

Old Man and the River



STUDY GUIDE

THEATRE DIRECT
EXCEPTIONAL THEATRE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Show Details

Title:	Old Man and the River
Duration:	50 minutes (full theatre experience with pre-show and post-show activity)
Company:	Theatre Direct, Toronto Canada

Creative Team

Created by Lynda Hill and Thomas Morgan Jones
Inspired by the story by Thomas Morgan Jones
Concept, Dramaturgy and Direction by Lynda Hill
Original Production Design by Kelly Wolf
Original Music by Nicky Phillips
Lighting Design by Jennifer Lennon
Puppetry by Mike Peterson and Eric Woolfe

Show Description

A grumpy old man lives in his little house in the woods by the river. Every day is the same and he likes it this way, until one day... a magical creature leaps into his world and everything changes! Old Man and the River is a delightful and inventive puppetry piece conceived especially for very young.

About the Company

Now in its 41st year, Theatre Direct Canada is one of the Country's leading theatres for young audiences whose productions have reached audiences in schools and theatres touring throughout Ontario, across Canada and overseas. The company's productions engage students from over 25 local schools while its year-round drama school and community-based education involve over 300 children and their families. Theatre Direct's work has been recognized with numerous Dora Mavor Moore Award nominations and has won 6 Dora Mavor Moore Awards for outstanding Production in the TYA category, 10 Chalmers Canadian Play Awards, as well as, the Canada Council Theatre for Young Audiences Prize.

What to Expect

The environment and atmosphere of the theatre is welcoming and the staff are all committed to greeting and meeting the child and educator/parent/caregiver gently and openly.

When You Arrive

- 1) You should arrive at the designated venue 20-30 minutes before the start time of the performance. This is to allow enough time to visit the bathroom, be seated, and be present for the opening introductions.
- 2) You will be greeted by our Education Team.
- 3) We will check with you about visiting the bathroom prior to the start of the performance.

Snack Space

Q: Is there a place to eat a snack before or after the performance?

A: There may not be a designated area for snacks at the venue on the date of your visit. However, many venues do have some lobby or outdoor space which may be appropriate for student groups to enjoy a simple snack. It should also be noted that unless otherwise stated there is no food or beverages allowed inside the theatre space other than bottled water.

Educational Material

Educational Review from an Expert

- **Nancy Brown**, Seneca College Early Childhood Education Faculty Member

The *Old Man and the River* is a very accessible performance for young children. The story builds confidence in the young viewer because as it unfolds the repetition of events, actions and sounds builds a “knowing”... and thus a sense of competence and success with the medium.

The writers, directors and puppeteers have brought together their outstanding abilities to create a table puppet play that is skillfully designed for this age group of children who are beginning to use symbols in their own communication. The play brings the children into a world where actions and gestures tell a story.

As the three days of the story pass there is a repetition to allow the children to feel that they can anticipate what is going to happen but at the same time there is a change and it is ‘readable’ to the children because they have learned the pattern of the narrative.

Themes for *Old Man and the River*

- Friendship
- The Natural World
- Routines
- Adjusting to change

Connections to Ontario Kindergarten Curriculum Specific Expectations

The new 2016 Kindergarten Program is based around the 4 frames: Belonging and Contributing, Self-Regulation and Well-Being, Demonstrating Literacy and Mathematics Behaviours and Problem Solving and Innovating. The new curriculum also emphasizes an approach that integrates all 4 frames into classroom activities, inquiries and experiences. This performance, associated study guide materials and potential extension activities provides educators with an experience that ticks every box. For your convenience we have included below a breakdown of the overall and specific expectations met by bringing your Kindergarten class to *Old Man and the River*.

