



SHOW TIME for Teachers

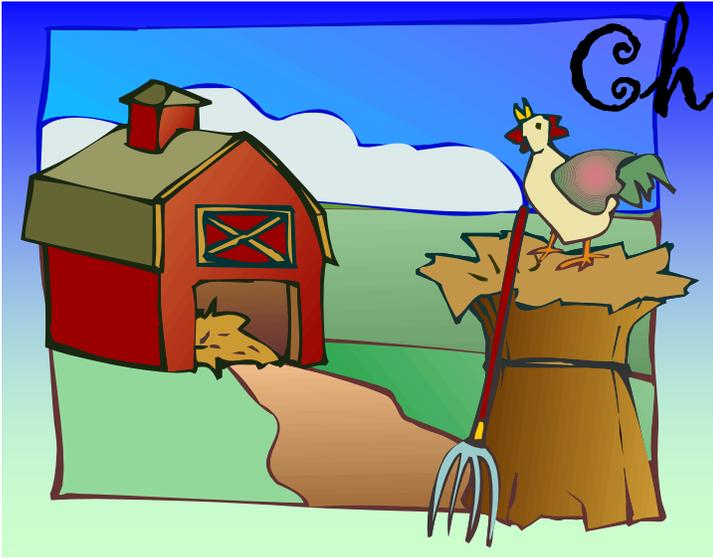
Welcome to Show Time,
a performing arts resource guide published by CSB/SJU Fine Arts Programming. This issue of Show Time is designed to be used before or after a performance of *Charlotte's Web*.

Suggested activities in this issue include background information and ideas for integrating the performance with several subject areas. The activities may be adapted to meet your classroom time and needs. Please feel free to copy pages in this guide as needed for student use.

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Charlotte's Web



“There can be no mistake about it. A miracle has happened and a sign has occurred here on earth, right on our farm, and we have no ordinary pig.”

The story opens on a farm with the birth of a litter of pigs. The farmer, Mr. Arable, is about to destroy the tiniest one, or the “runt,” but is stopped by the pleading of his young daughter, Fern. She takes over the bottle-feeding and special care required for such a little pig—whom she names “Wilbur”—and the pig flourishes. Now that Wilbur is growing, Mr. Arable must sell him—but, again at Fern’s urging, the pig is sold to her Uncle Homer Zuckerman. Since the Zuckerman’s farm is just down the road, Fern can still visit him often.

