



STELLA, QUEEN OF THE SNOW

Applause Series Curriculum Guide
November 6, 2014



CIVIC CENTER • STONER THEATER • TEMPLE THEATER • COWLES COMMONS

Stella, Queen of the Snow

Dear Teachers,

Thank you for joining us for the Applause Series presentation of *Stella, Queen of the Snow*. We are thrilled to invite Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia back to present their newest work. Of the many companies that present work for young audiences, Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia is one of our favorites. Their ability to lift the work of classic children's authors and illustrators off the page and onto the stage is nothing short of exquisite. Adapted from the award-winning *STELLA AND SAM* books, this story is sure to capture your students' hearts and imaginations.

We thank you for sharing this very special experience with your students and hope this study guide helps to connect the performance to your in-classroom curriculum in ways that you find valuable. In the following pages, you will find contextual information about the performance and related subjects, as well as a variety of discussion questions and assessment activities. Some pages are appropriate to reproduce for your students; others are designed more specifically with you, the teacher, in mind. As such, we hope that you are able to "pick and choose" material and ideas from the study guide to meet your class's unique needs.



See you at the theater,

Des Moines Performing Arts Education Team

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Alliant Energy, American Republic Insurance Company, Bradford and Sally Austin, Bank of America, Casey's General Stores, EMC Insurance Companies, Greater Des Moines Community Foundation, Hy-Vee, John Deere Des Moines Operations, Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs, Richard and Deborah McConnell, Pioneer Hi-Bred - a DuPont business, Polk County, Prairie Meadows, Principal Financial Group, Sargent Family Foundation, Target, U.S. Bank, Wells Fargo & Co., Willis Auto Campus, Windsor Charitable Foundation and more than 200 individual donors.

GUIDE CONTENTS

About Des Moines Performing Arts
Page 3

Going to the Theater and Theater Etiquette
Page 4

Civic Center Field Trip Information for Teachers
Page 5

Vocabulary
Pages 6

About the Performance
Page 7

About Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia
Page 8

About the Author & Illustrator
Page 9

All About Winter
Page 10

Pre-Show Exploration
Pages 11-12

Post-Show Discussion Questions
Page 13

Assessment Activities
Pages 14-15

Resources and Sources
Page 16

This study guide was compiled, written and edited by Michelle McDonald and Karoline Myers. Adapted in part from Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia's *Stella, Queen of the Snow* Study Guide.

ABOUT DES MOINES PERFORMING ARTS



Des Moines Performing Arts is a private, nonprofit organization and is an important part of central Iowa's cultural community. It is recognized nationally for excellence as a performing arts center and is committed to engaging the Midwest in world-class entertainment, education, and cultural activities.

Des Moines Performing Arts presents professional touring productions, including theater direct from Broadway, world-renowned dance companies, family programming, comedy, and concerts.

Education and Community Engagement programs are core to Des Moines Performing Arts' mission as a nonprofit performing arts center.

Public education programs allow audience members and local artists to make meaningful and personal connections to the art they experience on our stages. Guest lectures and Q&As with company members allow audiences to explore the inner workings of the performance. In addition, master classes, workshops, and summer camps taught by visiting performers give local actors, dancers, and musicians the chance to increase their skills by working directly with those who know what it takes to succeed on the professional stage.

Through its **K-12 School Programs**, Des Moines Performing Arts strives to ensure that central Iowa students have affordable access to high quality arts experiences as part of their education. More than 50,000 students and educators attend curriculum-connected school matinee performances through the Applause Series annually. In addition, Des Moines Performing Arts sends teaching artists into the schools to provide hands-on workshops and residencies in special opportunities that engage students directly in the creative process. And, through its partnership with the John F. Kennedy Center, Des Moines Performing Arts provides teachers with in-depth professional development training on how to use the arts in their classrooms to better impact student learning. The Iowa High School Musical Theater Awards is Des Moines Performing Arts' newest initiative to support the arts in Iowa schools, providing important learning tools and public recognition to celebrate the achievements of students involved in their high school theater programs.

DID YOU KNOW?

More than 350,000 people visit Des Moines Performing Arts venues each year.

Des Moines Performing Arts opened in 1979.

Des Moines Performing Arts has three theater spaces:

- *Civic Center, 2744 seats*
- *Stoner Theater, 200 seats*
- *Temple Theater, 299 seats (located in the Temple for the Performing Arts)*

No seat is more than 155 feet from center stage in the Civic Center.

