

PLAY GUIDE



418 W. Short Street
Lexington, KY 40507
859.254.4546
www.lctonstage.org

Alice in Wonderland

By Kathryn Schultz Miller
Based on the book by Lewis Carroll

Presented on the LCT Main Stage: Jan. 26 - Feb. 2, 2025
On tour: Feb. 18 - May 9, 2025

Thank you to our
Major Contributors:



Dear Educator -

Lexington Children's Theatre is proud to be producing our 86th season of plays for young people and their families. As an organization that values the arts and education, we have created this Play Guide for teachers to utilize in conjunction with seeing a play at LCT.

Our Play Guides are designed to be a valuable tool in two ways: helping you prepare your students for the enriching performance given by LCT's performers, as well as serving as an educational tool for extending the production experience back into your classroom.

We designed each activity to assist in achieving Kentucky's Academic Standards (KAS) and National Core Arts Standards for Theatre. Teachers are important voices at LCT, we rely heavily on your input. If you have comments or suggestions about our Play Guides, show selections or any of our programming, your thoughts are greatly appreciated. Please email Rhonda Bell, our Education Director, at education@lctonstage.org.

Please use the Educator survey following a performance. We are thrilled that you rely on LCT to provide your students a quality theatrical experience, and we hope this resource helps you in your classroom.

LCT's Education Department

The mission of our education programming



The mission of Lexington Children's Theatre's Education Department is to provide students of all ages with the means to actively explore the beauty, diversity, complexity, and challenges of the world around them through the dramatic process. We strive for young people to develop their own creative voice, their imagination, and their understanding of drama and its role in society.

Your role in the play

You may wish to have a discussion with your class about your upcoming LCT experience and their role as audience members. Remind your students that theatre can only exist with an audience. Your students' energy and response directly affects the actors onstage. The quality of the performance depends as much on the audience as it does on each of the theatre professionals behind the scenes and on stage.

Young audiences should know that watching live theatre is not like watching more familiar forms of entertainment; they cannot pause or rewind us like a DVD, there are no commercials for bathroom breaks, nor can they turn up the volume to hear us if someone else is talking. Your students are encouraged to listen and watch the play intently, so that they may laugh and cheer for their favorite characters when it is appropriate.

At the end of the play, applause is an opportunity for your students to thank the actors, while the actors are thanking you for the role you played as an audience.



Play Synopsis

The story begins with Lewis Carroll himself, the writer of the famous tale, searching for Alice. When he finds her, he asks her to pose for a photograph but does so in a hilariously silly way. To help her strike the perfect pose, he begins recounting the fantastical story of Wonderland. Alice listens eagerly, though she can't quite recall if the adventure was real or just a dream.

Lewis, who reminds Alice of the always-late White Rabbit, spins the tale of a strange land full of quirky characters: the hot-tempered Queen of Hearts, the grinning Cheshire Cat, and the ever-curious Caterpillar. Lewis transports Alice back to Wonderland by having her stand in a circle made of rope, singing her a lullaby that lulls her to sleep.



When Alice wakes, she's in Wonderland! She first encounters the frantic White Rabbit, who's running late but can't remember why. Alice soon finds herself in a hallway filled with doors of all sizes. She struggles to open them until she drinks a potion labeled "Drink Me" and shrinks tiny enough to fit through a small door. But—oh no!—she's forgotten the key on the table. She eats a cake labeled "Eat Me" and grows to an enormous size, bumping her head on the ceiling and crying an ocean of tears.

Floating in her salty tears, Alice spots the White Rabbit's glove and trades it for a plum pudding, shrinking to three inches after eating it. She then meets the Caterpillar smoking on a mushroom. Confused about her identity after all her size changes, she asks for help. The Caterpillar advises her to eat different sides of the mushroom to control her size. Alice experiments and grows tall enough to meet a pigeon who mistakes her for a serpent. After much nibbling, she finally returns to her original size.

Alice searches for the magical garden she glimpsed through the tiny door earlier. Along the way, the grinning Cheshire Cat appears, offering her two choices: visit the Mad Hatter or play croquet with the Queen of Hearts. Lost and tearful, Alice hears Lewis's lullaby and follows it to find the Mad Hatter hosting a madcap tea party with his imaginary friends. The Hatter's bizarre behavior annoys Alice, and she decides to continue her search.

She finally discovers the beautiful garden, where gardeners are frantically painting white roses red to avoid the Queen's wrath. Alice is swept into a wild game of croquet with live hedgehogs as balls and flamingos as mallets. The Queen of Hearts cheats shamelessly, moving arches made from audience members to ensure her own success. When Alice struggles, the Queen commands the audience to boo her. Alice boldly calls out the Queen's unfairness, prompting the infamous cry: "Off with her head!"