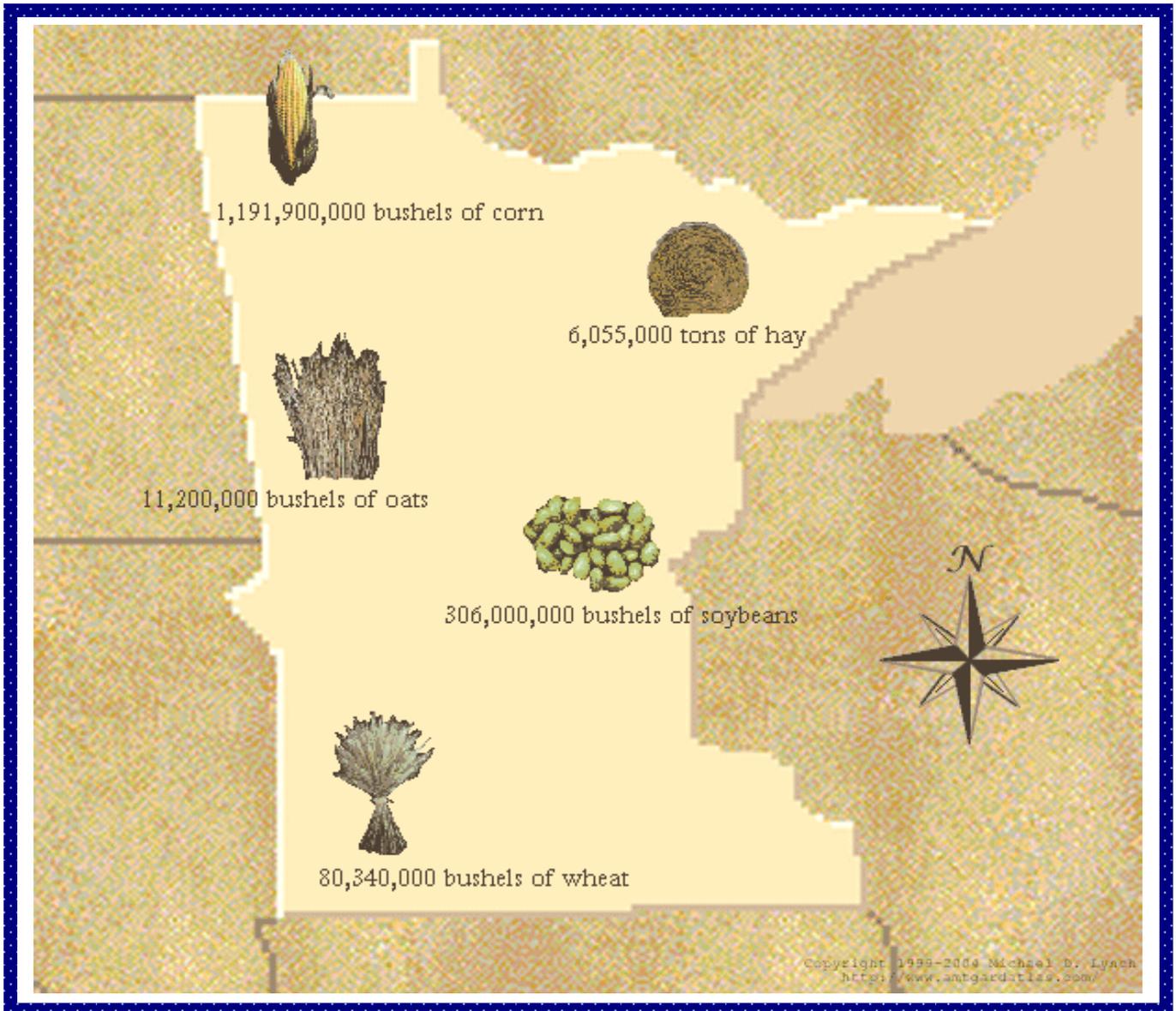
On the Zuckerman’s farm, Wilbur meets many new animals—Goose and Gander, Sheep, and Templeton the Rat—but without Fern around as much, he admits to feeling lonely. One night, a voice answers his wishes, and promises to be his friend. The next morning, he finds out that the voice belongs to a beautiful grey spider named Charlotte. Although Wilbur is nervous about trusting this new acquaintance (she captures bugs in her web, so he thinks she’s “brutal”), he soon learns that Charlotte is his loyal and true friend when she devises a plan to save him from his inevitable trip to the slaughterhouse. Through her talent at weaving words into her web, and her sacrificing most of her energy to do so, she convinces “the people” that Wilbur is “some pig,” and he is insured a long life in the barnyard.



CHARLOTTE'S WEB
(L to R): TOP: Donna Michelle; FRONT: Robert Chew, Rhett Ransom Pennell
photo by Jean-Marie Guyaux

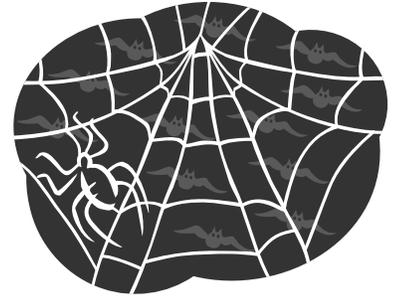
Minnesota Farm Facts

According to the Minnesota Agricultural Statistics Service, in 2006 Minnesota Farmers Produced:

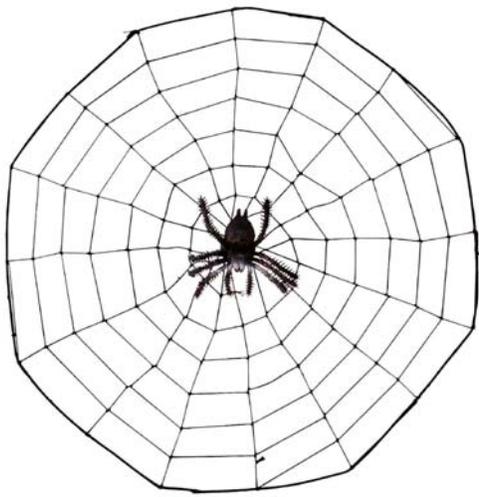


** 1 bushel equals 35 liters, which is equivalent to 17½ Two-Liter Bottles of Soda**

Discussion Topics to Use After Seeing Charlotte's Web



- ✿ How does Fern convince her father not to kill the smallest pig—the “runt” of the litter? What does she do to help raise the little pig?
- ✿ When Wilbur moves to the Zuckerman farm, he meets many animals, but is still lonely until he meets Charlotte. What is different about Charlotte that makes her become Wilbur’s friend?
- ✿ When Wilbur meets Charlotte, he wonders if he will ever learn to like someone who is so “brutal” and “bloodthirsty,” yet Charlotte soon becomes his best friend. Have you ever changed your opinion about someone after you got to know them better? Are first impressions always reliable?
- ✿ In the play, we see both Charlotte and Templeton the Rat do things for Wilbur which help to save his life. Do they both help him for the same reasons? How is Templeton convinced to help? Why does Charlotte make sacrifices for Wilbur? What does Wilbur do to return the favors?
- ✿ Ask students if they can remember which words Charlotte wove into her web (SOME PIG, TERRIFIC, RADIANT, HUMBLE). How did the appearance of these words save Wilbur’s life? What other words can they think of that Charlotte might have used?



Fun Facts about Spiders!

Did you know...?

Did you know that spiders have been around for at least 300 million years? This is according to a spider fossil that was found near Aberdeen, Scotland. The oldest human remains are only 300 to 450 thousand years old.

Did you know that spiders of certain families can fly through the air by their own silk? This is called ballooning. Spiders do this by standing with their abdomens raised and squirting out threads into rising air currents. Some have been found to float as high as 14,000 feet!

Did you know that spiders of certain families can breathe under water? An air bubble forms around their body hair when they dive under water. Some can stay down below the water's surface for as long as ten hours!

Did you know that spiders grow by molting or shedding their skin? This skin is not soft like ours, but is made from a hard material called cuticle. The cuticle also acts as an outside skeleton which does not grow with the spider. When the spider gets too big, it hangs upside down by a thread and waits for the cuticle to crack (thus beginning the molting process). Spiders will molt three to twelve times during their lives.

Did you know that spiders can lay hundreds of eggs at once? To protect these eggs, the spider spins a silk cocoon around them. When they are ready to come out, the baby spiders tear a hole in the silk and push themselves out as hard as they can.

Did you know that spiders have taste glands in their gullets (throat or esophagus) and in their legs? This "taste-by-touching" protects the spider from eating bad tasting food and protects the bad tasting bugs from being hurt by the spider.



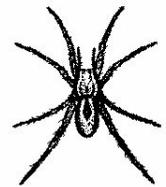
Barn Spider



Tarantula



Fishing Spider



Wolf Spider



Funnel Web Spider



Black Widow



Jumping Spider

14,000 feet is a little over 8 Sears Towers stacked on top of each other! (Including the antennas)

What kind of Spider is Charlotte?

Charlotte is commonly known as a Barn Spider or *Araneus Cavaticus*, from the Orb-Weaver family and the *Araneus* genus. Orb-Weavers (*Araneidae*) form a family of some 2,500 species found in all parts of the world.

Orb-Weavers typically have poor vision. They locate prey by feeling vibrations and tension in the threads of their web. They quickly capture their prey with the first three pairs of their legs, while their fourth pair pulls out silk to wrap around their victim. The prey is bitten before being carried to the center of the web or to the spider's retreat off in a corner, where it is eaten.

In the fall, many species of female Orb-Weavers produce egg sacs containing several hundred eggs, and then they die. In some species, the eggs hatch soon; in others, not until the following spring. The large number of eggs produced suggests that these spiderlings will face a great number of hazards in their short life-time.

Araneus is the largest genus of spiders, with over 1,500 species found in most parts of the world.