Cowles Commons, situated just west of the Civic Center, is a community gathering space that is also part of Des Moines Performing Arts. The space features the Crusoe Umbrella sculpture by artist Claes Oldenburg.

As a nonprofit organization, Des Moines Performing Arts depends on donor funding to support facilities, programming, and education programs.

The Applause Series started in 1996. You are joining us for our 19th season of school performances.

GOING TO THE THEATER . . .



YOUR ROLE AS AN AUDIENCE MEMBER

Attending a live performance is a unique and exciting opportunity. Unlike the passive experience of watching a movie, audience members play an important role in every live performance. As they act, sing, dance, or play instruments, the performers on stage are very aware of the audience's mood and level of engagement. Each performance calls for a different response from audience members. Musicians and dancers may desire the audience to focus silently on the stage and applaud only during natural breaks in the performance. Audience members can often take cues from performers on how to respond to the performance appropriately. For example, performers will often pause or bow for applause at a specific time.

As you experience the performance, consider the following questions:

- * What kind of live performance is this (a play, a dance, a concert, etc.)?
- * What is the mood of the performance? Is the subject matter serious or lighthearted?
- * What is the mood of the performers? Are they happy and smiling or somber and reserved?
- * Are the performers encouraging the audience to clap to the music or move to the beat?
- * Are there natural breaks in the performance where applause seems appropriate?

A SPECIAL EXPERIENCE

Seeing a live performance is a very special experience. Although it is not required, many people enjoy dressing up when they attend the theater.

THEATER ETIQUETTE

Here is a checklist of general guidelines to follow when you visit the Civic Center:

- * Leave all food, drinks, and chewing gum at school or on the bus.
- * Cameras, recording devices, and personal listening devices are not permitted in the theater.
- * Turn off and put away all cell phones, pagers, and other electronic devices before the performance begins.
- * Do not text during the performance.
- * Respect the theater. Remember to keep your feet off of the seats and avoid bouncing up and down.
- * When the house lights dim, the performance is about to begin. Please stop talking at this time.
- * **Talk before and after the performance only.** Remember, the theater is designed to amplify sound. Other audience members and the performers on stage can hear your voice!
- * Use the restroom before the performance or wait until the end. If you must leave the theater during the show, make sure the first set of doors closes before you open the second — this will keep unwanted light from spilling into the theater.
- * Appropriate responses such as laughing and applauding are appreciated. Pay attention to the artists on stage — they will let you know what is appropriate.
- * Open your eyes, ears, mind, and heart to the entire experience. Enjoy yourself!

GOING TO THE THEATER information is adapted from the Ordway Center for the Performing Arts study guide materials.

CIVIC CENTER FIELD TRIP INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS



Thank you for choosing the Applause Series with Des Moines Performing Arts. Below are tips for organizing a safe and successful field trip to the Civic Center.

ORGANIZING YOUR FIELD TRIP

- * Please include all students, teachers, and chaperones in your ticket request.
- * After you submit your ticket request, you will receive a confirmation e-mail within five business days. Your **invoice will be attached to the confirmation e-mail.**
- * Payment policies and options are located at the top of the invoice. **Payment (or a purchase order) for your reservation is due four weeks** prior to the date of the performance.
- * The Civic Center reserves the right to cancel unpaid reservations after the payment due date.
- * Tickets are not printed for Applause Series shows. Your invoice will serve as the reservation confirmation for your group order.
- * Schedule buses to arrive in downtown Des Moines at least 30 minutes prior to the start of the performance. This will allow time to park, walk to the Civic Center, and be seated in the theater.
- * Performances are approximately 60 minutes unless otherwise noted on the website and printed materials.
- * All school groups with reservations to the show will receive an e-mail notification when the study guide is posted. Please note that study guides are only printed and mailed upon request.

DIRECTIONS AND PARKING

- * Directions: From I-235, take Exit 8A (Downtown Exits) and the ramp toward 3rd Street and 2nd Avenue. Turn onto 3rd Street and head south.
- * Police officers are stationed at the corner of 3rd and Locust Streets and will direct buses to parking areas with hooded meters near the Civic Center. Groups traveling in personal vehicles are responsible for locating their own parking in ramps or metered (non-hooded) spots downtown.
- * Buses will remain parked for the duration of the show. At the conclusion, bus drivers must be available to move their bus if necessary, even if their students are staying at the Civic Center to eat lunch or take a tour.
- * Buses are not generally permitted to drop off or pick up students near the Civic Center. If a bus must return to school during the performance, prior arrangements must be made with Des Moines Performing Arts Education staff.