“In the Kindergarten program, the arts provide a vehicle through which children can express their growing sense of self and their interpretations of the world. **The arts transcend any single subject or discipline.**”

– FDK Program 2016

Overall Expectation 1: communicate with others in a variety of ways, for a variety of purposes, and in a variety of contexts

- 1.1 Explore sounds, rhythms, and language structures, with guidance and on their own.
- 1.2 Listen and respond to others both verbally and non-verbally (e.g using the arts, using signs, using gestures and body language), and in a variety of contexts (eg. After read-alouds and shared reading and writing experiences; in imaginary or exploratory play)
- 1.3 Use and interpret gestures, tones of voice, and other non-verbal means to communicate and respond (e.g respond to non-verbal cues from the educator; vary tone of voice when dramatizing; name feelings and recognize how someone else might be feeling)
- 1.6 use language (verbal and non-verbal communication) to communicate their thinking, to reflect and to solve problems
- 1.10 retell experiences, events and familiar stories in proper sequence (e.g. orally; in new and creative ways; using drama, visual arts, non-verbal communication and representations; in a conversation)

Overall Expectation 2: demonstrate independence, self-regulation and a willingness to take responsibility in learning and other endeavours

- 2.2 demonstrate a willingness to try new experiences (e.g. experiment with new materials/tools; try out new activities in a different learning area; select and persist with things that are challenging; experiment with writing) and adapt to new situations (e.g. having visitors in the classroom, having a different educator occasionally, going on a field trip, riding the school bus)
- 2.5 develop empathy for others, and acknowledge and respond to each other's feelings (e.g. tell an adult when upset; have an imaginary conversation with a tree or an insect; role play emotions with dolls and puppets)

Overall Expectation 3: identify and use social skills in play and other contexts

- 3.3 demonstrate an awareness of ways of making and keeping friends (e.g. sharing, listening, talking, helping, entering into play or joining a group with guidance from educators)

Overall Expectation 7: participate actively and regularly in a variety of activities that require the application of movement concepts

- 7.1 Participate actively in creative movement and other daily physical activities (e.g. dance, games, outdoor play, fitness breaks)

Overall Expectation 11: demonstrate an understanding and critical awareness of a variety of written materials that are read by and with their educators

- 11.9 Retell, orally or with non-verbal communication, familiar experiences or stories in proper sequence (e.g., in new and creative ways, using drama, visual arts, non-verbal communication, and representation; in a conversation)

Overall Expectation 12: demonstrate an understanding and critical awareness of media texts

12.2 communicate their ideas, verbally and non-verbally, about a variety of media materials (eg. Describe their feelings in response to seeing a DVD or a video; dramatize messages from a safety video or poster; paint a picture in response to an advertisement or CD)

Overall Expectation 13: use the process and skills of an inquiry stance (i.e., questioning, planning, predicting, observing and communicating)

13.1 state problems and pose questions in different context and for different reasons (e.g., before, during and after inquires)

Overall Expectation 17: describe, sort, classify, build, and compare two-dimensional shapes and three dimensional figures, and describe the location and movement of objects through investigation

17.2 communicate an understanding of basic spatial relationships (e.g., use terms such as “above/below”, “in/out”, “forward/backward”; use visualization, perspective and movements [flips/reflections, slides/translations and turns/rotations]) in their conversations and play, in their predictions and visualizations, and during transitions and routines

17.3 investigate and explain the relationship between two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional figures in objects they have made (e.g., explain that the flat surface of a cube is a square)

Overall Expectation 18: recognize, explore, describe, and compare patterns, and extend, translate, and create them, using the core of a pattern and predicting what comes next

18.1 identify and describe informally the repeating nature of patterns in everyday contexts (e.g., patterns in nature such as morning-noon-night, the four seasons, or the arrangement of leaves on the stem of a plant; the pattern on a piece of clothing; the pattern made by floor tiles; the pattern of words in a book or poem; the pattern on a calendar or in a schedule; the pattern of the beat or rhythm in songs), using appropriate terminology (e.g., “goes before”, “goes after”, “repeats”) and gestures (e.g., pointing, nodding, using slap/claps)

Overall Expectation 20: apply the mathematical processes to support the development of mathematical thinking, to demonstrate understanding, and to communicate thinking and learning in mathematics, while engaged in play-based learning and in other contexts*

20.4 build three-dimensional structures using a variety of materials and identify the three-dimensional figures their structure contains

Overall Expectation 21: Express their responses to forms of drama, dance, music and visual arts from various cultures and communities

21.1 express their responses to drama and dance (e.g., by moving, by making connections to their experiences with drama and dance, by talking about drama and dance)

21.2 dramatize rhymes, stories, legends, and folk tales from various cultures and communities (e.g., use actions, pictures, words, or puppets to tell a story in the dramatic play area or in the blocks area)

