

# School Matinee Series Study Guide

2019/20



**Hopkins Center  
for the Arts**  
at Dartmouth

Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia  
*The Very Hungry Caterpillar  
and Other Eric Carle Favourites*

Mon, Mar 9, 10 am



# Welcome to the Hop

A performance needs an audience, so be prepared to play your part!

## Theater Etiquette

When entering the Hopkins Center, show consideration for all those sharing the building by remaining quiet and respectful in common areas. Applause is the best way to show your enthusiasm and appreciation! Backpacks, food, drink and gum are not allowed in the theater. Please turn off all cell phones and note that recording the performance or taking photos is strictly prohibited.

## Information for Teachers

Review this study guide for context and activities that will help your students engage with the performance. Please read the email that accompanies this guide—Hop staff often request details about your visit including how many buses you'll be bringing and what accommodations you need.

This study guide's content was created by Kate Adams and Ally Tufenkjian. If you have questions about this guide, please direct them to Ally Tufenkjian at [ally.s.tufenkjian@dartmouth.edu](mailto:ally.s.tufenkjian@dartmouth.edu). To download copies of this and other guides, visit [hop.dartmouth.edu/study-guides](http://hop.dartmouth.edu/study-guides).

## Enjoy the Show!

The Hopkins Center's mission is to ignite and sustain a passion for the arts within Dartmouth and its greater community and to provide the core educational environment for the study, creation and presentation of the arts.

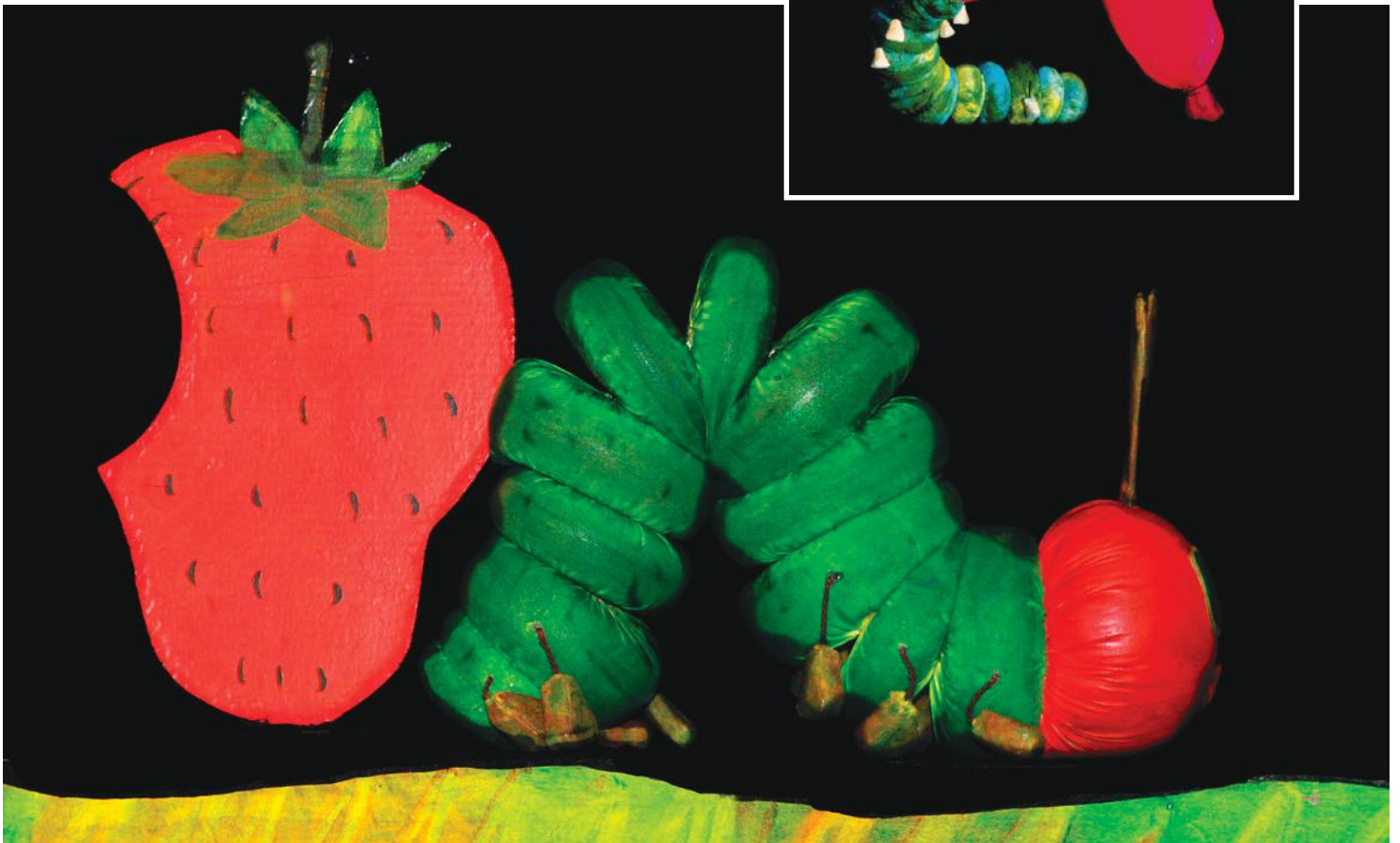
## Did You Know?