ARRIVAL TO THE CIVIC CENTER

- * When arriving at the Civic Center, please have an **adult lead your group** for identification and check-in purposes. A Des Moines Performing Arts staff member may be stationed outside the building to direct you to a specific entrance.
- * Des Moines Performing Arts staff will usher groups into the building as quickly as possible. Once inside, you will be directed to the check-in area.
- * Applause seating is not ticketed. Ushers will escort groups to their seats; various seating factors including group size, grade levels, arrival time, and special needs seating requests may be used to assign a group's specific location in the hall.
- * We request that an **adult lead the group into the theater and other adults position themselves throughout the group**; we request this arrangement for supervision purposes, especially in the event that a group must be seated in multiple rows.
- * Please allow ushers to seat your entire group before rearranging seat locations and taking groups to the restroom.
- * As a reminder, children under the age of three are not permitted in the theater for Applause performances.

IN THE THEATER

- * In case of a medical emergency, please notify the nearest usher. A medical assistant is on duty for all Main Hall performances.
- * We ask that adults handle any disruptive behavior in their groups. If the behavior persists, an usher may request your group to exit the theater.
- * Following the performance groups may exit the theater and proceed to their bus(es).
- * If an item is lost at the Civic Center, please see an usher or contact us after the performance at 515.246.2355.

QUESTIONS?

Please contact the Education department at education@desmoinesperformingarts.org or 515.246.2355
Thank you!

VOCABULARY



Photo by Margo Ellen Gesser.

ART & THEATER TERMS

choreography: the art of planning and arranging movements, steps and patterns. We often think only of dancers, but puppeteers in theater must choreograph their movements as well.



Puppetry, such as in Disney's *The Lion King* is choreographed carefully.
austin.culturemap.com



Puppetry: an art form in which objects, often with human or animal characteristics, are brought to life by puppeteers.

watercolor: technique of painting which uses water instead of oil as the base. Author and illustrator Marie-Louise Gay uses watercolor.



Watercolor illustration of Stella and Sam.
marielouise-gay.wordpress.com

SHOW TERMS

Fog: a cloud that forms when warm air meets cold air. Water vapor in the air cools and tiny droplets of water form.



Image: kymkemp.com



A snow fort.
mclendonblog.blogspot.com

fort: a strong or fortified enclosure or building used for protection.

Goosebumps: a bumpy condition of the skin usually caused by cold, fear, or emotion.



A person's arm with goosebumps on it.
Image: telegraph.co.uk



Image: earthponds.com

pond: a pool of still water, smaller than a lake.

skates: shoes fitted with a metal blade for skating on ice.



Stella and Sam both have a pair of ice skates in the book.
Image: gabbyandlaid.com

Snowbank: a mound of snow from a snow drift, or sometimes snow shoveled from a road or sidewalk.



A snowbank created by drifting snow.
Image: canadasrock.ca



Image: Wikipedia.org

snowflake: one of the small, feathery masses in which snow falls.

Snow pea: a variety of the common pea having green, thin, flat, edible pods that are used in cooking.



health.howstuffworks.com

ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE



Photo by Margo Ellen Gesser.

Mermaid Theatre's newest production, *Stella, Queen of the Snow* brings the magic of winter to life from a child's perspective .

The story is retold on stage using hand-carved and hand-painted puppets and scenes.

Run Time: Approx. 60 minutes

THE STORY

Stella, Queen of the Snow tells the story of Stella and her little brother Sam, as they spend the day playing in the snow. It is Sam's very first snowstorm and he has many questions about the snow. The forest, snowballs, snow angels and the mysterious white stuff itself provide fuel for Sam's questions and Stella's answers as they discover the world of winter together.

Written and illustrated by Marie-Louise Gay, *Stella, Queen of the Snow* was published in 2000 and is part of the Stella and Sam series. It is a winner of the Elizabeth Mrazik-Cleaver Award. Marie-Louise Gay's evocative watercolors bring alive the magic of a winter day.

PUPPETRY

Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia does not typically construct "traditional" puppet styles, such as rod, hand, shadow, marionette, mouth and body puppets, but all of those styles of puppetry have been incorporated into their shows over the years. Instead, the company constructs their puppets to make sure that the puppets first look like the objects in the books. In this production, most of the puppets are hand carved from soft sponge foam using scissors. The puppets have carved wooden joints and handles, and are covered in hand-painted silk or stretchy fabric.

