

The Velveteen Rabbit

A Play-Along Audio Play Curriculum Guide

Introduction

5 Lessons + 1 optional extension lesson

Approximately 45 minutes (or allotted class period) per lesson

Appropriate for grades K - 5

Goals

- ◇ Students will learn about audio drama, theatre, puppets, and elements of performance
- ◇ Students will build their own puppet and puppet theatre
- ◇ Students will distinguish between different musical cues
- ◇ Students will make choices about acting out their puppet during rehearsal
- ◇ Students will collaborate to rehearse and perform the final puppet show

Educational Outcomes

- ◇ Students will utilize listening skills to analyze the text and music of The Velveteen Rabbit
- ◇ Students will practice hands-on creativity in making puppets and a puppet theatre
- ◇ Students will be empowered to make clear choices about their puppet and performance
- ◇ Students will practice communication and collaboration through the rehearsal of The Velveteen Rabbit
- ◇ Students will practice empathetic skills and hone presentation abilities through the performance of The Velveteen Rabbit

Lessons

Lesson 1: The Velveteen Rabbit: First Listen & Introduction

- ◇ Track 1: Listening Track & Track 2: Audio Plays & Your Imagination
- ◇ Booklet pages: 1-2

Lesson 2: Gathering Materials & Making Puppets

- ◇ Track 3: Making Your Puppets
- ◇ Booklet pages: 2-15

Lesson 2.5 (Optional Additional Lesson Grades 3-5): Making puppets with a real Puppet Artist!*

- ◇ Puppet Building Video Link: https://youtu.be/3cHV7o_fJH4
- ◇ Puppet Demo Video Link: <https://youtu.be/8eKgrCqSeYY>

Lesson 3: Rehearsal Part 1: Exploration

- ◇ Track 4: Setting the Stage & Track 5: Exploring with Puppets
- ◇ Booklet pages: 16-24

Lesson 4: Rehearsal Part 2: Practice

- ◇ Track 6: Rehearsal Track**
- ◇ Booklet pages: 24

Lesson 5: Performance

- ◇ Track 7: Performance Track
- ◇ Booklet pages: 25-26

*Jesse Mooney-Bullock, a professional puppet artist of Moon Bull Studio leads students in a workshop to build a Real Rabbit puppet out of everyday found objects in the "Build Video". He then goes on to lead a short workshop on puppeteering in the "Demo Video". In the Interview video we learn about Jesse and his experience as a professional puppeteer! These awesome videos are great for older students, grades 3-5, and may be used as an additional lesson or integrated into the other lessons as the instructor wishes.

** Rehearsal Tracks are also provided split into separate tracks by scene as an option in case groups will be rehearsing simultaneously. Alternatively the class can act as audience and rehearse groups one at a time along with the full Track 6 Rehearsal Track.

A note on casting and grouping students:

Depending on class size, double casting (ie. a student playing both "Little" and "Fairy" is encouraged). Similarly students can choose the same character (ie. there can be two "Velveteen Rabbits"). Recommended group cast size is 4-7. Doubling ideas are below.

Additional content: Meet the artists!

Visit the Walterhoope website (walterhoope.com) for additional content that includes a short video introducing Walterhoope, the composers, and the actors from The Velveteen Rabbit! This is a great way for students to get inspired and see the diversity and personality of the creators behind the project!

Lesson 1: The Velveteen Rabbit: First Listen & Introduction

Goal

Students will learn about audio drama, theatre, puppets, and elements of performance

Outcome

Students will utilize listening skills to analyze the text and music of The Velveteen Rabbit

Materials Needed

- ◇ Track 1: Listening Track
- ◇ Track 2: Audio Plays & Your Imagination
- ◇ Booklet Pages: 2
- ◇ Optional: Crayons or drawing materials and blank paper

Key Concepts

- ◇ Active Listening
- ◇ Adaptation
- ◇ Puppet Theatre

Key Vocabulary:

- ◇ Audio Play: A dramatic story told only through sound and voices
- ◇ Imagination: Our ability to create images, stories, and realities in our mind

Lesson Plan

Introduce the story of The Velveteen Rabbit by Margery Williams.

Let students know that this was originally a short story (perhaps show the book) that they will get to experience this week in a whole new way! Introduce the concept of “adapting”. Check out the synopsis below to learn more about differences between the original story and the audio play.

Ask students to listen actively to what they are about to hear. Discuss how to listen actively. Encourage students to close their eyes or draw what they hear as they listen to help them listen.

Listen to Track 1 with the class.

Pause briefly before continuing to Track 2. Let students know that on the next track they will hear from Walterhoope, the creators of this audio play, and learn about what comes next.