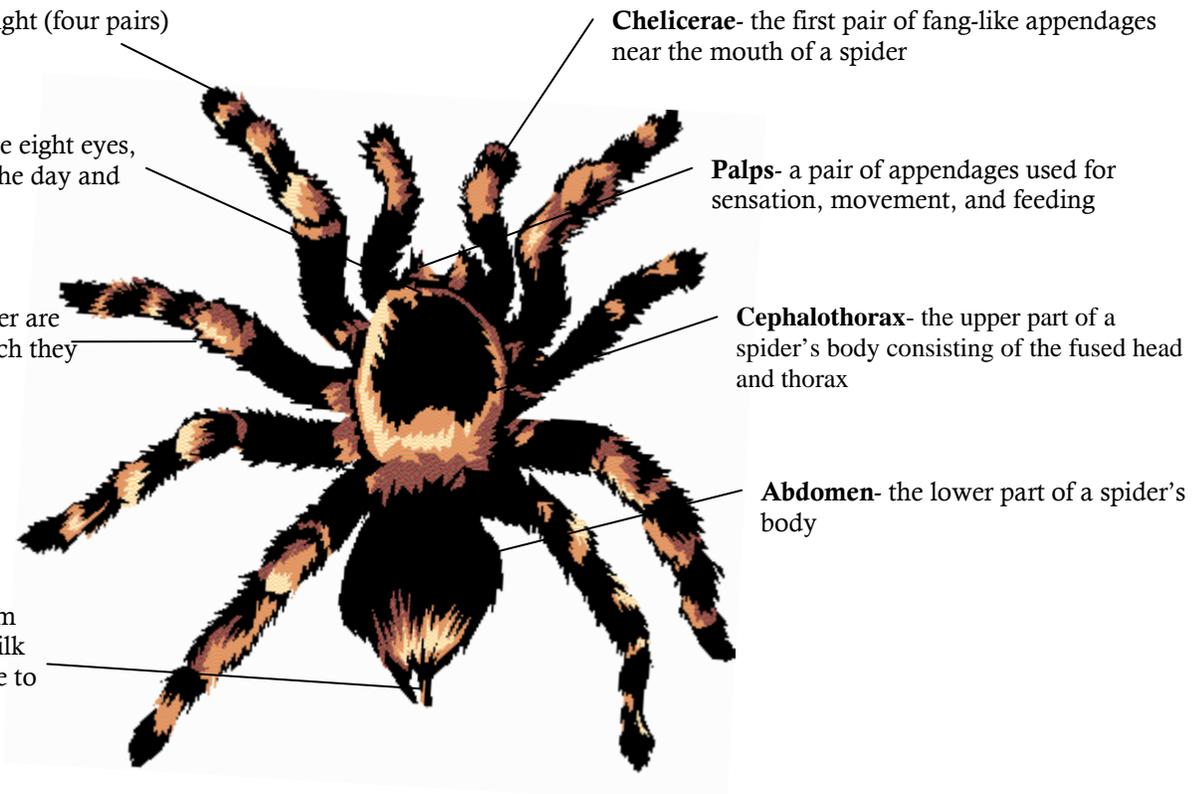
Learn about a Spider's Body...

Legs- spiders have eight (four pairs) of jointed legs

Eyes- most spiders have eight eyes, some they use during the day and others only at night

Hair- the legs of a spider are covered with hair, which they use for sensation

Spinnerets- organs from which spiders secrete silk threads, which they use to make webs



Lesson Plans

Curriculum Ties: Language Arts

Activity Title: Adjective Poetry

Suggested Grade Levels: 2nd-5th

Materials: Sample Poems

Objective: Students will be able to create their own poems using adjectives and activities that describe themselves.

Process:

- ✦ Ask students to recall the words that Charlotte spun in her web to describe Wilbur (SOME PIG, TERRIFIC, RADIANT, HUMBLE). Discuss how these words helped to save Wilbur's life.
- ✦ Discuss students' previous knowledge of poetry. Introduce basic elements of poetry, possibly including different poetical elements.
- ✦ Give students several sample poems, which they can use to model their own after.

Scott
write, runs
cool, strong, smart
fun, creative
Scott

Jessie
dances, draws
pretty, smart, fast
nice, talented
Jessie

- ✦ Brainstorm for words that students may want to use in their poems.
- ✦ Have students write a poem about themselves.
- ✦ Have each student share their poem with the class. Poems can also be posted on a classroom bulletin board.

Optional: Like Charlotte, students may want to write about one of their friends. This lesson can also be done in pairs with students writing about each other.

Curriculum Ties: Science

Activity Title: Anatomy of a Spider

Suggested Grade Levels: 2nd-5th

Materials: Spider, Magnifying Glass, Spider Anatomy Diagrams

Objective: Students will be able to identify the basic parts of a spider's body.