The puppetry style of this show is a loose form of rod puppetry. Metal or wooden rods are inserted into the puppets and held by the puppeteers for control. Puppeteers then lie flat on their backs on rolling "skateboards" to manipulate the puppets. They are masked by the set pieces. A combination of traditional theater lighting, LED lighting and projections are used to create the effect of snow and variation of color and texture.

NARRATION

As with all Mermaid Theatre's adaptations of classic children's picture books, the stories are told through the use of a narrator who recites books' text verbatim. For this show the recorded narration is provided by Marie-Louise Gay, author and illustrator of the book. She recorded both a French-language and English-language version of narration based on the needs of the tour.

MUSIC

Stella, Queen of the Snow features an original musical score composed by Steven Naylor, Mermaid Theatre's Artistic Advisor for Music and Sound Design.

A "NON-SHUSHING" SHOW

Mermaid Theatre productions are "non-shushing" shows. Students are encouraged to clap and laugh when they see something that pleases them. They may also help tell the story along with the narration.

⇒ *Etiquette take-away:* Noises that help tell the story are okay. Side conversations are not.

ABOUT MERMAID THEATRE OF NOVA SCOTIA



Photo by Margo Ellen Gesser.

Now in its forty-second season, Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia ranks among North America's most respected creators of young audience entertainment. Nearly four million young people around the world have delighted in Mermaid's unique adaptations of children's literature.

LITERATURE & THE ARTS

Mermaid Theatre believes that young people benefit greatly from early exposure to literature, the arts, and the power of the imagination. Therefore, Mermaid Theatre's creative ambition is to produce work which is quality theatre—entertaining, informative, and stimulating to all the senses—along with the goal of encouraging literacy and generating enthusiasm for the art of reading. With these core values in mind, the company produces some of the most highly regarded theater for young audiences around the world. Classic children's literature comes to life through striking visual images, evocative original music, innovative puppetry and staging in productions that captivate young people's imaginations.

IN NOVA SCOTIA

Mermaid Theatre is from Nova Scotia, Canada. They provide important educational outreach throughout Nova Scotia, through school visits and their Institute of Puppetry Arts based in Windsor, Nova Scotia.

AMBASSADOR ROLE

Extensive international engagements allow the company to play an important ambassadorial role for the Province of Nova Scotia and for Canada. Mermaid Theatre has represented Canada in Japan, Mexico, Australia, England, Northern Ireland, Holland, Scotland, Wales, Hong Kong, Macau, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan and Vietnam.



Nova Scotia, shown here in red, is located on Canada's southeastern coast. Map courtesy of solarnavigator.net.



Mermaidtheatre.ca

Other popular productions from Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia:

Goodnight Moon & The Runaway Bunny

Guess How Much I Love You & I Love My Little Storybook

Swimmy, Frederick & Inch by Inch

Treasured Stories by Eric Carle

ABOUT THE AUTHOR & ILLUSTRATOR



Marie-Louise Gay is one of Canada's best-loved creators of children's books. Part of the Stella and Sam series, *Stella, Queen of the Snow* was created in 2000 and is a winner of the Elizabeth Mrazik-Cleaver Award.

Read on to learn about the author and illustrator.

CHILDHOOD

Marie-Louise Gay was born in Quebec City, Canada in 1952. She moved ten times before she was 12 years old, and although French was her first language, she learned to speak a new language, English, during her travels. From an early age, she felt that her best and most constant friends would always be books.

As a child, she did not draw much. Then, after she failed art in Grade 3, she gave up on drawing for the next ten years. She tried piano lessons and at nine years old became a child actress, but as a teenager realized that her greatest passion was drawing.

EDUCATION AND EARLY CAREER

Marie-Louise Gay enrolled at the Institut des arts graphiques in Montreal, studying graphic design. She then attended the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts School, majoring in animation. Later on, she studied illustration at the Academy of Art College in San Francisco.

Marie-Louise professionally illustrated magazines, textbooks and posters. She was also the art director for a children's book publisher and taught illustration at the Université du Québec à Montréal. She also designed clothes for children and wrote three plays, creating the set, puppets and costumes.

