

STUDY GUIDE

The Shoemaker and the Christmas Elves

THE SHOEMAKER AND THE CHRISTMAS ELVES

Music, Book, and Lyrics
by Paul Deiss

TEACHER RESOURCES

Based on the Grimm Brothers tale *The Shoemaker and the Elves*, this play and study guide were produced in support of the teaching of the Virginia Standards of Learning in Family Ties, Folk Tales, Language Arts, Literary Classic, Biography, Music, Reading, Writing, History, and Character Development.

AT THE LIBRARY

Grimm's Fairy Stories: The Brothers Grimm Classic Collection by The Brothers Grimm

Grimm's Complete Fairy Tales by Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm

ON THE WEB

The Elves and the Shoemaker
<https://americanliterature.com/author/the-brothers-grimm/fairy-tale/the-elves-and-the-shoemaker>

Biography: 5 Facts About the Brothers Grimm
<https://www.biography.com/authors-writers/brothers-grimm-facts>

World of Tales: Stories for Children from around the World
https://www.worldoftales.com/Brothers_Grimm.html#gsc.tab=0

PLAY SYNOPSIS

Two elves are secretly sent to work for a poor cobbler until he does something nice for them. If he does, the elves will become true Christmas elves and be sent to work for Santa at the North Pole.

Not knowing how to make shoes, the Christmas elves do what they do best: make toy dolls for children. Using the cobbler's leather scraps, the elves busily make dolls for the cobbler and his wife to sell in their shop.

Over time, the cobbler and his wife become rich and no longer need the help of the elves, but the elves can't leave until their kindness has been repaid.

One night, the cobbler and his wife discover the Christmas elves asleep in their kitchen. They realize that it is the elves who have helped them during their time of need and decide to return their kindness by making each of the elves a new pair of shoes. The elves awake to see their new shoes and rejoice that they can now become Santa's elves!



The Brothers Grimm

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LITTLE-KNOWN FACTS ABOUT THE BROTHERS GRIMM

Once upon a time, over 200 years ago, there were two German brothers named Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm. The brothers worked as lawyers and librarians, and later on became university professors. In their free time, they had a really interesting hobby — collecting fairy tales! In those days, there was no television, radio or internet, so people gathered together in the evenings to hear storytellers tell tales like *Cinderella* and *Hansel and Gretel*.

The brothers liked nothing more than traveling all around Europe and listening to local storytellers tell their fairy tales. Then, they wrote them down in a big book for everyone to enjoy. Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm are best known for their collection of fairy tales, but there's so much more to their story. From getting kicked out of work at a college, to writing a dictionary, there are so many interesting and little-known facts about the Grimm brothers. Read on to learn more about this talented pair.

Jacob and Wilhelm came from a family with nine children. History only remembers two of the brothers Grimm, but there were actually several.

Their birth home was destroyed in World War II. When visitors go to the birthplace to see the plaque and statue of the brothers Grimm, they are actually across the street from the home where they were born, as the original was destroyed.

The Brothers Grimm also created a German dictionary. They laid the foundation for a humongous German dictionary that was completed over 120 years later.

The German Fairy Tale Route is a tourist attraction that includes all of the fairy tales and events in the lives of the Brothers Grimm. It goes from Bremerhaven on the north German coast to Hanau in the middle of Germany.

Most fairy tales begin with the words "Once upon a time...". In German, this is "Es war einmal...".

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THE PLAYWRIGHT'S JOB

Playwrights are responsible for writing the play. What they write tells the actors what to say on stage. Some playwrights adapt stories so that they can be performed on stage for new audiences.

When a playwright adapts a story, the characters, events, and even settings may change to fit the stage production. The playwright may change a character's thoughts into events and actions that happen on stage. Additional scenes and characters may be added or cut to make the story the best play it can be. There are many adaptations of fairy tales in books, movies, and plays.

adapt: to change to fit a new use or situation

MATCHING

Match the following adaptations to their original stories:

ORIGINAL

Cinderella

Ali Baba and the 40 Thieves

The Gingerbread Man

The Frog Prince

Jack and the Beanstalk

ADAPTATION

The Horned Toad Prince

The Runaway Tortilla

Kate and the Beanstalk

CinderElmo

Ali Baba and the 40 Aliens

WRITE YOUR OWN FAIRY TALE

Fairy tales are types of folk tales. They usually begin with "Once upon a time..." and end with "...happily ever after." Also, fairy tales usually have events happening in threes, and involve magic.

Folk tales are short, with a simple plot. They have characters that represent a characteristic (like good or bad) and feature events that are repeated, especially in threes. They are also based in fantasy.

Use the template below to start writing your very own fairy tale.

Once upon a time, there was a _____ who lived in a _____ .

But there was a mean _____ who always _____ .

So one day the _____ decided to _____ . There was a magic _____ that _____ ! After that, _____ .

Then, the _____ never _____ . And they lived happily ever after.

The End



ONLINE

Fairy tales are just one type of interesting story.

Try your own at: kidzone.ws/creative-writing/fairy-tales.htm

A Closer Look at the Elves

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Complete the table. Show how many boots the elves made on nights 1 through 10.