21.3 express their responses to music by moving, by making connections to their own experiences or by talking about the musical form

Overall Expectation 22: communicate their thoughts and feelings and their theories and ideas,

through various art forms

22.1 communicate their ideas about something (e.g., a book, the meaning of a word, an event or an experience, a mathematical pattern, a motion or movement) through music, drama, dance and/or the visual arts

Overall Expectation 23: Use problem solving strategies, on their own or with others, when experimenting with the skills, materials, processes, and techniques used in drama, dance, music and visual arts

23.1 use problem-solving skills and their imagination to create drama and dance (e.g., try out different voices for parts of a story or chant; find different ways to move to music, try to connect the movement with the mood and speed of the music; create a sequence of movement)

23.4 communicate their understanding of something (e.g., a familiar story, an experience, a song, a play) by representing their ideas and feelings through the arts

Vocabulary

What/who we see in the story:

House	Forest	Old Man
Bed	Trees	River Faerie
Door	Tree stump	Leaf
Sun	Hill	Broom
Moon	River	Fishing Pole
Cloud	Bridge	Dragonfly

Actions in the story:

Blowing	Hiding	Sitting
Bowing	Hugging	Sleeping
Bubbling	Inviting	Sneaking
Climbing	Playing	Stretching
Dancing	Rising	Swaying
Drooping	Searching	Sweeping
Fishing	Setting	Swimming
Flying	Shaking	Swinging
Following	Shuffling	Walking
Giggling	Sighing	Whispering

The Story

The story is told over three days.

In the first day, we see the Old Man go about his daily routine in his usual grumpy way. He grumbles at the Sun for waking him. He grumbles at the dust on the floor and sweeps it out of his house. He makes his way to the River, stopping along the way to grumble at the laughing Trees. He fishes and catches nothing. The Dragonfly visits and he shoos it away. He makes his way back home and goes to bed with a heavy sigh.

The next day, something strange is in the air. The Sun jumps high into the sky and dances everywhere. It sneaks up on the Man's house and blazes brightly in his window. The Old Man wakes to see the bright Sun and chases it away. He begins to sweep his house and a big wind blows open his door sending a huge pile of Leaves inside. The Old Man sweeps them out with determination.

He makes his way to the River and on the way, the Trees are laughing hysterically! They won't stop, even when he shushes them! They startle him when they dump many Leaves on his head and laugh outrageously! He nearly stumbles as he climbs the hill to the bridge over the River and just as his fishing line enters the water, the River bursts into operatic song! Then, he feels a tug on his line and a struggle ensues.

Suddenly, a magical River Faerie flies out of the water, lands gracefully on the bridge, and bows to the Old Man. The Old Man scrambles away and hides in his house. The River Faerie follows him, he wants to play. He knocks on the Old Man's door over and over again until finally the man swings open the door startling the Faerie, and sending it flying into the sky. The Faerie dances a dance of friendship which the Old Man rejects. He goes back inside, slams the door and hides in his bed. The River Faerie sadly returns to the river.

The next day, the Old Man wakes, looks to the Sun and instead of brightness and blue sky, a Cloud passes over. The Old Man begins to look for the River Faerie. He feels sorry and wants to see him again. He passes through the forest and the Trees are silent. He sits at the River and the River is silent. The Dragonfly comes and sits patiently beside the Old Man who stares into the water searching for the Faerie. The Old Man sighs and makes his way home. Along the way, he decides to stop in the forest to think. The Trees whisper. The River begins to bubble and River Faerie flies up and lands on the bridge. He spies the Old Man sitting all alone in the distance. The Faerie has an idea to sneak up on him and surprise him. The Old Man sees him sneaking and plays along. They find each other and joyfully hug. The Trees laugh. The new friends play. The Sun begins to set, the Moon rises, and the stars twinkle. The River Faerie bows to the Man, the Man bows to his new friend. They each go home. They look forward to playing again tomorrow. The Old Man goes to sleep, sighing happily.

The End.

Educational Activities

Pre-Show Activities

Pre-show activities are fun to do before you come to see Old Man and the River! However, all these activities can also be facilitated after seeing the performance!