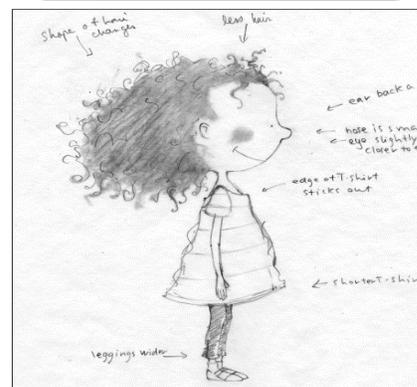
CHILDREN'S BOOKS

Marie-Louise Gay fell in love with children's books and since has written and/or illustrated over 60 books for children. These books are inspired by her childhood, her own children, her travels and especially by her imagination. She writes these stories in French and English, but her books have also been translated into many other languages.

"Stella and Sam" now have an animated television series airing in Canada. In 2013, they were also featured on a commemorative stamp, because of the impact Marie-Louise Gay has had on Canadian children's literature.

Marie-Louise lives in Montreal with her family. She says she still travels a lot — but mainly through her imagination.

"...there is time for a slower rhythm, a time for introspection, a time to lie back and breathe and look at the snowflakes falling . . ."
-Marie-Louise Gay



A detailed sketch of Stella by Marie-Louise Gay.
marielouisegay.com

ALL ABOUT WINTER

Stella and Sam have great fun playing outside in the snow. What kinds of things do you like to do in the winter?

WHAT IS WINTER?

Winter is the coldest of the four seasons of the year, occurring between autumn and spring in the northern latitudes. It begins at the Winter Solstice and ends on the Vernal Equinox. Winter days have the shortest amount of daylight and also the lowest temperatures.

When it is winter in the Southern Hemisphere, it is summer in the Northern Hemisphere. This occurs because the Southern Hemisphere is tilted away from the sun and the Northern Hemisphere faces the sun more directly.

Winter with heavy snow, ice and very cold temperatures does not occur everywhere in the world. Typically, when the Southern Hemisphere has winter, they do not experience snow cover on the ground like our winter. In places like Australia, winter can be quite mild in temperature. Snow cover may only happen on mountains or at higher altitudes.



An Iowa farm in the winter.
deepmuckbigrake.com

WINTER STORMS

The danger of winter weather varies across the country. Winter storms can range from a moderate snow over a few hours to a blizzard with blinding, wind-driven snow that lasts for several days. Many winter storms are accompanied by dangerously low temperatures and sometimes by strong winds, icing, sleet and freezing rain.

Wind chill can cause problems during the winter, too. Wind chill is the combination of wind and temperature and is based on the rate of heat loss from any exposed skin.

WINTER LIFE

Trees and plants stop growing in the winter. Many animals hibernate or take a long nap during the winter. Examples of true hibernators are chipmunks, bats and woodchucks. Reptiles, amphibians and bees are dormant. Bears, raccoons and skunks pack on extra pounds for warmth and take long naps, but do not truly hibernate. Like true hibernators, they lower their body temperatures, heart rate and breathing.

Many other animals, like birds and insects, migrate to other climates during the winter to find food and warmth. Fish may even migrate to warmer or deeper waters.

Some animals must simply adapt in the winter. They may grow a new, thicker coat of fur that is sometimes a different color to hide them in the snow. Animals such as squirrels and mice spend the fall gathering food for winter so that they do not go hungry.

WINTER ACTIVITIES

What types of things do you like to do in the winter? Below are a list of fun things to do outside in the winter.

- Build a snowman
- Go ice skating
- Build a snow fort outside
- Have a snowball fight (be careful!)
- Go sledding
- Make snow angels
- Go on a scavenger hunt

Did Stella and Sam do any of these things when they went outside in *Stella, Queen of the Snow*?



Children sledding in the Winter.
unitychristchurch.org

HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED.....

Why do you see your breath when it's cold?

Check out this website to learn more about why we see our breath during winter days.

[CLICK HERE](#)

PRE-SHOW EXPLORATION



Photo by Margo Ellen Gesser.

1) WRITING WITH DESCRIPTIVE LANGUAGE

Goal: To explore descriptive language and introduce students to the concept of a *simile*.

When: Before seeing the performance

Explanation: In this activity, students will review the creative language that Marie-Louise Gay uses in *Stella, Queen of the Snow*. Students will create a class book that uses descriptive language to paint word pictures of winter.

