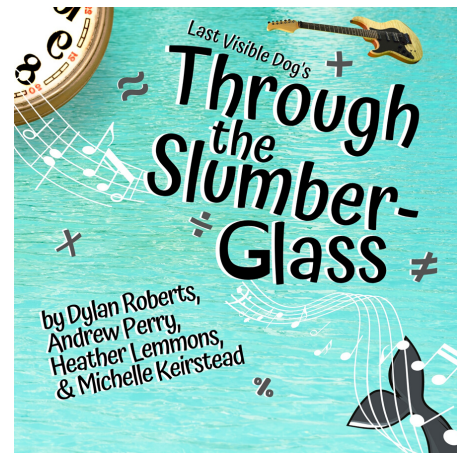


# Pollyanna theatre company

## Distance Learning Activities 2020



### **Activity: Detective work on Scene 1 from Through the Slumber-Glass**

Theatre is a highly collaborative activity. That means that everyone working on a play's production works together to create a unified telling of the story of the play. It takes many people to bring a play to life, but all of the theatrical elements (the dialogue, the characters, the scenery, the lighting, the costumes, the sound and music as well as the director's vision for the story) have to work together to create a clear meaning for the audience.

Use the first 5 minutes of Pollyanna's production of **Through the Slumber-Glass** to find clues that all work together to set the stage for the action of the story that is to come. This activity's complexity can easily be adjusted and adapted to provide similar learning **for children in grades 3 or 5** or for older students, but was designed to complement TEKS English Language Arts and Reading Learning Objectives for **Grade 4:**

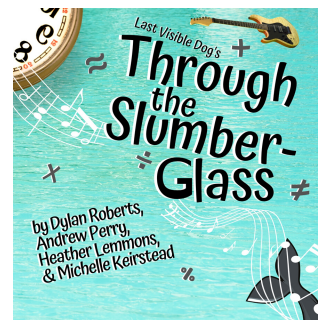
(1) The English language arts and reading Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) embody the interconnected nature of listening, speaking, reading, writing, and thinking through the seven integrated strands of developing and sustaining foundational language skills; comprehension; response; multiple genres; author's purpose and craft; composition; and inquiry and research. The strands focus on academic oracy (proficiency in oral expression and comprehension), authentic reading, and reflective writing to ensure a literate Texas. The strands are integrated and progressive with students continuing to develop knowledge and skills with increased complexity and nuance in order to think critically and adapt to the ever-evolving nature of language and literacy.

(7) Response skills: listening, speaking, reading, writing, and thinking using multiple texts. The student responds to an increasingly challenging variety of sources that are read, heard, or viewed. The student is expected to:

- (A) describe personal connections to a variety of sources, including self-selected texts;
- (B) write responses that demonstrate understanding of texts, including comparing and contrasting ideas across a variety of sources;
- (C) use text evidence to support an appropriate response;
- (D) retell, paraphrase, or summarize texts in ways that maintain meaning and logical order;
- (E) interact with sources in meaningful ways such as notetaking, annotating, freewriting, or illustrating

### **What To Do**

**Step 1:** Explain to your student/child that they are about to become a theatre detective and look for clues. Depending upon the age of the child you are working with, ask them to begin by **READING** the portion of the script on the pages following this 2-page activity. If you have time, you can read the dialogue with the child by voicing the role of Mom while your young learner reads "OPH," the 9-year-old boy who is the main character in the play. Or, begin by just asking the child to watch **CLIP #1** which can be found [here](#). It would be wonderful if the child could do both, **READ THE SCRIPT SEGMENT** and **WATCH CLIP #1**.