- The Hopkins Center is located on the ancestral homelands of the Abenaki people.
- The Hopkins Center opened in 1962.
- The Hopkins Center presents over 100 live arts events each year.

## About the Show

This clever compilation of whimsical Eric Carle classics mirrors the beloved writer/**illustrator**'s storytelling and art. Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia uses large-scale puppets illuminated with **black light** technology. The brightly colored **puppets** move across the black background as if Carle's colorful, **collage**-style illustrations have hopped from page to stage.

Three beloved stories by Eric Carle are retold in this performance. *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* follows the wonderful adventures of a very tiny (and very hungry!) caterpillar as he eats his way through an amazing variety of foods on his path to becoming a beautiful butterfly. High up in the sky, *Little Cloud* playfully transforms himself into various



*The Very Hungry Caterpillar* in performance by Mermaid Theatre.

creatures, including a sheep, an airplane, a shark and more. *The Mixed-Up Chameleon* is bored with his life, sitting about predictably changing color all day; following an adventurous trip to the zoo, he attempts to emulate each of the beautiful animals he sees before coming to the conclusion that there is value in his own unique self.

Adapted, designed and directed by Jim Morrow, with music by Steven Naylor and narration by Gordon Pinsent, the hour-long production features the imaginative approach to storytelling through theater that has earned international recognition for Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia.

# About the Artists

Mermaid Theatre was founded in 1972 in Wolfville, Nova Scotia. The company moved to the neighboring town of Windsor in 1987 and helped to revitalize the historic town's downtown business core. Their headquarters includes production studios, administrative offices, rehearsal quarters, a versatile studio and a 400-seat performance facility known as The Mermaid Imperial Performing Arts Centre (MIPAC).

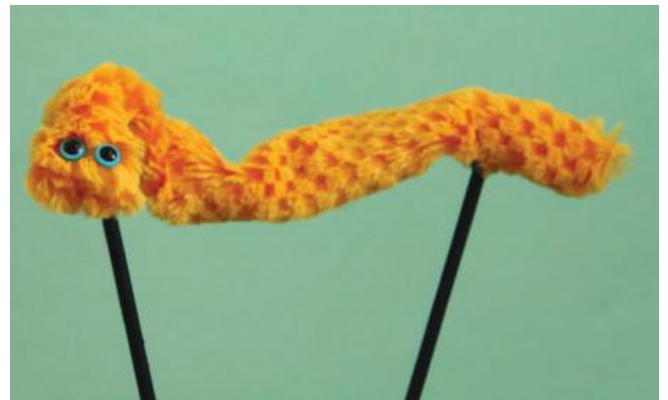
Each year, they present more than 400 performances for 200,000 spectators—many of them new to the theater experience. Mermaid regularly crosses Canada and the United States and has represented Canada in more than a dozen countries. Recorded narration featuring outstanding international artists facilitates performances in English, Spanish, Korean, Japanese, French, Cantonese and Mandarin. Closer to home, Mermaid's Institute of Puppetry Arts offers puppetry instruction at both community and professional levels.

The Institute of Puppetry Arts' imaginative, curriculum-based touring programs entertain and inform students and teachers throughout the region as well as encourage educators to incorporate the performing arts into the teaching of science. Mermaid's contributions to the local economy as well as the role they play as cultural ambassadors for Nova Scotia and Canada have merited Export Excellence awards from both the provincial and national governments.