Activity:

1. Read *Stella, Queen of the Snow* as a class. Point out to the students that Stella uses descriptive language to help Sam imagine what snow is like.
2. In the book, find the simile where Stella says “*Snow is as cold as vanilla ice cream....and soft as baby rabbit fur.*”
3. Have the students imagine they have never seen snow before. Invite the students to explore how the descriptive language paints a picture in their mind for what snow is like.
4. Introduce the term *simile* (comparing two things using ‘like’ or ‘as’).
5. Have the students brainstorm other language to describe the snow, using similes. The students may use “*Snow is as cold as....and as soft as....*”, or they may come up with their own similes about snow or even other aspects of winter.
6. Next, make a class book created by the students. Each student will contribute one page and write a descriptive sentence, using similes. Encourage students to paint a word picture so that someone

who has never experienced snow or winter would be able to understand. Have them illustrate their final draft to create a more polished book. (As an alternative you could simply display the students’ work in the room or hallway instead of putting it into a book).

Follow-Up Discussion Questions:

1. Why do writers use descriptive language?
2. Does good descriptive language make it easy to imagine what the writer is telling us?
3. Good descriptive language appeals to our senses. What are the five senses? (sight, hearing, feel, taste, smell)
4. Can you come up with an example of descriptive language that paints a picture of how something looks? Sounds like? Feels?
5. How would *Stella, Queen of the Snow* be different if Marie-Louise Gay didn’t use descriptive language?

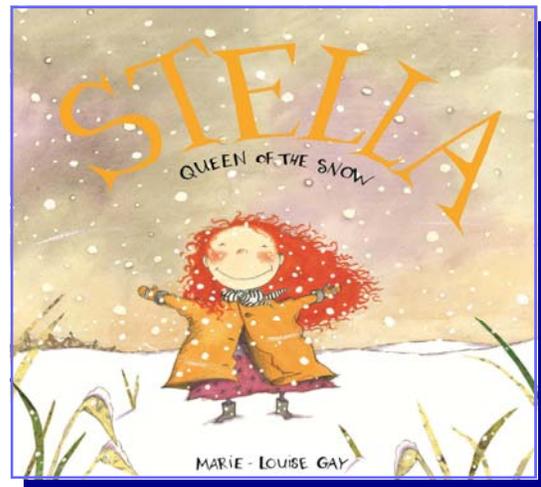


Image provided by: kidsentertainment.net

PRE-SHOW EXPLORATION, pg. 2



2) ANIMALS IN THE WINTER

Explanation: It is wintertime in *Stella, Queen of the Snow*. Students will activate prior knowledge, ask questions, and do basic research to learn how different animals migrate, adapt or hibernate to survive the cold winter.

Activity:

1. Ask the students to think about winter, how the weather gets colder, the days get shorter, and the leaves fall off the trees. Snow covers the ground. People live in warm houses, bundle up in heavy layers of clothes, and go to the grocery store for food, but what do animals do?
2. Read the book *Stella, Queen of the Snow* as a class. Ask students to pay attention to Sam's questions about animals in the winter.
3. After you finish the book and discuss students' observations, create a KWL chart* about animals in the winter. Have students draw on prior knowledge of animal behavior to share what they know about animals in the winter. Fill in what they *know* in the first column of their KWL chart.
4. Organize what they know into categories, such as type of animal, how they get food, and how they stay warm.
5. Next, have students generate questions that they still have about animals in the winter. Record their questions in the second column- what they *want* to know.
6. Use student questions to guide their exploration. Stock your reading corner with books on different North American animals and their winter habits.

*The KWL chart is a graphical organizer, created by Donna Ogle in 1986. The letters are an acronym for "what we know," "what we want to know," and "what we learned."

7. As you study different animals, introduce the terms Migrate, Hibernate, and Adapt .

8. On a wall or bulletin board, put up three headings: MIGRATE, HIBERNATE, ADAPT.

9. Each day, choose a featured animal. Ask students to read about its winter habits. Based on the information, ask students to classify whether it is an animal that migrates, hibernates, or adapts.

Once students have decided, post a picture of the animal under the correct heading. Caption the picture with 2 or 3 sentences about the animal's winter habits.

10. As students gain new knowledge, fill in the final column of the KWL chart with statements about what they've *learned*.

Follow-Up Discussion Questions:

1. Do people migrate, hibernate, or adapt in the winter? What leads you to this conclusion?
2. What do animals and people need to survive the winter? What else do they need?
3. What ways can we help animals that adapt and are still active in the winter?

3) CREATING STELLA

Explanation: In this activity students will watch a video of the puppets and sets being created for *Stella, Queen of the Snow*.



Click above for video.

