

P R O V I D E N C E  
**Ballet**  
T H E A T R E

Presents

*Hansel and Gretel*

**Study Guide**

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# ***Hansel and Gretel***

Providence Ballet Theatre's "Hansel and Gretel" is an original, contemporary ballet interpretation of the classic fairy tale. All of the choreography, music and costumes were developed for this performance. Attending this performance provides teachers and students with wonderful opportunities to explore and address many of the ELA common core standards. In order to maximize the educational value of this opportunity, you may consider the following ideas, activities, questions and prompts, which were designed to help you align your ballet experience to the common core reading standards for Literature 3-8:

- Read Hansel and Gretel, a classic German fairy tale collected by the Brothers Grimm.
- Choose from the selection of questions and prompts, which can be easily modified to accommodate student age, levels, abilities and needs.

**We hope you enjoy the performance.**

## Pre viewing questions

- How do you think people perceive you?
- What adjectives do you think people might use to describe your personality?
- The ballet we are going to see involves no spoken words. If I were to take away your ability to speak, how would that change people's perception of you?
- How does the Ballet Performance and the Story differ?
- Why might food or hunger be an important part of this story?
- What makes someone a hero in a fairy tale? Do you think Hansel or Gretel will act heroically?
- How do fairy tales usually show the difference between good and evil? What clues help you tell them apart?

## Observing the Ballet Performance

### Dance

- How do the dancers use different parts of their bodies?
- Notice how and when the dancers change their movements from heavy to light.
- Does the mood of the dancers change between scenes?
- Do you notice any repeating patterns or steps?
- How do the dancers articulate their character? Do you have a favorite?

## **Music**

- How does the music compliment the various characters, or various parts of the story?
- Can the music be used to predict what is about to happen?
- Note changes in the tempo, key, mood and rhythm of the music.
- What instruments do you hear?

## **Visual**

- Notice the details of the set. Does it fill the stage?
- How would you describe the costumes? Are they colorful, drab? Are they what you would expect the characters to wear?
- How does the lighting change throughout the performance? What does it add to the performance?
- Do the performers look like they are working hard or having fun, or both?
- Does the set, costumes, dance steps suggest when and where the story might take place?

## **After viewing questions**

- Create a Venn diagram, comparing and contrasting 2 different versions of Hansel and Gretel i.e. story and live ballet performance. Focus on techniques, music, movement, colors, costumes, and characterizations utilized by each medium.
- How did ballet, a medium without speech, manage to capture and convey the personalities and emotions of the various characters in the story?

- Describe a scene in the ballet where you knew exactly what a character was thinking or feeling. How did that character convey his or her emotions on the stage?
- Describe a part of the story you thought was suspenseful, humorous, sad or silly. How did each medium (dance, music, video and lights) use different strategies to convey the element of suspense, humor, sorrow or silliness?
- Which character in the ballet do you relate to most? Why?
- Select one character from the ballet performance of “Hansel and Gretel”. In what ways were their personalities shaped by events that took place? Was there a pivotal event or moment that shaped their character, or did it happen gradually?