**Step 2:** Ask the child to get a pencil and some paper and watch the clip again. Explain that it takes many, many different people to create a theatre performance. And each one works hand in hand with the others to create a unified way to tell the story of the play. Some of these people are the playwright, the set designer, the costume designer, the lighting designer, the director, the sound designer, and the person who writes the original songs and music for the production. All of these people read the play and share their ideas about how best to tell the story of the play on stage. There is a huge amount of give and take and discussion as a play becomes a production on stage. In this way a Theatre Company is much like a family. Everyone may have wonderful ideas, but through give and take and discussion, the group collaborates and agrees upon a good course of action. Tell the child that they are going to now use their best detective skills to find the clues that help answer a question that is very important to how the play will unfold. So they will need to take notes as they watch the scene again. They may need to pause the action and write and then restart the clip. If the child doesn't know how to pause and restart the video, teach that detail now.

**Step 3:** The title of the play, **Through the Slumber-Glass**, tells us something about what time of day this story might be taking place. Ask the child what word (or part of a word) might give us a clue about what time of day? (Slumber = nighttime).

**Step 4:** Ask the child to watch the clip again and make a list of all of the various clues that they see that lets them know, beyond the title of the play, that the story is TAKING PLACE AT NIGHT? You can help them focus their detective work by asking some open questions that direct their investigation such as:

*"What does the Mother say in her dialogue that lets you know it is nighttime?"*

*"What choices did the costumer make that lets us know it is nighttime?"*

*"What are the two family members doing when the play opens and what does the recorded voice say is coming on television? How does that help us know it is nighttime?"*

*"What set pieces and furniture appear during the scene to let us know it is nighttime?"*

Challenge the child to find at least 8 clues.

It may take the child 2 or 3 more passes through the clip to create their written list of clues.

**Step 5:** Review the clues the child found and talk about what they discovered as a theatre detective.

**Step 6:** Based on the clues that they found, ask the child what they think is going to happen in the story next? What prediction do they make about what happens next in the play? Ask them to write their prediction for what happens next in the action in at least two complete sentences. What in the video clip made them think of their answer?

**Step 7:** After they have written those sentences and you have discussed their written answer, watch [CLIP #2](#) which is the opening of the play again, but it *continues* to show what happens after the main character goes to sleep. Finish by telling the child that the next segment of **Through the Slumber-Glass** will be coming soon!

**Activity Extension:** Now that they have seen the first full 12 minutes of the play on video, ask the children to reflect upon what happens in their house at bedtime. How do they sometimes respond when their parents or caregivers ask them to get ready for bed? How much is their response like the main character's response that they just watched? What bedtime rituals do they practice (brushing teeth, reading a favorite story, saying a bedtime prayer, etc.?) Ask the child to write a list of all of the parts of their nightly ritual. Share with the child what your bedtime ritual might have been like when you were their age.

*(OPH, dressed in pajamas, lies on the floor of the living room which is decorated with various paintings [dancers, fish] and a small statue, playing a handheld video game in front of the television. MOM sits on the couch scrolling on her phone with one hand and a glass of red wine in the other. From the television, the sounds of commercials can be heard.)*

**TELEVISION (V/O)**

“... even the toughest of stains. Is your phone too small for your fingers? Do you suffer from achy knees ...”

**OPH**

Mom, how do the people get in the television?

**MOM** *(focused on her phone)*

It's a broadcast, honey.

**OPH**

What's a broadcast?

**MOM**

It's like radio waves, honey.

**OPH**

Oh, ok ...

*(OPH gets lost in the Handheld Video Game which intensifies as signified by the music and a moment passes.)*

Mom?

**MOM**

Yes, dear?

**OPH**

How do radios wave? Is it like the ocean? Are the radio waves salty, too? And why IS there so much salt in the ocean?

**MOM** (*distracted*)

What is it, dear ...

*(The News Theme comes from the television, bringing MOM out of her haze of electronic distraction.)*

**TELEVISION** (*V/O*)

Tonight on your Local News 7, it's that time of year again! The pumpkin spice craze is back ...

**MOM** (*without looking up*)

Alright, honey. Time to get ready for bed. Brush your teeth and I'll be there in a minute to tuck you in.

**OPH**

But Mooom, I'm not tired.