Alice cleverly insists on a trial first, and the Queen agrees, turning the court into a chaotic scene of absurdity. As Alice defends herself, she begins to grow taller and taller, reliving her strange day among Wonderland's zany inhabitants. It's all so fantastical that Alice herself wonders if it was real.

Exhausted, Alice falls asleep and wakes back in the real world, with Lewis snapping her photograph. She recounts her wild adventure, and Lewis reminds her that life is about growing and taking time to appreciate the journey. He encourages Alice to continue sharing the Wonderland story, even with her future children, and to remember that life isn't a race—there's wonder in every moment.

What to know - before the show!

What is Nonsense?

Nonsense is a recurring topic in *Wonderland*. Alice falls through a rabbit hole and ends up in a completely new world. Prepare your students for *Wonderland's* nonsense by making a few new rules in your classroom. With your students, come up with some ridiculous rules that they must follow for the rest of the day. You could have to spin around 3 times before you sit down or do jumping jacks anytime someone says, "spelling." The sillier the better, because, after all, it's supposed to be nonsense! At the end of the day, ask the students to imagine what it would be like to have to follow rules like this every day. Ask them to write a personal narrative about their nonsense day.

“ If I had a world of my own, everything would be nonsense. Nothing would be what it is, because everything would be what it isn't. And contrary wise, what is, it wouldn't be. And what it wouldn't be, it would. You see?”
Alice in Wonderland



KAS: C.2.3; TH:Cr1.1.4.c

Victorian Language



Alice in Wonderland began as a novel written by Lewis Carroll's in 1865. Because of the time period, there is a lot of Victorian language used in LCT's production. Ask your students to look these words up in order to better understand the language of the production. Once your students understand these words, have them create "Victorian Scenes" in which at least five of these words are used.

bargain (v)	dreadful (adj)	majesty (n)	tart (n)
croquet (n)	duchess (n)	muss (v)	temper (n)
curious (adj)	hatter (n)	nonsense (n)	treacle (n)
dash (v)	lovely (adj)	suppress (v)	waistcoat (n)

KAS: L.3.4.d; L.3.2

Story Circles

Illustrate it!

Mr. Dodgson drew illustrations of his stories for Alice Liddell.

Have your students illustrate the story you created as a class!

KAS: VA:Cr1.2.2;
VA:Cr2.3.4

Lewis Carroll (Charles Dodgson) originally told the story of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* to Alice Liddell and her sister to entertain them on a boat ride. Talk to your students about what they do to entertain themselves on long trips. Do they listen to music, play video games, or even stream movies? In Victorian times, none of these things were possible, so they told stories.

You and your class are going to tell a story together. Ask them to sit in a large circle. Help your students by starting the story with "Once upon a time...", creating an open beginning for them to build upon. Once you have given them a good foundation, ask them to go around the circle and each add a sentence or two to continue the story. Encourage them to be inventive and use their imagination. Ask them to leave the story open, not to end it with the last person in the circle because they are all going to write their own ending.

When the last person has added their part of the story, tell your students to go to their desks and write their own ending. Share them aloud.

KAS: L.3.3a; C.3.3b

What to know - before the show!

The Real Alice

All in the golden afternoon
Full leisurely we glide;
For both our oars, with little skill,
By little arms are plied,
While little hands make vain pretense
Our wanderings to guide.

Thus grew the tale of Wonderland:
Thus slowly, one by one,
Its quaint events were hammered out -
And now the tale is done,
And home we steer, a merry crew,
Beneath the setting sun.

Alice! a childish story take,
And with gentle hand
Lay it where Childhood's dreams are twined
In Memory's mystic band,
Like pilgrim's wither'd wreath of flowers
Pluck'd in a far-off land.

This abbreviated poem serves as
Mr. Dodgson's account of the
creation of Wonderland



On July 4, 1862, a ten-year old girl named Alice Liddell and her sisters Edith and Lorina were traveling in a row boat on the Thames River in England on their way to a picnic. A man named Charles Dodgson was with the girls. They asked

him to tell them a story as they rowed. Mr. Dodgson was a good storyteller and had told the Liddell sisters many wonderful stories before, but this story was different because after hearing the story, Alice asked him to write it down. Mr. Dodgson told a fantastic story of a girl named Alice and her adventures after falling through a rabbit hole. Alice's Christmas present in 1864 was a handwritten copy of the story, with a few additions and illustrations by Mr. Dodgson.