Process:

- ✦ Have students use a magnifying glass to observe either a spider kept in the class room or a spider they might find near their school or home.
- ✦ Have students make a list of what they learned about the spider from observing it (eight legs, eats bugs, spins webs, etc.)
- ✦ Ask students if they know how a spider creates a web. Discuss the function of a spider's spinnerets.
- ✦ Hand out visual diagrams of a spider's body with anatomical labels.
- ✦ Discuss the anatomy of a spider.
- ✦ Discuss the role of spiders within both a food chain and an ecosystem.

Curriculum Ties: Mathematics, Art

Activity Title: County Fair Mathematics

Suggested Grade Levels: 3rd-5th

Materials: Poster Board, Colored Markers, Magazines, Scissors, Glue, Paints

Objective: Students will be able to utilize their buying and selling math skills to “purchase” items commonly found at a county fair.

Process:

- ✦ Ask students if they have ever been to a county fair or state fair. What was it like? What did they see? Did they or their parents purchase anything while they were there? Was it similar or different to the county fair represented in *Charlotte’s Web*? How?
 - ✦ Brainstorm for items or activities that the students think might be for sale at a county fair (food, carnival rides, games, balloons, toys, etc.).
 - ✦ Arrange students in groups of two or three. Have each group choose a county fair item to sell.
 - ✦ Have each group make a sign advertising their item. They need to decide how much their item will cost and include it on their advertisement. Their signs could be drawn, painted, or made of magazine cutouts.
 - ✦ Hang students’ signs around the classroom.
 - ✦ Inform each student that they have a set amount of money to spend at the county fair. They must choose what items they want to spend their money on, without spending more money than they have. Have students prepare a list of what items they would buy and the total amount they would spend.
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Curriculum Ties: Art

Activity Title: Paper-Mache Charlotte

Suggested Grade Levels: K-5th

Materials: Balloons, Newspaper, Flour, Paint, Brushes, Pipe Cleaners, Tape

Objective: Students will be able to create their own paper-mache spider.

Process:

- ✦ Give each student an inflated balloon. Also distribute approximately twenty one-inch strips of newspaper to each student.
- ✦ Mix the flour and water together until a smooth paste is achieved. It should not be too thick or too drippy.
- ✦ Provide a bowl of flour/water paste for every two students.
- ✦ Have students dip strips of newspaper in paste and warp around their balloon. After two layers, students should stop and let them dry overnight.
- ✦ When dry, have students tape on pipe cleaners and bend them to look like spider legs. Then wrap another layer of paper-mache around the balloon and let dry overnight.
- ✦ When dry, pop and remove balloon.
- ✦ Have each student paint their Charlotte.

Optional: Students might want to create a class spider web to display their Charlotte’s!

Bibliography and Recommended Further Reading

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Minnesota Farm Facts.

[http://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics by State/Minnesota/Publications](http://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/Minnesota/Publications)

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Theater Etiquette

Each year, thousands of teachers, students, bus drivers, and parents take part in CSB/SJU's Fine Arts Education Series. Please review the **LOOKING and LISTENING** information below with your students to help make your theater experience the best it can be.

LOOKING and LISTENING

Attending a live performance of *Charlotte's Web* will be interesting and enjoyable for everyone if you remember to...

- ~watch for facial expressions to help you understand what the actors are feeling.
- ~listen in order to understand the communication between the actors

The performers in *Charlotte's Web* need help from you, the audience. You are an important part of the play. Being an audience member in a theater is different from watching a movie or television show. The performers are in the same room with you and are affected by what you do. To do their best, the performers need you to watch and listen closely. Audience members also depend on your quiet attention during the performance so that they can enjoy their theater experience as well.

Please review the **PROCEDURES** information below to help your theater visit go smoothly.

PROCEDURES

- ~Please bring a minimum of one adult chaperone for every fifteen students.
- ~Please remind chaperones that the theater etiquette they model speaks volumes to your students.
- ~Prepare your students to enter the theater in single file in order of seating.
- ~Position your chaperones to maximize adult supervision of your group.
- ~Please wait until your whole group is seated before making trips to the rest room. Then students may go in small groups with the teacher's permission. Younger students making trips to the rest room will need to be chaperoned.
- ~The theater is a food, gum, drink, radio, camera, tape, and video recorder free zone!
- ~Please leave inappropriate behaviors behind when visiting the theater.
- ~Please remain seated following the performance. Your group will be dismissed from the theater by a Fine Arts Programming staff member.

Enjoy *Charlotte's Web*!

This study guide was adapted from materials provided by **Theatreworks/USA** and designed by Alison Guessou, CSB '08.