Follow-Up Questions:

1. What materials or tools did you see them use?
2. What steps did they take to create the show?
3. What types of things did the creators need to think about when designing the show?

POST-SHOW DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



COMPREHENSION:

1. During which season does this story take place?
2. What is the relationship between the characters in the story? What are some of the clues that tell you?
3. Who is older—Stella or Sam? How do you know?
4. Why did Sam have so many questions about the snow? Why was he so curious?
5. What types of things did Stella and Sam do in the snow? Do you have a favorite activity to do in the snow?
6. Does Stella answer all of Sam's questions? Does she tell him the truth each time?
7. Stella has a wonderful imagination. Why types of things can you do with your imagination?
8. Why was Sam always following behind Stella?
9. Sam didn't always participate with Stella while he was outside. Why do you think he didn't participate? What was he doing?
10. What kind of sibling relationship do Stella and Sam have? Do you think they like spending time together?
11. Do you think Stella and Sam will go outside to play in the snow again? How do you know?
12. Do you remember the first time you saw snow? What did you do?

MUSIC:

1. Do you remember any of the music from the show? If so, what did it sound like?

PUPPETRY:

1. Were you able to see the puppeteers at all during the show? Why or why not?
2. What did the puppets look like? What kind of colors were they?
3. How do you think the different puppets were made?
4. If you could ask the puppeteers a question, what would it be?
(You may email student questions to Mermaid Theatre at puppets@mermaidtheatre.ns.ca. They are great at responding!)

THEATER EXPERIENCE:

1. What was your favorite part about our trip to the theater?
2. How was the performance different than the book? How was it the same?
3. Was there anything that surprised you during the performance?
4. What new things did you learn from the puppeteers during the Q&A following the performance?

ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES, pg. 1



1) WRITE A LETTER

Goal: To reflect on the performance experience and to practice writing skills.

When: After the performance.

Explanation: After the show, students will write letters to the Mermaid Theatre performers or to Des Moines Performing Arts donors whose support keeps Applause tickets accessibly priced for school groups.

Activity:

1. After attending the performance, discuss the experience with your students. Use the following discussion questions to guide the conversation:

- What was the show about?
- What parts of the show were most exciting?
- Which character did you enjoy the most? Why?
- What did the characters find? What did they learn?
- What was special about the puppets?

2. Next, invite students to write a letter to the performers or to Des Moines Performing Arts donors.

Letter Starter #1:

Dear *Mermaid Theatre* performers,

My favorite part of the show was...
While watching your show I felt... because ...
I have drawn a picture of the scene when...
If I could be in your show, I would play the part of ... because ...

Letter Starter #2:

Dear Des Moines Performing Arts Donors,

Thank you for helping my class go to the Civic Center to see *Stella, Queen of the Snow*. My favorite part of the show was...

While watching the show I felt... because ...
I have drawn a picture of the scene when...
This experience was special because ...

3. After writing the letter, students can illustrate a scene from the performance.

4. Last, mail the letters to us and we'll make sure they get to the right people.

Des Moines Performing Arts
Attn: Education Department
221 Walnut Street
Des Moines, IA 50309

Follow-Up Discussion Questions:

1. What did you choose to share in your letter? Why?
2. How does receiving a letter make you feel?
3. How do you think the recipient of your letter will feel when he or she receives your letter? Why?
4. Why do you think the performers choose to make being a puppeteer their career?
5. Why do you think people give money to help students like you attend performances presented by Des Moines Performing Arts?

ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES, pg. 2



2) ACTING OUT A STORY

Goal: To use drama and imagination to demonstrate comprehension of a story.

When: After the performance

Explanation: In this activity, students will use drama and their imaginations to re-tell a STELLA & SAM story.

Activity:

1. Read one of the STELLA & SAM books by Marie-Louise Gay aloud to the class.
2. As a class, brainstorm the characters in the story.
3. As a class, determine the plot or sequence of main events.
4. Break up the story into small segments and assign each segment to a group of 3-4 students.
5. Students then create tableau (frozen picture that tells a story) of their assigned moment in the story. Students may represent the characters, objects, or setting of their assigned moment.
6. All groups then show their tableau in front of the class in the order of the story.
7. Once a group is “frozen,” tap students on the shoulder one at a time. When tapped, they should “unfreeze” and briefly describe who they are and what they are doing in the scene.

Follow-up Questions:

1. How would you describe the character or object you played?
2. What happened at the beginning of the story? In the middle? At the end?
3. How did you feel when you were depicting your tableau for the class?