**MOM**

No "buts" dear. You've got a math quiz tomorrow and you need your rest. Now hop to it, honey-bunny. Teeth. Bed. Now.

*(OPH somewhat begrudgingly gets up and begins to walk to the bedroom still playing the Video Game.)*

**MOM** (*still without looking up*)

Turn off that game and don't forget your teeth!

**OPH**

Awwwww, but why do I have to brush my teeth?

**MOM**

You ask me this every night and every night I tell you the same thing. You don't have to brush them all, dear. Just the ones you want to keep.

**OPH** *(to self)*

But ... I want to keep them all, don't I?

**MOM** *(exiting)*

Not that little loose baby-tooth! That one's about ready to go. Quick, what's twelve minus seven?

*(OPH turns off the game and stomp-walks to the bathroom [offstage] while MOM exits the other direction. A shaker sound signals the brushing of teeth. Elements of the Theme Song begin as the living room shifts to the bedroom. OPH's bedroom contains a bed, nightstand, alarm clock, nightlight, fishtank, and an open closet door with a hanging full-length mirror. It should also have some version or assortment of an oversized toothbrush, oversized tooth-shaped chair, stuffed animals, dragon and 8-bit style posters, and a large toy castle in keeping with a child's preferred accoutrements. During the math-equations transition, a stagehand/CREW who's been moving the set pieces stops to admire their work, then notices they're being watched by the audience and nervously runs away.)*

**OPH** *(still brushing offstage)*

Mmmm ... five?

**MOM** *(offstage)*

Right! How about fourteen plus fifteen.

**OPH** *(offstage)*

Ummmm ... twenty ... twenty eight? No! Twenty nine!

**MOM** *(offstage)*

Good job! And now ... nine times two.

**OPH** (*offstage*)

Ugh. I hate nines.

*(MOM enters OPH's bedroom with a glass of water, sets it on the nightstand, then sits on the bed)*

**MOM**

Well?

**OPH**

I'm thinking! Uhhh... oh! Eighteen!

**MOM**

You got it! Good Job.

*(OPH having finished in the bathroom enters through the Bedroom Door, feeds the fish, and heads to the bed where MOM sits waiting.)*

**MOM**

Alright honey, get some rest so your brain will be at its best for your quiz tomorrow.

**OPH**

Mom, why is math so hard?

**MOM** (*tucking OPH in*)

Oh, don't look at it like that, honey. It's not magic. Just think of it like one of your video games. You have to learn the special moves and the steps to get good at it, right? Math has steps too, and once you learn them you'll always know them and you'll be good at it forever.

**OPH**

If you say so. It sure seems like magic sometimes.

**MOM**

Well, there are no magic potions for life, darling. Sometimes you have to do a little hard work now to make things easier later. So get some sleep and I'll see you in the morning. I love you.

**OPH**

Love you too, Mom. Did you check under the bed?

**MOM**

Yes, dear.

**OPH**

And the closet, too?

**MOM**

Yes dear, and as I've told you a thousand times, there are no such things as monsters.

**OPH**

Not even Dragons?

**MOM**

Well, maybe dragons.

**OPH**

WHAT?!?!

**MOM**

I'm kidding! I'm kidding! No dragons! I promise.

**OPH**

Geez Mom. Are you trying to give me nightmares?

**MOM** (*endearingly condescending*)

Oh really? Is our plucky hero afraid of dragons?

**OPH** (*responding unconvincingly quickly*)

No ... I mean, of course not.

**MOM**

Uh huh, I didn't think so. Okay, don't forget your glasses now. G'night, honey bunny.

*(as an afterthought)*

Do you want your nightlight on?

**OPH**

No mom, you know I'm too old for that now. G'night!

*(MOM whistles/hums Theme Song as she turns off the overhead light and closes the door. After a brief moment, OPH sits up, drinks about half of the glass of water and then reaches over to the nightstand to switch on the Nightlight [perhaps one that projects shadow figures on the walls].)*

Maybe just in case.