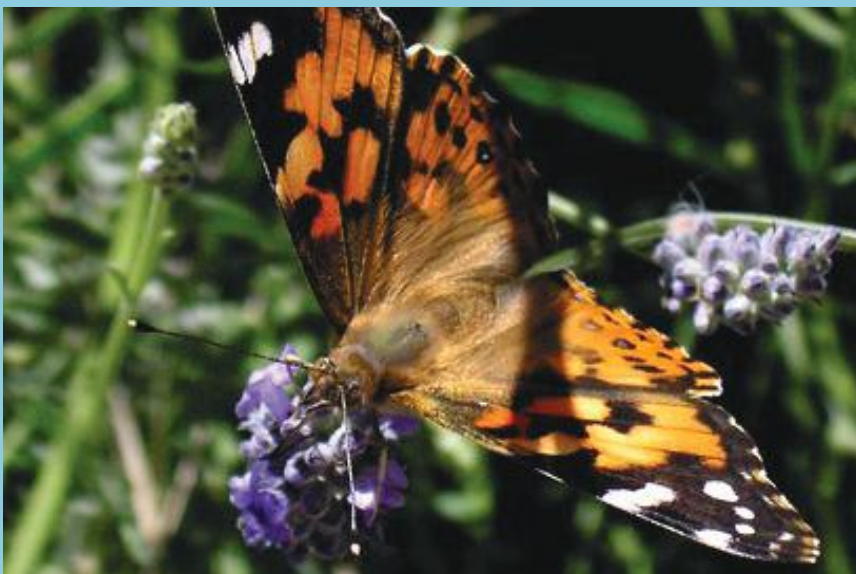
## Contextual Background

### What are Rod Puppets?

Mermaid Theatre uses several different kinds of rod puppets in its productions. A rod puppet is a puppet that is attached to a stick or rod which serves as a handle for the puppeteer to move different areas of the puppet. More complicated rod puppets use "cable-control," a wire or string which, when pulled by a trigger, moves the puppet in a certain way. Rod puppets can be used in a variety of different ways and do not require a lot of previous puppetry experience in order to be performed well. They are a good starting point for learning about puppetry and puppet-making.



*Orange worm rod puppet.*



### Fun Fact

Butterflies taste with their feet. Their taste sensors are located in the feet and by standing on their food, they can taste it!

*Painted Lady butterfly on a flower.*



*Green caterpillar on a leaf.*

## What are Caterpillars?

When a butterfly egg hatches, out comes a caterpillar! This stage of a butterfly's life can last from two weeks to a month, with the caterpillar growing to more than 30,000 times its original size. Because they grow so quickly, caterpillars will spend most of their time eating. Caterpillars have powerful jaws that easily chop leaves, but they are very limited in their diet; many will only eat the leaves of a single type of plant. Most of a caterpillar's body is filled with intestines that quickly digest its food.

While moths spin cocoons, butterflies do something a little different. After a period of feeding and growth, the butterfly caterpillar attaches itself to a branch and grows a very hard skin called a chrysalis. Metamorphosis, the process through which a caterpillar becomes a butterfly, occurs inside the chrysalis.

## What are Chameleons?

Chameleons are a type of reptile that can change colors. There are 171 different species of chameleons. The largest chameleon is called the Parson's chameleon and can grow up to 27 inches long, while the smallest chameleon, the leaf chameleon, only grows to be half an inch long! Most chameleons have a prehensile tail, which they use to wrap around tree branches. Their eyes can move independently of each other with a full 360-degree view. Chameleons eat insects and birds, and they drink lots of water by either slurping it up with their tongues or inhaling it.



*Panther chameleon on a branch.*

### Fun Fact

A chameleon's skin does not change color to match its surroundings. Its skin actually changes colors due to its emotions, or changes in light, temperature and humidity.

A chameleon's skin is one of its primary forms of communication with other chameleons, particularly potential mates.

# Pre-performance Discussion Questions

After reading the books in class, choose from these questions based on your instructional goals:

## Themes of the Show:

- What is the main idea of each story?
- Why do you think Eric Carle wanted to write books about a caterpillar, a cloud and a chameleon?

## The Arts and Storytelling:

- What do you notice about Eric Carle's illustrations (such as their bright colors and collage-style art)? Why do you think he made those choices in his illustrations to help tell these stories?
- What kinds of puppets have you seen before? What do they look like? How do they move?

## Science:

- What food does the caterpillar eat in the story? How are these foods similar or different from the food a caterpillar eats in real life?
- What kinds of animals do the main characters of each story meet?
- Why do you think a chameleon changes color?