Listen to Track 2 with the class. Follow the instructions on the track to engage in discussion and feel free to pause if needed.

Reflect. Encourage the class to share their listening experience. Utilize discussion questions below. You may also **review** key concepts and vocabulary here.

Review how the class will be making puppets and a puppet theatre, rehearsing, and finally performing their very own puppet show along with the audio play of *The Velveteen Rabbit*.

Discussion Questions

- Was it easy to listen without seeing anything? Why or why not?
- How did you feel listening to the audio play?
- What parts of the story were most exciting?
- Which characters could you see most clearly?
- What do they think this story is about?
- What do you think it means in the story to become “real”?
- Why do you think becoming real was so important to the Velveteen Rabbit?
- Do you have or did you ever have a toy that felt real to you? Why?
- How do you think the Child felt about the Velveteen Rabbit?
- Why does the Child give the Velveteen Rabbit to Little?
- Who do you think the rabbit at the end of the story was?
- Why do you think your imagination is important?

The Velveteen Rabbit (original short story) Synopsis

The Velveteen Rabbit is a short story by Margery Williams about a stuffed rabbit who is given to a little boy for Christmas. For a while, the boy doesn't play with the rabbit and it sits unnoticed on a shelf while the boy plays with other mechanical toys that can move about. During this time the Rabbit meets the Skin Horse who tells him that some toys become real through the special love of the children that play with them. The Rabbit hopes this will happen to him some day. One night when the boy can't find his favorite toy to sleep with, his Nanny gives him the Velveteen Rabbit instead. From this time on the boy loves the Rabbit and plays with him all of time, finally regarding him as real. As the rabbit becomes more and more worn and dingy, one day he meets some actual real rabbits that can hop about and tell him that he is not real. One day the boy comes down with Scarlet Fever and the Rabbit stays with him until he recovers. When he gets well, the doctor orders him to go to the seaside and that all his toys be burnt. The rabbit is tossed out in a sack with the other toys and is very sad. When he begins to cry, a magical fairy grows out of a flower from his tear and comforts him. The fairy takes him to a field with many other wild rabbits and gives him a kiss that turns him into a real rabbit. The next spring, the Rabbit returns to look at the boy, who seems to see a similarity to his old Velveteen Rabbit.

What's different in Walterhoopé's audio play adaptation?

Walterhoopé's adaptation is designed to be much more inclusive than the original story and relatable to an audience of 21st century children. All of the human characters can be imagined as any race or gender. The original story is clearly about a wealthy boy, while in Walterhoopé's adaptation, the child could be from any economic background. Walterhoopé's adaptation reimagines the mechanical toys as digital toys to relate to 21st century children. In Walterhoopé's adaptation, the Child has a little sibling called Little who becomes ill (as opposed to the Child). This provides the Child with agency as they decide that Little needs the Velveteen Rabbit more than they do. Thus the Child is able to make the choice to surrender the Velveteen Rabbit as opposed to having it forcibly taken away. Finally, Walterhoopé's adaptation is of course an audio play with music and sound effects,

designed for children to listen and play along with puppets!

The illustrations by Nytaya Babbit that are provided as a basis for the paper puppets are also designed to reflect inclusivity and children should feel free to design, decorate, and embody them however they like!

Lesson 2: Gathering Materials & Making Puppets

Goal

Students will build their own puppet(s) and puppet theatre

Outcome

Students will practice hands-on creativity in making puppets and a puppet theatre

Materials Needed

- ◇ Track 3: Making Your Puppets
- ◇ Booklet pages: 2-15
- ◇ Scissors
- ◇ Crayons, markers, or other coloring materials (to decorate puppets and puppet theatre)
- ◇ Scrap cardboard (for the middle of the puppets)
- ◇ Glue or tape (or staples)
- ◇ Popsicle sticks (or alternative)
- ◇ Cardboard box or Poster Board (for later)

Key Concepts

- ◇ Making creative choices
- ◇ Hands on making abilities
- ◇ Using found materials

Key Vocabulary

- ◇ Puppet Theatre: A miniature theater where the puppets perform
- ◇ Design: The visual and other artistic aspects of a play or performance
- ◇ Rehearsal: "Practice" performances where performers explore and make choices for the actual performance
- ◇ Perform: To act out a story
- ◇ Materials: The physical "stuff" we need to accomplish a task
- ◇ Scene: One part of a theatrical story. Often indicated by what characters are on stage

Lesson Plan

Review (briefly) the story of *The Velveteen Rabbit* and remind students that they will be making puppets, a puppet theatre, and rehearsing and performing a play along audio play!

