dragon, seven dwarfs, etc. Each group must find a way to incorporate the character into the story, changing the plotline to accommodate the new character.

Evaluation: How did the addition of the character change the original story? What elements of the plot had to change significantly to accommodate the change? How did the new character add/eliminate complications in the original story? Was foreshadowing employed to prepare for the new addition to the story?

D. PICTURE THIS

Objective: Develop a personal interpretation of art, foster storytelling techniques.

Activity: Show the class a painting by a well-known painter. Choose a painting that allows for story exploration. (Give examples.) Ask the students for their interpretations of the painting. Why do different people see things differently?

Divide the class into small groups. Give each group a copy of the picture. Tell each group that they are to create a short story about the picture. Where does the story take place? Who is in the picture? Encourage the students to think creatively. Have each group choose a spokesperson who will share the group's interpretation of the picture with the rest of the class.

Evaluation: What did the interpretations have in common? What was different? How did each of the stories incorporate the elements of plot?

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E. TV INTERVIEW

Objective: To learn to form character and character motivations by using physical movement and emotional motivations.

Motivation: Discuss how all the characters in the story need an appropriate and clearly defined motivation for all actions. Identify the wants/needs of important characters in **Disney's *Beauty and the Beast***.

Presentation: Have a student assume the role of a TV interviewer (i.e. Barbara Walters, Geraldo, etc.). Have another student assume the role of the Beast, Belle, Gaston, Maurice, etc. Have the TV interviewer ask questions of the characters that reveal what each wanted. Allow the class to ask questions of the characters from the floor which challenge the motivations of the characters.

F. HOME IS WHERE THE HEART IS

Objective: Learn to express oneself through body actions.

Motivation: Discuss how Belle felt about missing her home when she first went to live in the Beast's castle. Ask what Belle missed about her home. Ask students what they miss most about home when they are away. Ask the question, If you were suddenly taken from your home, what things would you miss doing the most?

Presentation: Have students pantomime an action that represents something they love most about their homes. (This can be done individually or planned in groups.)

Alternative: Have students pantomime an action that one of the characters in the play would most enjoy about home or in the village.

G. ROOMS

Objective: Stimulate imagination, spontaneous verbal expression of ideas.

Motivation: Talk about the Enchanted Objects that appeared in **Disney's *Beauty and the Beast***. How did each physicalize the inanimate object? Babette? Lumiere? The rug? What did the objects have to say about the Beast? About each other?

Presentation: Divide the class into small groups. Give each group a card with the name of a room and a list of suggested objects found in that locale. Each participant chooses to become an object found in the room. Physicalize the object and interact, using dialogue, with other objects found in the room.

Alternative: Conduct the above activity using the same room but change the time period, creating a list of objects that would be found in that locale during the time period, i.e. Biblical times, King Louis XIV's Court, Frontier America, Medieval, etc.

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H. EXCHANGE CHARACTERS

Objective: Incorporate movement and dialogue, listening skills.

Motivation: Discuss with the class the relationships that developed between characters in the play, i.e. Lumiere and Babette; Mrs. Potts and Chip; Gaston and LeFou; Belle and the Beast. What did the pair have in common? How did they differ?

Presentation: Divide the class into pairs. Give each group a pair of characters from the play. Present them with a conflict. Each person decides which character she/he is to portray. Begin the playing, and midway begin to exchange roles, not immediately, but gradually. At the end of the activity they will have completely reversed roles.

Example: LeFou and Gaston are camping in the forest. LeFou is frightened and wants to return home. Gaston wants LeFou to build a fire and start cooking the day's kill. Begin the scene and midway exchange roles.

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I. CHARACTER WALK

Objective: Explore physical movement and relate it to character development. Develop an awareness of rhythmic patterns.

Motivation: Ask students about their favorite characters in the play. What was it about the character each like? How was each character physicalized by the actor?

Presentation: Have the class line up at one end of a large auditorium. The leader should play an instrumental musical selection with a strong beat. Have the students walk through the room in time with the music so they can get the feel of the beat. Then, the leader calls out the name of a character from **Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*** and each student walks as that character to the beat of the music.

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J. WHERE AM I?

Objective: Enhancement of observation skills; development of place/object association skills.

Motivation: Show the class pictures of objects that go together, such as an eraser, chalkboard and ruler. Show one picture that doesn't belong to that group of objects—a bed. Discuss which picture is out of place and why it doesn't belong.

Presentation: Divide the class into pairs. Each pair is given a card with the name of a location that appears in the play: The village market, the village tavern, Belle's house, the forest, inside the Beast's castle, the West Wing of the castle, Belle's room in the castle, the library and Maison des Lunes. The pair work together in order to find several props (pictures, drawings, or

words) scattered throughout the classroom which would belong to the setting on the card. The leader can set a time limit.

Alternative: Allow each group to create a list of objects found in a specific locale in the play and to name each object on a card. Arrange the cards from the most difficult to the most obvious object found in the locale. Using the game of password as a model, present the objects, one at a time, to a member of another team. The objective for the participants is to see how few objects need to be presented in order to visualize the locale from the play.

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K. ESTABLISHING A WHERE

Objective: Express oneself through body action; sharpen perception

Motivation: Show a picture to the class of a place: A beach, an airport, a train station etc. Discuss with the class which kind of action might take place in these settings. What actions are unique to the locales?

Activity: Give a class participant a *where* card identifying a locale from the play. The participant pantomimes an activity that would be done in that locale. When another class participant thinks he/she recognizes the locale, he/she

joins the scene, pantomiming another action that occurs in that place. (Use the locales mentioned in *Where Am I?*)

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L. RADIO STORY

Objective: Development of association and reasoning skills; enhancement of auditory skills.

Motivation: Ask students to identify sounds that accompanied specific action in the play, i.e. Lefou tripping, Maurice's invention, the rain falling, etc. Ask the students to find ways of reproducing those sounds.

Presentation: Divide the class into groups of five. Give each group a card that has the outline of a scene in which the action is accompanied by sound effects. Each group should plan how the sound effects alone will communicate the action of the scene. Example: The opening of a door, sound of footsteps, sound of sitting in a chair, sound of opening drawers, sound of shuffling paper which soon stops following by a low laugh of satisfaction, sound of a match being struck, low laugh, sound of body rising from chair, sound of footsteps running from room, crackling sound of fire, final sound of distant fire engines.

Each group plans the story using only the sound. The story is played to the entire class which listens with eyes shut.

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M. SOUND TAPE

- Have the class gather a collection of sounds from a variety of sources. The sounds should be recorded on an audio tape. Play the tape in class and have the class try to identify the source of the sounds.

- Play a sound tape in class that has a collection of sounds that tell a story. Have the class listen carefully to the tape. Have each student draw a storyboard portraying the action represented by the sounds.
- Play a sound tape in class that has a collection of sounds that tell a story. After the class has listened to the tape, divide the class in small groups. Have each group pantomime the action it thinks is represented by the sounds.