3) RETELL THE STORY WITH PUPPETS

Goal: To demonstrate reading comprehension through puppetry and performance.

Explanation: In this activity, students will re-tell the story of *Stella, Queen of the Snow* using simple puppets.

Preparation: Before you begin this activity, prepare simple puppets to represent each character in the story *Stella, Queen of the Snow*.

To do so, scan or photocopy a picture of Stella and Sam from the book *Stella, Queen of the Snow*. Trim away excess paper. Laminate if you so desire. Glue or tape cut-outs to popsicle sticks or paint sticks for students to hold onto.

Activity:

1. Read *Stella, Queen of the Snow* as a class.
2. Discuss the sequence of events. Which character spoke first in the story? Which character asked questions? How did the second character respond? What happened next?
3. Show students the puppets you have prepared.
4. As a class or in small groups, allow students to perform the story of *Stella, Queen of the Snow* with the puppets. Students may use the puppets to narrate the story in their own words.

Follow-Up Questions:

1. Why was Sam so curious about the snow?
2. What kind of sibling relationship do Stella and Sam have?

RESOURCES AND SOURCES

OTHER BOOKS BY MARIE-LOUISE GAY:

(Not a complete listing)

STELLA & SAM:

- *Stella, Star of the Sea* (1999)
- *Stella, Fairy of the Forest* (2002)
- *Good Morning, Sam* (2003)
- *Good Night, Sam* (2003)
- *Stella, Princess of the Sky* (2004)
- *What Are You Doing, Sam?* (2006)
- *When Stella Was Very, Very, Small* (2009)
- *Read Me A Story, Stella* (2013)

OTHER TITLES:

- *Lizzy's Lion* (1984)
- *The Garden: Little Big Books* (1985)
- *Moonbeam On A Cat's Ear* (1986)
- *Rainy Day Magic* (1987)
- *Angel and the Polar Bear* (1988)
- *Fat Charlie's Circus* (1989)
- *Willy Nilly* (1990)
- *Mademoiselle Moon* (1992)
- *Rabbit Blue* (1993)
- *Midnight Mimi* (1994)
- *The Three Little Pigs (Canadian Fairy Tales Series)* (1994)
- *Rumplestiltskin* (1997)
- *Sur Mon Ile* (1999)
- *Caramba* (2006)
- *Travels With My Family* (2006)
- *On the Road Again!* (2008)
- *Roslyn Rutabaga and the Biggest Hole on Earth!* (2010)
- *Caramba and Henry* (2011)
- *Summer in the City* (2012)

CLASSROOM RESOURCES

Marie-Louise Gay, Meet the Author”:

http://www.teachingbooks.net/author_collection.cgi?id=65&a=1

A mini-documentary of Marie-Louise Gay.

“Meeting Marie-Louise Gay”:

<http://allthelittlelights.com/marie-louise-gay-the-author-behind-the-stella-and-sam-series-is-getting-her-own-stamp/>

Meeting Marie-Louise Gay, the Author of the Stella and Sam Series.

“Mermaid Theatre—Stella, Queen of the Snow Production Video.”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ULAFXt2Xvd8>

Production time-lapse footage from Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia's "Stella, Queen of the Snow" by Marie-Louise Gay.

“Preschool Winter Activities”:

<http://www.preschoolrainbow.org/preschool-winter.htm>

Winter theme activities for teachers of young children.

“Snow activities”:

<http://www.childfun.com/index.php/activity-themes/seasonal/267-snow-activities.html>

Hundreds of pages of ideas, curriculum plans and activities.

“Why Do You See Your Breath When Its Cold?”:

<http://wonderopolis.org/wonder/why-do-you-see-your-breath-when-it%E2%80%99s-cold/>

Information about why we see our breath during cold days.

STUDY GUIDE SOURCES

Animals in Winter.

<http://www.sciencemadesimple.com/animals.html>

Animals that Hibernate.

<http://animals.pawnation.com/list-animals-hibernate-3236.html>

Kids Entertainment, Official Website.

<http://kidsentertainment.net/>

KidsKonnnect: Winter.

<http://www.kidskonnnect.com/403/32-categories/holidaysseasons/133-winter.html>

Marie-Louise Gay: My Life so Far. <http://marielouisegay.com>

Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia, Official Website.

<http://www.mermaidtheatre.ns.ca/repertory/treasures.shtml>

Winter Weather. <http://www.ready.gov/winter-weather>