Drama & Movement:

Nature Adventure Story

- 1) Have the children lay on the floor and tell them to pretend to be tiny little seeds. Then, you can ask them to slowly move their bodies toward the ceiling, growing into different kinds of trees. This could also be done with a drum or shaker if you would like to encourage the children to grow within a certain count or beat.
- 2) Tell them that all the trees have all begun to laugh [allow them to laugh and giggle as trees]. Then, tell them that the trees laughed so hard that a leaf fell off and began to blow in the wind. Ask them to transform their bodies and become that leaf blowing in the wind. At first, have them move slowly, and then move quickly.
- 3) Tell the children that the blowing leaf has landed in a river. Tell the children that they have been transformed into the river and to make their bodies move like water in a river. There are no wrong movements!
 - Ask them what their bodies moving as fast water might look like?
 - Ask them what their bodies moving as slow water might look like?
- 4) The next part of the story has the river ending at the base of a hill. Tell the children to climb out of the river and pretend that they are climbing up a big hill as themselves.
- 5) Once they have reached the top of the hill tell them they have arrived back at home and have them climb into their warm cozy bed and fall asleep.
- 6) Indicate that you have reached the end of the story adventure and have everyone sit down in a circle. Have the children share their favourite part of the story adventure.

Visual Arts:

Hand Print Painting

Tell the children to find a partner. Give each of them a piece of paper and a two pie tins of different colours. Tell them that they can dip their hands in the paint and make a print of their hand on their paper. Then have their partner dip their hand in a different colour and make a print on their partner's paper of their hand.

Once the paintings are dry each set of partners can list and write on the back how they are the same and how they are different and that's what makes friendship important.

Leaf Play

Have the children gather different types of leafs from the playground or from home. Then have them trace the leaves on paper with pencils or markers. Finally have the children label the type of tree it comes from.

Post-Show Activities

Drama & Movement:

Show me with your Body and Voice!

- 1) Have the children gather in an open space. Tell them to show you with their bodies how the trees in the play moved.
 - Ask them what sounds did the trees make?
- 2) Tell them to FREEZE! Now tell them to show you with their bodies how the Old Man walked.
 - Ask them what sounds did the Old Man make?
- 3) Tell them to FREEZE! Finally, tell them to show you with their bodies how the River Faerie moved.
 - Ask them if the River Faerie made sound? Follow up by asking what would they imagine the River Faerie might sound like?

Show me with your Body and Your Face and No Sound!

- 1) Have the children gather in an open space. Tell them to show you with their bodies and their faces and no sound that they are Grumpy.
 - o Encourage them to exaggerate the emotions they are showing. You may ask leading questions like what shape does your mouth make when you are grumpy? Do you have a bigger body when you are grumpy or a smaller body?
- 2) Erase that emotion with a swiping movement with the hands and a swiping sound from the mouth so that the body is ready for the next emotion. You may prompt students by saying let's erase/wipe off that emotion so we are ready to show another (swish, swish, swish, swish!).

Invite the children to show you a different emotion with their bodies and faces and no sound, see below for a list of emotions from the show to explore:

Grumpy	Disappointed	Lonely	Scared	Comforted	Playful	Happy
Mad	Mischievous	Sad	Confused	Curious	Hopeful	Excited

Moments of Empathy – Discussion

After seeing the performance you may ask the children about their favourite moment of the play, this is a great opportunity to explore their ideas about the character's actions and motivations. Consider questions that include all characters like the trees, the river, the sun, the moon! Here are some questions to get the discussion started:

Why does the Old Man need to sweep?

Why do the trees whisper as the Old Man passes?

Why does the Old Man shoo the Dragonfly away?

Why was the Old Man scared of the River Faerie?

Why does the Old Man jump when the Sun is in his window?

Why do the Trees turn away from the Old Man?

Why does the Old Man invite the Leaf to his bed?

How does the River Faerie feel when the Old Man closes his door?

Visual Arts:

Old Man's Tomorrow

Ask them how many days were there in the story of Old Man and the River? How many times did the sun rise? Review that there were three days in the story. Give a piece of paper to each child and have them draw a picture of what they imagine might have happened on the fourth day (if there had been one in the story).

Your Favourite Part

Let each child draw their favourite part of the performance. Afterwards let them describe it to you and discuss why it was their favourite part. Please use the provided boarder picture sheet we have included in this package.