Review all characters in the booklet (pages 5-11)

Divide students into puppeteering groups. Each group will be responsible for rehearsing and performing one or more of the "scenes" of *The Velveteen Rabbit*. See "Scene Breakdown" on page 15 of this guide. *It is recommended for the Instructor to decide upon puppeteering groups and scene assignments prior to this lesson.* Group size is at the discretion of the Instructor and may vary based on scene and class size (remember students making and puppeteering more than one character is OK). Instructors may choose to assign characters or allow students to choose their own.

Listen to Track 3 with the class. Students should follow along and participate with track instructions with their groups. Pause track at the end of “scavenger hunt music” if students need more time to find materials.

Review all the materials that students should have in order to build their puppets.

Assist students with designing, cutting out, and assembling their puppets. Students and Instructors should follow the detailed instructions in the booklet on pages 12-15 of the booklet.

Reflect. Encourage the class to share their making experience. You may also **review** key concepts and vocabulary here.

IF EXTRA TIME: Students may **decorate puppet theatre** box or poster board

Lesson 2.5: (Optional Extension Grades 3-5): Making puppets with a real Puppet Artist!

Goal

Students will use found objects to create a moveable puppet

Outcome

Students will practice listening and observing to use hands on tactical skills in the creation of a moveable puppet

Materials Needed

- ◇ Build Video: https://youtu.be/3cHV7o_fJH4
- ◇ Demonstration Video: <https://youtu.be/8eKgrCqSeYY>
- ◇ Interview with a Puppet Artist
- ◇ Cardboard egg cartons
- ◇ Empty toilet paper rolls
- ◇ Socks
- ◇ Clothes Pins (or short pencils)
- ◇ Packing Peanuts or Cotton Balls
- ◇ Pencils (used are OK)
- ◇ Hot Glue or Elmers Glue
- ◇ Tape
- ◇ Stapler
- ◇ Scissors
- ◇ Markers or other optional decorating materials

Key Concepts

- ◇ Following instructions (listening and watching)
- ◇ Design
- ◇ Found Objects
- ◇ Creativity

Key Vocabulary

- ◇ Puppet Artist: An artist who works with and builds puppets. They may perform with them too!
- ◇ Puppeteer: An artist who performs with puppets by moving them around the stage
- ◇ Found Objects: Objects that may be discarded or lie unused, which may be useful for creating a new object or project
- ◇ Recycle: To discard an object so that that object is later transformed and reused by other people for another purpose.

Lesson Plan

Introduce the idea of building a puppet from found materials. Let students know they will be building a moveable puppet along with a real puppet artist!

Gather materials needed.

Watch Build Video along with class. Pause after each step as needed.

Watch Demo Video along with class. Encourage the class to test their puppets along with Jesse.

Reflect. Encourage the class to share their making experience. You may also Review key concepts and vocabulary here.

IF EXTRA TIME: Watch Interview Video with class.

Lesson 3: Rehearsal Part 1: Exploration

Goal

Students will distinguish between different musical cues

Outcome

Students will be empowered to make clear choices about their puppet and performance

Materials Needed

- ◇ Track 4: Setting the Stage & Track 5: Exploring with Puppets
- ◇ Booklet pages: 16-24
- ◇ Cardboard Box or Poster Board (with optional decorations)
- ◇ All 7 Puppets
- ◇ 2 Chairs with no arms
- ◇ Sheet

Key Concepts

- ◇ Making creative choices
- ◇ Active listening and following directions
- ◇ Identifying musical cues

Key Vocabulary

- ◇ Puppeteer: An artist who performs with puppets by moving them around the stage
- ◇ Puppet Theatre: A miniature theater where the puppets perform
- ◇ Props: Objects that a character uses in the course of a theatrical story
- ◇ Rehearsal: "Practice" performances where performers explore and make choices for the actual performance
- ◇ Scene: One part of a theatrical story. Often indicated by what characters are on stage
- ◇ Narrator: A character who is outside the story and describes what happens in the story
- ◇ Musical Cue: A signal for a performer to come on stage or perform another action, specifically when that signal is a piece of music
- ◇ Acting: Performing onstage for an audience
- ◇ Instruments: Saxophone, Piano, Guitar, Marimba, Violin, Triangle (See pictures of each instrument in the booklet!)

Lesson Plan

Review what students have accomplished so far.

Introduce the idea that today students will begin rehearsal!

Listen to Track 4 with the class. Students should participate according to track instructions with their puppeteer groups. By the end of this track each puppeteer group should have all needed puppets assembled behind their puppet theatre.

Pause and let students know that they will be rehearsing and exploring along with the next track. This will involve teamwork and collaboration with their groups in order to share the

stage with the other puppeteers in their group.