NIGHT	NUMBER OF BOOTS MADE
1	2
2	4
3	8
4	16
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	

1. What pattern do you see?

2. Use a calculator to find out how many pairs of boots the elves made in total.

What if the elves had made 1 pair of boots the first night, 3 pairs the second night, 9 pairs the third night, and 27 pairs the next night? How many pairs of boots would they have made on the sixth night?

NIGHT	NUMBER OF PAIRS OF BOOTS MADE
1	1
2	3
3	9
4	27
5	
6	

1. What pattern do you see?

When the shoemaker and his wife made new shoes for the elves, they put 6 buttons on each shoe. How many buttons did they need for 1, 2, 3, and 4 pairs of shoes?

NUMBER OF SHOES	NUMBER OF BUTTONS
1	6
2	
3	
4	

Answer #2: 1,023 pairs of boots.

Cues at the Theatre

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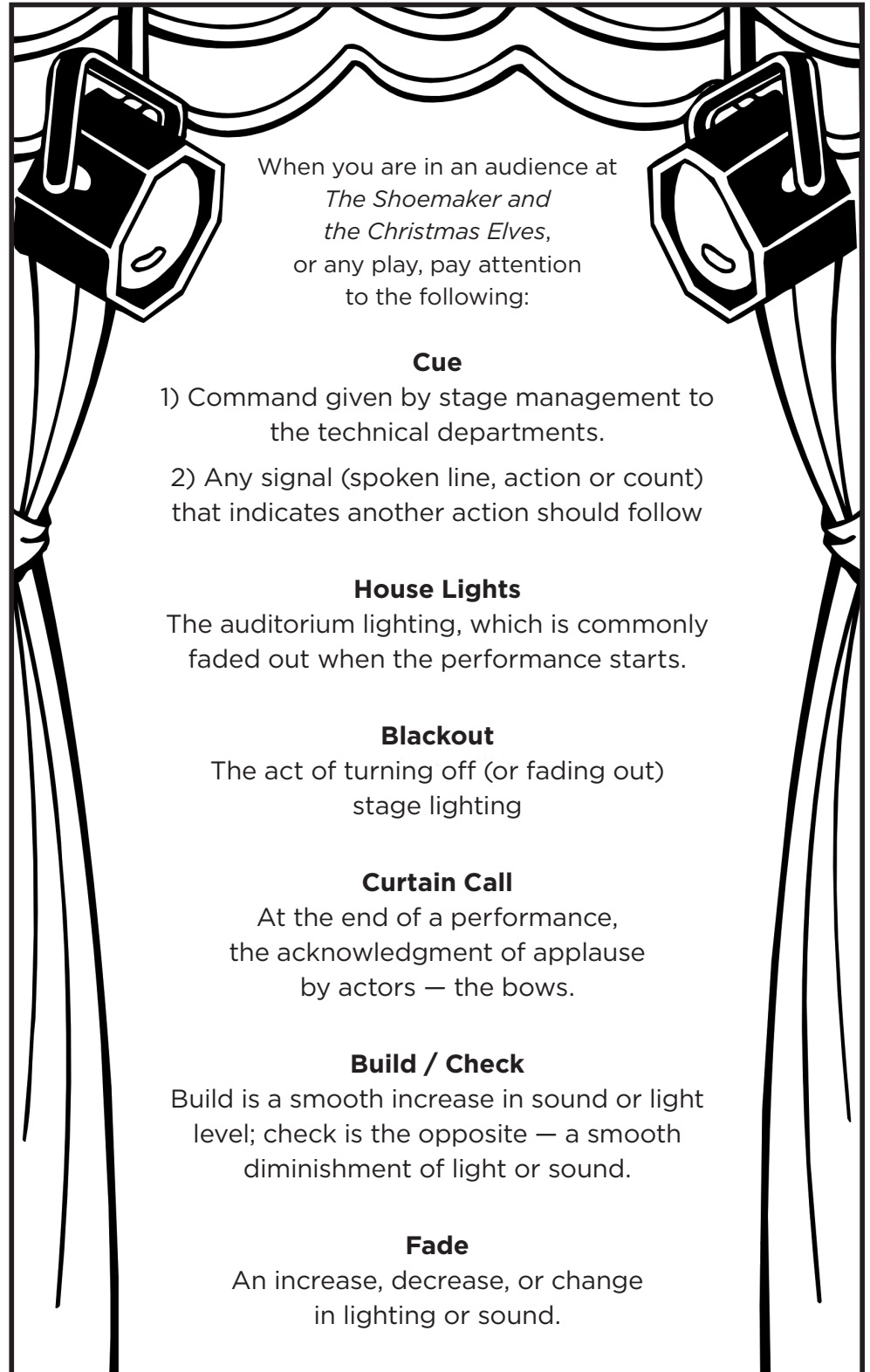
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When you are in an audience at *The Shoemaker and the Christmas Elves*, or any play, pay attention to the following:

Cue

- 1) Command given by stage management to the technical departments.
- 2) Any signal (spoken line, action or count) that indicates another action should follow

House Lights

The auditorium lighting, which is commonly faded out when the performance starts.

Blackout

The act of turning off (or fading out) stage lighting

Curtain Call

At the end of a performance, the acknowledgment of applause by actors — the bows.

Build / Check

Build is a smooth increase in sound or light level; check is the opposite — a smooth diminishment of light or sound.

Fade

An increase, decrease, or change in lighting or sound.