Leaf Characters

If you completed tracing a leaf in the preshow activity trace your original leaf a second time and turn it into a character / puppet character with a face and other details.

Draw a Picture of and Act Out the following scenes:

The Old Man is sleeping and the Sun is coming up!

The Sun comes into the Old Man's house!

The Cloud covers the Sun.

The Old Man is sweeping his house.

The Leaves blow into the Old Man's house.

The Trees are laughing so loud!

The Trees drop Leaves on the Old Man.

The Old Man and the River Faerie are up high in the Trees.

The Old Man is fishing, the Dragonfly visits.

The Old Man is fishing and the River is singing.

The River Faerie flies out of the River.

The Old Man is hiding. The River Faerie is searching.

The River Faerie is sad. The Trees are sad.

The Old Man is sad on the bridge.

The River Faerie comes back. He flies and dances through the air.

The River Faerie hugs the Old Man.

The Old Man and the River Faerie say goodbye.

A Centres-Based Approach to Exploring the Play

Exploration of the play can continue in some of the activity centres of your classroom:

Construction

Learning goal: I can build a bridge

Materials:
Building materials such as blocks, popsicle sticks, lego, tape, straws.

* The water table could be incorporated with a challenge to create a bridge across the water

Science and Technology: Overall Expectation 4: use technological problem-solving skills in free exploration, focused exploration, and guided activity

Creative

Learning goal: I can make a puppet

Materials:
Craft materials such as popsicle sticks, wool, construction paper, card stock, googly eyes.

Visual Arts: V3.1 use problem-solving skills and their imagination to create visual art forms

Writing

Learning goal: I can label my picture with the names of characters from the play

Materials:
Colouring materials such as crayons, markers, pencil crayons and paper. List of character names if desired for copying

Language: 4.3 write simple messages using a combination of pictures, symbols, knowledge of the correspondence between letters and sounds and familiar words

Dramatic Play

Learning goal: I can re-tell the story of the Old Man and The River

Materials:
No materials necessary, but could include the following as inspiration a broom, blue fabric, leaves.

Drama and Dance: D3.2 dramatize rhymes, stories, legends, and folk tales from various cultures, including their own
Language: 2.9 retell stories, in proper sequence, that have been read by and with the EL–K team, using pictures in the book and/or props

Listening

Learning goal: I can move my body to match the music / I can move my pencil to match the music.

Materials: Listening station, variety of instrumental music, paper and pencil if desired.

Drama and Dance: D3.1 use problem-solving skills and their imagination to create drama and dance

MORE ABOUT THEATRE DIRECT

Mission

- To commission, develop, produce and present theatre for young people that empowers, educates and inspires.
- To explore challenging ideas and subject matter relevant to young people, honestly, directly, courageously and passionately.
- To reflect and celebrate the cultural diversity of our audience through the stories we tell and the people who tell them.
- To nurture our audience's appreciation of the arts through and each other through accessible community and education programs.

Philosophy

Our work is driven by a belief that young people deserve truth not diversion - that they have a right to meaningful cultural content and experiences. We view our audience as thinking, feeling, complex individuals - not a market and not future audiences, but our present audience of emerging citizens that demands relevant theatre that engages all their faculties, feelings and intellect.

Our Team

Lynda Hill, Artistic and Executive Director

Liza Mattimore, General Manager

Chris Mustard (Young Associates), Financial Services

Emma Zabloski, Education Projects Manager and Associate Artist

Janet Brock, Outreach Coordinator

Meghan Hayward, Early Childhood Education Intern

Deborah Lim, Season Productions Manager

Alison Wong, WeeFestival Producer

Study Guide Contributors: Victoria Stacey, Melissa Haddad, Liza Mattimore,

Stephanie Perry & Naz Afsahi

Highlight Productions

Getting Wrecked
Little Sister
And by the way, Miss...
Binti's Journey
Walking the Tightrope
The Demonstration

A Buncha Young Artists Festival
Toronto at Dreamers Rock
Flesh & Blood
Beneath the Banyan Tree
Sanctuary Song
A Secret Life



Canadian Heritage
Patrimoine canadien



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My Favorite Part of the Play:

A large, empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for a student to write their favorite part of a play. The box is positioned in the center of the page, with a small box on the left side containing the text 'My Favorite Part of the Play:'. The entire page is framed by a blue border.