Listen to Track 5 with the class. Students should engage in activities as led by the track.

Review the musical instruments used, characters, and key concepts and vocabulary.

Reflect. Encourage the class to share their rehearsal experience.

Lesson 4: Rehearsal Part 2: Practice

Goal

Students will make choices about acting out their puppet during rehearsal and will collaborate to rehearse the final puppet show

Outcome

Students will practice communication and collaboration through the rehearsal of The Velveteen Rabbit

Materials Needed

- ◇ Track 6: Rehearsal Track
- ◇ Optional individual scene rehearsal tracks
- ◇ Booklet pages: 24

Key Concepts

- ◇ Presentation and performance
- ◇ Rehearsing and practicing
- ◇ Collaboration and teamwork

Key Vocabulary

- ◇ Cue: A signal for a performer to come on stage or perform another action
- ◇ Props: Objects that a character uses in the course of a theatrical story
- ◇ Entrance: The moment a character appears on stage.
- ◇ Exit: The moment a character leaves the stage
- ◇ Audience: The viewers of the play
- ◇ Rehearsal: "Practice" performances where performers explore and make choices for the actual performance
- ◇ Performer: A person who tells the story of the play
- ◇ On Stage: To be in view of the audience during the course of a play
- ◇ Off Stage / Backstage: To be out of view of the audience during the course of a play. Often behind or beside the stage.

Lesson Plan

Review the rehearsal experience from the previous lesson.

Set up puppet theatres and puppets.

Introduce that each puppeteer group will be rehearsing their scene or scenes to the actual rehearsal track today (with help from the Stage Manager!).

Have each group **listen to their scene or scenes from Track 6** and **puppeteer their puppets** along with the story. As directed by the "Stage Manager," puppets should enter on their assigned musical cues. Students should be encouraged to listen to what the audio play is saying about their character and make bold choices when acting out their puppet!

Note: Groups may work simultaneously on individual scenes if each group has access to a device upon which to play their scene selection from Track 6 (individual scene tracks are provided), or groups may act as “audiences” for one other’s rehearsals by playing Track 6 in its entirety and switching between groups during the track.

Reflect. Encourage the class to share their rehearsal experience. What was challenging? What was discovered? What worked best? Feel free to add as many days of rehearsal as is appropriate for your class.

Lesson 5: Performance

Goal

Students will collaborate to perform the final puppet show

Outcome

Students will practice empathetic skills and hone presentation abilities through the performance of *The Velveteen Rabbit*

Materials Needed

- ◇ Track 7: Performance Track
- ◇ Booklet pages: 25-26

Key Concepts

- ◇ Presenting & performance
- ◇ Ability to recall and memorize
- ◇ Collaboration
- ◇ Empathy

Key Vocabulary

- ◇ Performer: A person who tells the story of the play
- ◇ Performance: The presentation of a play by performers, with all parts ready to tell the story
- ◇ Curtain Call: The moment when performers bow to thank the audience for coming to the show
- ◇ Audience: The viewers of the play

Lesson Plan

Review concepts as needed in preparation for performance. Discuss with the class how to be a good audience member for one another.

Have the class **perform their scenes** in order along to Track 7, the performance track. Students may also perform to Track 6, if assistance cues from the Stage Manager are helpful/needed. Have all of the students **take a bow and clap for one another** at the end!

Reflect on the experience of creating a play along audio play of *The Velveteen Rabbit*! Feel free to utilize discussion questions below.

Discussion Questions

- What was it like to act like another person/animal?
- What was most exciting and vivid to imagine?
- What was challenging about this experience?
- What was most exciting about this experience?
- What was it like to collaborate with your group?
- What was your favorite part of *The Velveteen Rabbit*?
- What tips would you give to other kids who want to become puppeteers?

Scene Breakdown by character:

Scene	Rabbit	Child	Grown-Up	Little	Horse	Real Rabbits	Fairy
1	x	x					
2	x						
3	x				x		
4	x	x	x	x			
5	x	x	x	x			
6	x	x				x	
7	x	x	x	x			
8	x		x				
9	x	x				x	x
10	x	x				x	

Optional Props

- ◇ Digital Toy(s) - Phone, iPad etc.
- ◇ Little's Bed
- ◇ Garbage Bag
- ◇ Flower

Post-Class Teacher Survey

Thank you for utilizing The Velveteen Rabbit in your classroom! We hope that you found the experience engaging and fun for your students. As part of this project, we kindly request your participation in a brief post-class survey so we may better understand how the project was used, and the impact it had. Please follow the following link to take the survey:

<https://forms.gle/m79H5af6GAwsp84d9>