Alice Liddell grew up in Oxford, England. When she was four years old, she met Charles Dodgson while he was taking pictures of Christ Church, the school where her father was Dean. Mr. Dodgson was a math teacher, a photographer, a reverend, an artist, a poet, and a storyteller. He loved entertaining children with his stories, games, and riddles. He grew to be great friends with Alice and the other Liddell children. Charles Dodgson went on to write many other books, including: *Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There* (the sequel to *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*), *The Hunting of the Snark* (a fantastic story written in verse), and several other children's books under his pen name, Lewis Carroll. He also published many volumes on mathematics as Charles Dodgson. He was a very private man and did not enjoy being a famous author. Mr. Dodgson lived and taught in Oxford at Christ Church until his death in 1898.

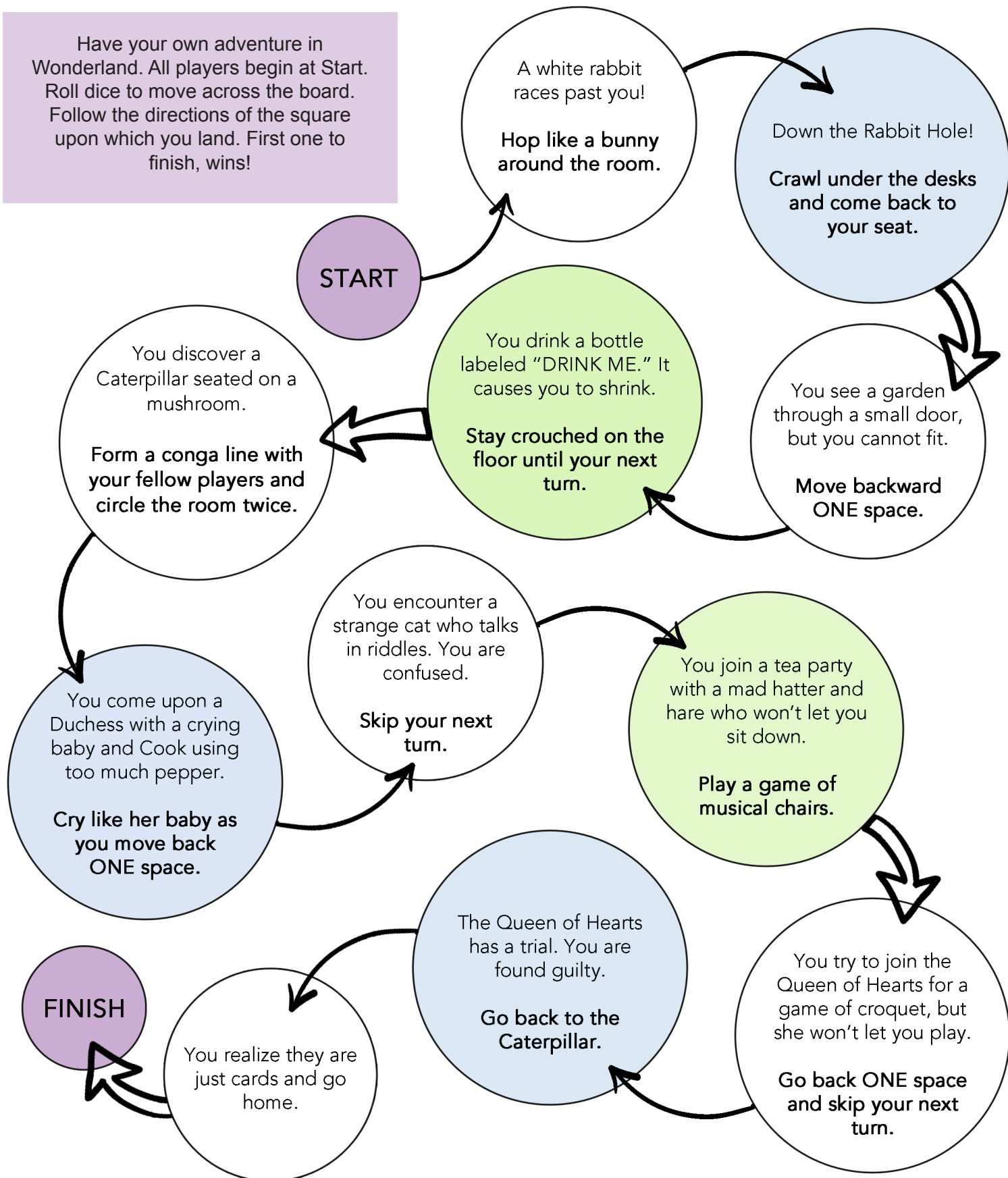
When Alice was a young woman, she set out on a grand tour of Europe with her sisters. She met Prince Leopold of England while he was studying at Christ Church and they fell in love. Unfortunately, the Prince had to marry a princess, but they named their first child Alice. Later on, she married Reginald Hargreaves and had three sons. Throughout her life, Alice enjoyed painting, singing, reading, and word games. After her husband died, Alice sold her handwritten copy of the book that Charles Dodgson had given her. When she was 80 years old, she traveled to the United States to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Lewis Carroll's (Charles Dodgson's) birth. While she was there, she received an honorary degree from Columbia University. Two years later, Alice Liddell Hargreaves died.