# Post-performance Discussion Questions

## Themes of the Show:

- What were some similarities between each story? What were some differences?
- What do you think the message of these stories is, particularly the message of *The Mixed-Up Chameleon*?

## The Arts and Storytelling:

- Which parts of the show were similar to the books? Which parts were different?
- What did you notice about the puppets? What did they look like? How did they move?

## Science:

- In *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, what did the caterpillar become? What steps does a caterpillar go through to become a butterfly?
- What animals did Little Cloud turn into? What were some of those animals' traits and characteristics?
- Why did the chameleon change colors in the show? How is this similar or different from the reasons chameleons change colors in real life?

# Learning Activities

## This is a... and Also a... (Grades Pre-K–2):

*The Very Hungry Caterpillar and Other Eric Carle Favourites* uses the art of puppetry and object transformation to help tell the stories. This activity helps students explore object transformation and pantomime within a simple structure.

Ask students to sit in a circle. Explain that you will be passing an object around the circle and that their job is to turn that object into something else. Use a simple object or shape to begin, such as a paper triangle. Model this by saying “This is a triangle and also a piece of pizza.” As you share what the object has become, pantomime a clear and simple action that helps students know what it is, such as pretending to bite off a corner of the triangle. After you model this example, ask students to tell you how they know it has become a piece of pizza. Encourage them to identify the specific action that went along with your statement.

Pass the triangle around the circle with each student saying “This is a triangle and also a ...,” along with making an action that helps transform the triangle into the new object they’ve identified. You can go around the circle as many times as you like with the same object, or you can add in a different object, such as a cloud shape, to add complexity.

Afterwards, ask students the following reflection questions:

- What object transformations do you most remember? Why?
- What skills did you need to use to successfully transform your object?
- How is what we did similar to what the puppeteers did in the performance? How is it different?

To see a video of this strategy in action, visit [dbp.theatredance.utexas.edu/content/not](http://dbp.theatredance.utexas.edu/content/not).

## Act the Story (Grades Pre-K–2):

Use Eric Carle’s *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* to explore and dramatize. Create an open space in the room and ask students to find their own spots. Explain that they will be acting out the story as you read it and that you will be acting along too! Encourage students to listen carefully to your instructions and stay in their own spots. Before beginning, establish and practice cues that you will use to guide students through the narrative pantomime. For instance, you might use a 3-2-1 countdown or “Freeze” to guide students and establish clear expectations for participation.

Tell students that in a moment, they will all get to be caterpillars. Encourage students to close their eyes and imagine what it would be like to be a caterpillar. Ask them to open their eyes, get very small and curl up inside their egg—the story is about to start! Read the story bit by bit, encouraging students to act along. For instance, read “One Sunday morning, the warm sun came up and pop! Out of the egg came a tiny and very hungry caterpillar.” Ask students to feel the warm sun from inside their eggs and get ready to hatch in 5-4-3-2-1! Once they’ve hatched, ask them to stretch a little and look around. What does it feel like to be outside your egg for the first time?

Continue reading and dramatizing the story. Act out moments such as the caterpillar eating its way through many different foods, getting bigger, making a cocoon and becoming a beautiful butterfly. As you go, you might ask students to freeze at certain moments and share how they’re feeling, what they’re thinking or what they think will happen next.

If you’d like, you can play music softly in the background to help set the mood and add to the exploration!

When the story concludes, have students transform back into people in 3-2-1. Ask students the following reflection questions:

- What was it like to be a caterpillar?
- How did it feel to become a beautiful butterfly?
- What are some ways that you will grow and change as you get older? What do you think these changes will feel like?

## This Setting Needs... (Grades K–2):

This activity helps students use their bodies and their imaginations to explore a setting or an event. You can choose any image from Eric Carle's books to recreate. For instance, you might choose a page from *The Mixed-Up Chameleon* that shows the chameleon going to the zoo to see the other animals.

Make sure you have a clear and open space for this activity. Turn to your chosen page in the story and ask students what they see. Make a running list on the board. Then, explain that they will use their bodies to make a group image or picture that recreates the setting on this page. (Review what a "setting" is, if needed.) Tell them that one at a time, they will come to the playing space and say "This setting needs a ..." and freeze in a frozen statue or image representing what they are. Model this for them by saying "This setting needs a happy elephant" and freezing as that animal. Encourage them to use their whole bodies and facial expressions. Once they come up to make their image, they should stay as frozen as possible. Explain that students should raise their hand when they have an idea and that when they come up to add to the group image, they should be respectful of others' space and refrain from physical contact.

