



**STUDY GUIDE**

## Welcome to the theatre!

Dear Teachers,

Welcome to Theatreworks USA and our production of *Dragons Love Tacos & Other Stories*! This guide was created to help both you and your students learn about the play, as well as provide opportunities for classroom enrichment and curriculum connections. A trip to the theatre is always an exciting one— one that can create life-lasting memories, like the ones we hope you and your students will leave with after seeing our show! You may want to review some basic theatre etiquette with your students, as this might be many of their first theatre experiences. Talking or being disruptive during the performance is distracting to the actors and fellow audience members. However, we highly encourage clapping, laughing, and cheering at the parts they enjoy. Feel free to use this guide as a starting point for you and your students to explore the play. (And don't forget, it's okay for you to have just as much fun as your students do!). Sit back, relax, and enjoy the show!

Dear Students,

Welcome to the theatre! We are very excited for you to join us for Theatreworks USA's production of *Dragons Love Tacos & Other Stories*!

What makes theatre different from other activities is that there are live actors on stage with no wall between you and them, which means you play a part in the show. You may get really excited during a show and want to clap or cheer and make a lot of noise! We want you to have as much fun as possible so feel free to do these things after a song or laugh when something is funny, but save talking to your friends until after the show!

A good audience member also makes sure that their cell phone and anything that makes noise is turned off. Make sure the grown up sitting near you does the same!

Most of all, we want you to have fun! The theatre is a magical place where anything can happen as long as you believe it can. So, sit back, relax, and enjoy the show!

- Your friends at Theatreworks USA

# FROM THE PAGE TO THE STAGE

## a look at adaptation

*Dragons Love Tacos & Other Stories* is a musical based on several favorite children's books: *Interrupting Chicken*, *Dragons Love Tacos*, *Cowgirl Kate and Cocoa: School Days*, *Mercy Watson Goes for a Ride*, and *The Dot*.

In an **adaptation**, a playwright and songwriter take the themes, characters, and major plot points of a book and finds a new way to tell the story.

When adapting all of these books, each writing team turned their book into a mini-musical. *Interrupting Chicken* connects all of the stories together.

As you'll see in the show, Chicken reads and interrupts famous fairy tales, so Papa Chicken decides to read her new books that she doesn't know yet.



### Some Famous Adaptations:

*Harry Potter* movies are based on the books by J.K. Rowling

*The Wizard of Oz* film is based on the book by L. Frank Baum

Disney's *The Little Mermaid* is based on an original story by Hans Christian Anderson

What are other adaptations you can think of?

Do you have a favorite book that you'd like to see come to life on stage? Which one?

**Before the play:** What parts of the different stories are important to remember?

**After the play:** How was the play different from the books?

# INTERRUPTING CHICKEN

Based on the book by **David Ezra Stein**

Adapted by **Brian Lowdermilk & Marcus Stevens**

**What is this story about?** It's bedtime for Chicken. Papa Chicken is going to read her a story, but Chicken can't help interrupting. Will Chicken ever get to sleep?

**Themes** Learning by Repetition, Manners, Storytelling

**Post-Show Questions**

- Have you ever interrupted somebody?
- Have you ever been interrupted?
- If so, how did that make you feel?
- Why is it important to be polite?



## Curriculum Connections & Activities

**LITERACY** Have each student tell a familiar story (like a fairy tale or fable) out loud in class and have the other students take turns interrupting them.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.2.4

**COUNTING** Read *Interrupting Chicken* out loud and have students count the number of times Chicken interrupts Papa.

CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.K.CC.B.4.C

**LIST-MAKING** Chicken tells Papa all of the things she did to prepare to go to bed. Make a list of the things you need to do before you go to bed.

**STORYTELLING** Chicken interrupts the stories she loves to change the ending to. How would you change the ending to some other famous stories like *Hansel & Gretel* and *Little Red Riding Hood*?



**Chicken Fact!** Chickens cluck after they lay an egg.

# DRAGONS LOVE TACOS

Based on the book by **Adam Rubin**

Illustrated by **Daniel Salmieri**

Adapted by **Joe Kinosian & Marcus Stevens**



**What is this story about?** Dragons love all sorts of tacos—except spicy ones! When a boy throws his new dragon friends a spicy salsa taco party, red-hot trouble ensues.

**Themes** Listening, Teamwork, Brothers & Sisters

**Post-Show Questions** Have you ever done something even though someone told you it wasn't a good idea?  
Why doesn't Billy listen to Sophia?  
What did Billy learn after the dragons burnt his house down?

KNOCK KNOCK

WHO'S THERE?



TACO WHO?

I DON'T WANT TO TACO'BOUT IT!

## Curriculum Connections & Activities

**IF DRAGONS...** Cause and Effect. Discuss with your students “If Dragons eat tacos, then they...”  
“If Billy doesn't listen to his sister Sophia, then...”

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.3.3

**REBUILD** When the dragons burn down the house they have to rebuild it! Have your students use shapes to draw your own “blueprints” for a house. Blueprints are the drawings that a worker uses to build things.

CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.1.G.A.2

**RECIPE FOLLOWING** In the classroom or at home, use the recipe on the following page to create your own salsa for your classroom taco party!

CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.2.MD.A.1



**Let's Taco'bout it!** Dragons are mythological creatures found in artwork, stories and legends.



# NOT-TOO-SPICY SALSA RECIPE\*

\*Perfect for Dragon Taco Parties

## INGREDIENTS

- 10-11 medium tomatoes
- 1/2 large white onion
- 1 bushel fresh cilantro
- 1/2 teaspoon ground red pepper
- 3/4 teaspoon sea salt
- 1/2 cup lime juice

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Cut the tomatoes in half
2. Remove the seeds
3. Cut the tomatoes into very small cubes
4. Cut the onion and cilantro into very small cubes
5. Add all of the above together in a large bowl with a tight lid
6. Add salt, red pepper, and lime juice
7. Mix well
8. Place all ingredients in a bowl with a tight lid and place in refrigerator for 2 hours
9. Serve and enjoy!

Students: This activity is for you to do with your parents or teachers!

# COWGIRL KATE & COCOA: SCHOOL DAYS

Based on the book by **Erica Silverman**

Painted by **Betsy Lewin**

Adapted by **Mark Sonnenblick & Ben Wexler**



**What is this story about?** Kate and her horse Cocoa do everything together — But when it's time for Kate to go back to school, Cocoa is worried she'll forget about him.

**Themes** Friendship, Listening, School

**KNOCK KNOCK**

WHO'S THERE?

**YUKON**

YUKON WHO?

**YUKON LEAD A HORSE TO WATER**

**BUT YOU CAN'T MAKE IT DRINK!**

**Post-Show Questions** Why doesn't Cocoa hear Kate telling him that she's going to school?  
Who does Cocoa think kidnapped Kate?  
Do you have friends that you do some activities with, but not others? Is it nice to leave out some friends when you hang out with others?

## Curriculum Connections & Activities

**SHOW & TELL** Kate talks about all the fun things she did on her summer break with her horse, Cocoa. Each student should bring in something from their summer break and talk about it.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.2.1.A , CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.2.4

**RESEARCH** Kate does a project about her horse, Cocoa. Students can use their research and computer skills to create their own short presentation about their pets or favorite animals.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.3.5



**Horse Fact!** Horses can sleep both lying down and standing up!





## MERCY WATSON GOES FOR A RIDE

Based on the book by **Kate DiCamillo**

Illustrated by **Chris Van Dusen**

Adapted by **Janet Allard & Brendan Milburn**

**What is this story about?** Mercy Watson, a beloved pig, desperately wants to drive a car. When she finally gets behind the wheel—chaos ensues!

**Themes** Following your dreams, Importance of rules

**Post-Show Questions** Why do you think Mr. Watson didn't want Mercy driving?  
Have you ever really wanted to do something even though you weren't quite ready or supposed to do it?

Even though Mercy didn't get into too much trouble from the police officer, do you think she learned her lesson?

What do you call a pig that drives recklessly?

A road hog!

### Curriculum Connections & Activities

**WHEN PIGS FLY** Pigs don't really drive cars. Make a list of pig facts that you know and another list of what makes Mercy different from a real pig.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.2.1



**Pig Fact!** Mr. Watson calls Mercy a "Porcine Wonder." **Porcine** means anything that looks like a pig!



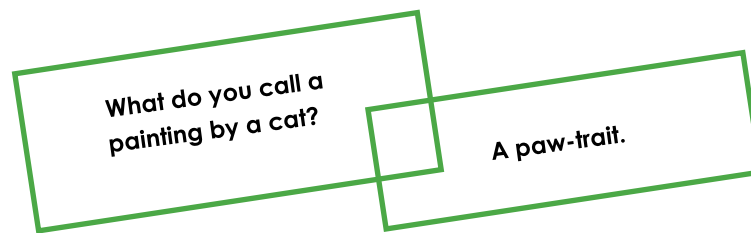
# THE DOT

Based on the book by **Peter H. Reynolds**  
Adapted by **Sam Salmond**

**What is this story about?** Vashti can't draw. Or so she thinks.  
An entire world of possibilities opens up after she simply draws a dot.

**Themes** Art, Creativity,  
Facing your fears

**Post-Show Questions** Has there ever been something you didn't think you were good at?  
Did someone help you get better? Did you try? Did you practice?  
How does it feel when you're able to succeed at something you didn't think you could do?  
Vashti was scared to draw because she didn't think her drawing would be any good. How do you think she felt after she tried?



## Curriculum Connections & Activities

**DOTS & SHAPES** Vashti paints dots, which are her version of circles. Have your class come up with other shapes. How can you split those shapes up if you wanted to share them with one, two, or three more people? Ask the students to draw shapes on the board and then draw lines within them in order to divide them up.

CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.2.G.A.3

**FRAME YOUR ART** On the next page, have your students use a ruler to measure each side of the gold frame. How long is each side? When they're done, grab a pen and everyone can make their own dot!

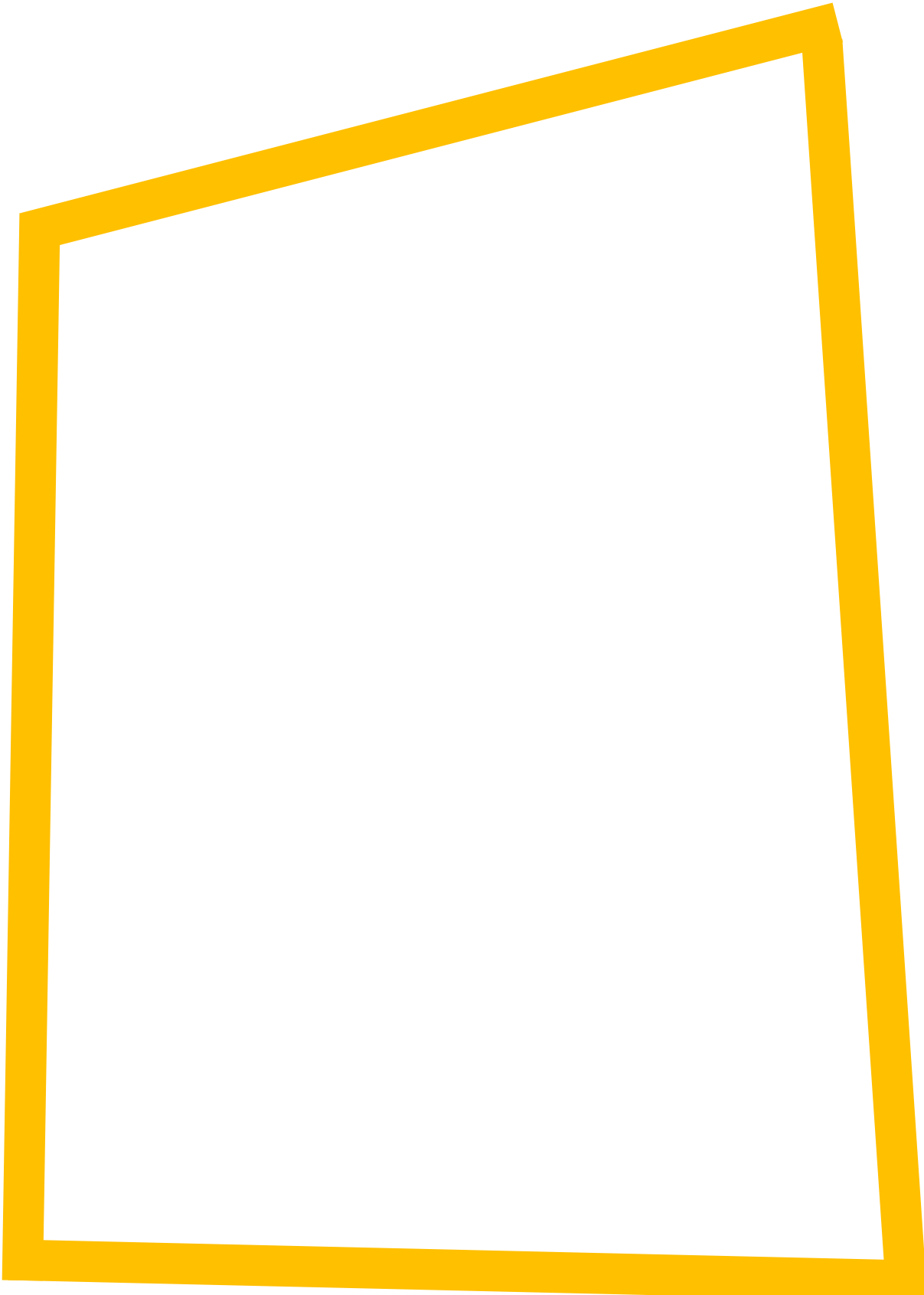
CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.2.MD.A.1



**Make Your Mark!** Visit [thedotclub.com](http://thedotclub.com) to learn about ways to celebrate creativity in your classroom!



**MAKE YOUR MARK!**



# WHAT DO YOU REMEMBER?

1. Dragons can't eat spicy salsa because \_\_\_\_.

- a. it tastes funny.
- b. they can't eat red things.
- c. it gives them tummy troubles.
- d. the chef didn't wash his hands.

2. Cocoa doesn't hear Kate tell him she's going to school because he sees \_\_\_\_.

- a. a rabbit
- b. an apple
- c. a bus
- d. a cowgirl

3. After Mercy gets to drive the car, she wants to be the first pig to \_\_\_\_.

- a. fly a hot air balloon
- b. bake a cake
- c. run for mayor
- d. build a castle

4. Vashti discovers that blue combined with yellow makes \_\_\_\_.

- a. brown
- b. purple
- c. green
- d. a mess



All photos by Jeremy Daniel