

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

ENTRY POINTES

“Entry Pointes” are questions, topics and areas of focus for educators to use and make connections between their curriculum and the ballet. Educators are encouraged to expand and adapt entry pointes as necessary to meet the grade levels and needs of their students and address specific standards.

Arts and Humanities (PDE Standards 9.1, 9.2, 9.3 & 9.4)

The story of *Beauty and the Beast* has consistently been part of our literary and pop culture. Research the story. Where does it come from? How many different versions are there? Find other stories, books, movies, TV shows, etc. that are directly taken from the story.

Design, plan and make a prototype of a set for the Beast’s enchanted garden. What would your magical elements be? How would you portray this with props, lighting and choreography on stage?

Underneath his gruff and frightening exterior, the Beast is trying to become a kind and caring Prince. In small groups, act out a scene in which the group meets someone who looks or behaves differently from everyone else. In what ways will this person be different? How will this person be treated? How will s/he react?

Class discussion: In the story of *Beauty and the Beast*, what are all the ways that Beauty is made to appeal to us? What are all the ways that the Beast is made unappealing to us? Is there sexism involved in making these distinctions? Is there racism? What else may be going on?

Composing music for ballet has changed considerably over the last 250 years. In fact, before Tchaikovsky composed ballet scores, which are still admired today, composing music for ballet was not viewed favorably by many musicians. Research the history of music composition for ballet. Why was it sometimes looked down upon? How did Tchaikovsky change this?

English Language Arts—Common Core Friendly (PDE Standards 1.3, 1.4, &1.5)

Collaborate / Recreate / Act it Out! Read and review the synopsis. Break students into small groups. Give each small group a chance to talk about a scene they would like to recreate. The synopsis is brief so be sure to add enough action so an audience can understand what is happening. (No frills. Each re-creation should take 2 minutes or less.) Once they have decided on a scene, give each group name tags. Each character from that particular scene is represented on a tag. Students decide who will play which role and tape the tag on the shirt. Allow students approximately 10 minutes to prepare. They may choose to use words or not to create their scenes.

Optional: Provide simple art supplies to create props.

Have each group present and perform for their peers. This is a great opportunity to review audience etiquette.

Beauty and the Beast is based on a fairy tale. What are some typical elements of that literary genre? What parts of this genre are evident in the synopsis of the ballet? How do costumes and set design help portray fairy tale elements? What modern fairy tales can you think of? Choose a story in another style and rewrite it into a fairy tale.

One of the main characters in the ballet is named Beauty. Explore other fables, stories, novels, and poems in which beauty/goodness is an essential component of a character. Why is this such a pervasive theme in literature? Do beauty and goodness always go together? Name some exceptions from stories you know.

In the ballet we are not told how the Prince was turned into a beast. Create your own story to explain this, and why he was cursed to remain a beast until someone learned to love him.

Research the origin of the *Beauty and the Beast* story. Where does it come from? How does the original story differ from the Disney animated or live action films? What are the common elements that remain in all versions of the story? Focus on key characters and dramatic situations. If this activity is done after seeing the ballet, include a discussion about differences between the ballet and the Disney films/other stories.

Mathematics—Common Core Friendly (PDE Standards 2.1, 2.3 & 2.4)

Choose one of the characters from the ballet. Draw a costume for that character, showing how it would look on the character. Find a partner and measure, in inches, how wide the costume needs to be at the shoulders and the waist, and how long it needs to be from the waist down and for the sleeves. Then convert those measurements into centimeters. Re-draw your costume to scale. How is it different from your original drawing?

In the ballet the Simians give Beauty a gold throne, flowers, a tiara and a dress. Identify prices in U.S. dollars for these items and convert the prices to European Union euros, Japanese yen, the Mexican peso, Canadian dollars and the Nairobi naira (or any other country/currency you prefer!).

The beauty industry is a multi-billion dollar industry. Identify and estimate the cost of all the beauty products in your family's home and the monthly budget for these products.