Have several students come up to make this frozen group image of the setting. Because holding a frozen position can be challenging, build in opportunities for students to quickly shake out their bodies and go back to being frozen. Once several students have created the setting, ask the remaining students who are observing some scaffolded reflection questions:

- What do you notice about this image?

Encourage students to focus on basic physical observations first, such as "I see two curved arms" or "I see someone crouched," before making interpretations. For instance, if a student says "I see an elephant," ask "How do you know it's an elephant?" This helps students specify how they know what they know.

- Based on these observations, what do we think is happening in this image?
- How do we think the chameleon is feeling in this image? What do you think will happen next?

You can use this same process to create a frozen image of a later page in the story. Afterwards, you might ask students to compare the first image with the second and discuss how the chameleon's feelings change throughout the story.



*Eric Carle creating his book illustrations.*



# Vocabulary

**Black light:** Ultraviolet or infrared radiation, invisible to the eye.

**Collage:** A technique of creating artwork that involves pasting different materials, such as tissue paper, newspaper clippings, photographs or other material fragments, on a single surface.

**Illustrator:** A person who draws or creates pictures for magazines, books, or advertising.

**Pantomime:** The art of expressing emotions, actions, feelings and scenarios using gestures without speech.

**Puppeteer:** A person who manipulates an inanimate object that might be shaped like a human, animal, mythical creature or another object to create the illusion that the puppet is “alive.”

**Puppet:** A movable model of a person or animal that is used in entertainment and is typically moved either by strings controlled from above, by a rod from below, or by a hand inside it.

**Reptile:** A type of cold-blooded animal that produces eggs and whose body is covered by scales or plates.

**Ultraviolet:** Relating to or producing electromagnetic wavelengths beyond the violet end of the visible light spectrum.

# Resources

**The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art’s website**, showcasing picture books from Eric Carle and from around the world: [www.carlemuseum.org](http://www.carlemuseum.org)

**Teacher Guidebook for *The Very Hungry Caterpillar and Other Eric Carle Favourites*, written and compiled by Cassie LaFavor:** [hcpsartsinedu.org/StudyGuides19-20/The%20Very%20Hungry%20Caterpillar%20Study%20Guide.pdf](http://hcpsartsinedu.org/StudyGuides19-20/The%20Very%20Hungry%20Caterpillar%20Study%20Guide.pdf)

# References

## The Artist and the Show:

[www.carlemuseum.org](http://www.carlemuseum.org)  
[www.eric-carle.com](http://www.eric-carle.com)  
[www.mermaidtheatre.ca/caterpillar](http://www.mermaidtheatre.ca/caterpillar)

## Background:

[www.ngkids.co.uk/science-and-nature/butterfly-life-cycle](http://www.ngkids.co.uk/science-and-nature/butterfly-life-cycle)  
[www.livescience.com/51061-chameleon.html](http://www.livescience.com/51061-chameleon.html)

## Activities:

[dbp.theatredance.utexas.edu/content/narrative-pantomime](http://dbp.theatredance.utexas.edu/content/narrative-pantomime)  
[dbp.theatredance.utexas.edu/content/not-0](http://dbp.theatredance.utexas.edu/content/not-0)  
[dbp.theatredance.utexas.edu/teaching-strategies/setting-needs](http://dbp.theatredance.utexas.edu/teaching-strategies/setting-needs)

## Vocabulary:

[dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/illustrator](http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/illustrator)  
[dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/reptile](http://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/reptile)  
[www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/pantomime](http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/pantomime)  
[www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ultraviolet](http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ultraviolet)

# Image Credits

[www.eric-carle.com/slideshow\\_collage.html](http://www.eric-carle.com/slideshow_collage.html)

[puppetpie.com](http://puppetpie.com)

[search.creativecommons.org/photos/f5056018-9847-460f-b80a-51af64a4b356](http://search.creativecommons.org/photos/f5056018-9847-460f-b80a-51af64a4b356)

[search.creativecommons.org/photos/4d168a5f-1d19-4735-956a-11122e0db7a8](http://search.creativecommons.org/photos/4d168a5f-1d19-4735-956a-11122e0db7a8)

[unsplash.com/photos/WBCefg9hYo4](http://unsplash.com/photos/WBCefg9hYo4)