What to know - before the show!

Your Adventures in Wonderland

Have your own adventure in Wonderland. All players begin at Start. Roll dice to move across the board. Follow the directions of the square upon which you land. First one to finish, wins!



How to grow - after the show!

Cheshire Moves



The actors who played the Cheshire Cat in Lexington Children's Theatre's production of *Alice in Wonderland* had to work together to coordinate their motions. Acting and working in theatre takes a great deal of team work. Talk about this with your class. Discuss the types of challenges they would have if they were linked to other students. Now have them try it.

Ask your students to memorize the line "We're all mad here. I'm mad. You're mad." Ask them to make up a motion that will accompany each word. Once the motion for each word is established, ask your entire class to line up. They must recite this line and do the motion at the same time. See how long it takes your class to be completely together. After they have mastered the "We're all mad here. I'm mad. You're mad." line and motion, ask them to recite it with motion while moving about the room.

KAS: TH:Cr1.1.K.a, TH:Cr2.1.K

You Are What You Eat!

When Alice drinks the liquid from the vial, she grows larger. When she eats the cakes, she shrinks. Ask your students to think of other things in Wonderland that Alice could eat and what effect might they have on her. For example: if she ate a rose, her nose might grow larger, or if she took a sip of Wonderland soda, the fizz would make her fly. Encourage your students to be as creative as possible. Have them share their ideas with the class. Then, as a class, create a "Guide to Wonderland Cuisine" to help any other would-be wonderland travelers.



KAS: TH:Cr1.1.1.b, TH:Cr3.1.2.b



Big Alice, Little Alice

Help Alice by making things for her to use during her trip to Wonderland. What objects could the "little Alice" and the "big Alice" use, and how (the little Alice might use a mushroom as an umbrella or a shoe as a boat, for example, while the big Alice might use a mixing bowl as a drinking cup or a rake as a comb)?

Divide the class into groups. Assign each group to imagine five objects that could be used in different ways by either the "little Alice" or the "big Alice." After students have thought of their objects, have them draw and cut these objects out of construction paper. Put each group's objects into a separate envelope.

Switch the envelopes so that each group has a collection of objects that were created by another group. Have students try to guess how each of the objects could be used by either the big Alice or the little Alice.

KAS: TH:Re7.1.2

ACTIVATE IT!

Have the students pretend to use the objects as they think Alice could. The rest of the class should guess whether Alice is big or small and how that object is being used.

KAS: TH:Cr1.1.K.a, TH:Cr2.K

How to grow - after the show!

You Make the Rules



The Queen of Hearts makes up her own rules for Wonderland. Now you can make up your own rules for your classroom, home, or your own imagined world. Be as creative and outrageous as the Queen of Hearts when you write your own set of rules. Try to make it rhyme so that your subjects will remember all the rules.

First, you must always _____

Next, you must never _____

Sometimes _____

Often _____

Seldom _____

If _____, then _____

And remember _____

How to grow - after the show!

Resources and Related Titles

Here are more tales of interesting new worlds and faraway lands.

Through the Looking Glass and What Alice Found There by Lewis Carroll

The Hunting of the Snark by Lewis Carroll

The Chronicles of Narnia by C.S. Lewis

A Wrinkle in Time by Madeline L'Engle

Bridge to Terabithia by Katherine Paterson

The Wizard of Oz by L. Frank Baum

The Hobbit by J.R.R. Tolkien

These websites provide insight into the world of Wonderland, Victorian culture, and Charles Dodgson himself.

Alice in Wonderland – An Interactive Adventure
www.ruthannzaroff.com/wonderland/

Lenny's Alice in Wonderland Site
www.alice-in-wonderland.net/

The Victorian Web
www.victorianweb.org/

The Lewis Carroll Society of North America
www.lewiscarroll.org/

LCT teaches in YOUR school!

Would you like to see some of these play guide activities modeled in your classroom?

Book a workshop for your class with one of LCT's teaching artists! In our pre-show workshops, our teaching artists will engage students in acting skills and themes from the play through drama activities. In our post-show workshops, students will extend their play-going experience by strengthening their personal connection to the play and deepening their understanding of the themes and characters.



Call us at 859-254-4546 x226 to book a pre or post-show workshop for your class!

To learn more about Lexington Children's Theatre and our programming for your school visit:
www.lctonstage.org/for-educators/arts-education-in-the-classroom/