Classical ballet emphasizes balance and symmetry of dancers and movements. In this activity the teacher demonstrates the kind of symmetry that moving in front of a mirror makes. Then demonstrate the different kinds of symmetry one can make by moving the right arm and left arm in the same direction or in opposite directions, by moving the left arm and right leg in synchrony and vice versa. Students: Find a partner and stand face to face. One partner slowly moves different parts of their body. Have the other partner copy the movement as if they were a mirror. Then have students try moving the same limb in the opposite direction. Then try moving a different limb in the same direction. Which movement feels harder or easier? Draw a figure of a dancer showing symmetrical positioning/movement.

Science (PDE Standard 3.1)

In addition to fables and myths, the inspiration for the Beast in the 1740 story of *Beauty and the Beast* may have been a real person who had a very rare condition called hypertrichosis, which causes excessive hair growth. Research this condition - what causes it? Is there a treatment/cure? How prevalent/rare is it? What percentage of the general population has this disease? What happened to people in the 18th century who had this disease? What happens to people now? What other diseases affect how a person looks? How does society treat people with those diseases?

The ballet begins in an enchanted forest. If you were to walk into a forest near Pittsburgh, what animals might you find? What animals are no longer found in our forests that used to be there? What kind of a "beast" might you have found there in the time of the first European settlers? Choose an animal that can no longer be found here and write an essay or create a display about what caused it to die out or leave the area.

In the ballet a Stag throws a rose through Beauty's window as a way to tell her that the Beast needs her. Experiment with throwing a flower in this manner and calculate its trajectory. Consider the factors of gravity, air resistance, speed and weight. Experiment with other objects and compare your results.

Create a display about roses. What is the genus and plant family? How many species and varieties are there? What are the botanical features? How are they used in medicine, as food and in other ways? What do roses mean in popular culture?

Is there medical evidence that someone can die of a broken heart? Find stories or data on this topic. Create a bibliography of resources.

History and Geography (PDE Standards 7.1, 7.2, 7.3, 7.4, 8.1, & 8.4)

Where did the earliest stories of a human falling in love with a beast/animal arise? On a world map or a globe, place a symbol on locations where fables/myths/stories appeared from the earliest stories through 1740, when *Beauty and the Beast* was first published.

What people consider "beautiful" for a woman or a man differs across the world and over time. Choose a country, region or culture. Research the concept in the 1600s, the 1800s and present day. Copy or print out an example of the idea of beauty for men and women at each time period, along with a description of what is/was considered "beautiful." Create a Venn diagram to show any "beautiful" attributes that have stayed consistent over time. Or research two or three countries and compare/contrast their concept of beauty.

In 18th-century France, when *Beauty and the Beast* was written, marriages were often arranged: a young person's family (or hired "matchmaker") would find a husband or wife for the young person - often s/he didn't know and had never met the other young person and had no say in the matter. This practice of arranged marriages still exists in some countries and cultures. Examine one of these cultures in depth - why is this done? How do families, and the brides and grooms involved, feel about it? What issues arise? Was/is this practiced anywhere in the U.S?

Beauty and the Beast takes place in an enchanted garden and a fairytale kingdom. Pick a country in the world where you would like this story to take place. Then choose one city where you would like Beauty's family to live, and one small town where you would like the Beast's castle to be. Draw a map between the city and town that includes the roads, waterways, mountains and other landmarks that currently exist in that country.

Tchaikovsky, who created the music used in *Beauty and the Beast*, was born and lived in Russia. Ballet began in Italy. All the words for the movements and steps in ballet are French. Copy or print out a map of Europe. Find and color those three countries - Italy, France and Russia. Draw a road that starts in Italy, goes through France, and ends in Russia. What other countries do you have to drive through to make that journey? Can you change the road to drive through different countries on that journey from Italy to Russia? What different countries could you include?