Student Learning Objectives - The Magic Paintbrush

30-minute preparatory session, 45-minute performance

Students Will Be Able To (SWBAT):
- Recognize Chinese vocabulary words
- Make inferences about the plot of a Chinese folktale and evaluate those inferences
- Identify elements of a classic Chinese folktale, including characters, plot points, and major themes
- Relate major themes, such as selflessness, bravery, and creativity to situations in their own lives
- Draw conclusions about Chinese culture and cultural differences

New York State Learning Standards met with The Magic Paintbrush

The Arts
- Standard 1: Creating, Performing and Participating in the Arts
- Standard 2: Knowing and Using Arts Materials and Resources
- Standard 3: Responding to and Analyzing Works of Art
- Standard 4: Understanding the Cultural Dimensions and Contributions of the Arts

English Language Arts
- Standard 1: Students will read, write, listen, and speak for information and understanding
- Standard 2: Students will read, write, listen, and speak for literary response and expression
- Standard 3: Students will read, write, listen, and speak for critical analysis and evaluation
- Standard 4: Students will read, write, listen, and speak for social interaction

Languages Other Than English (LOTE)
- Standard 2: Students will develop cross-cultural skills and understandings

Social Studies
- Standard 2: World History

Additional Resources for Teachers

Books

Websites
- http://education.asianart.org/explore-resources/video/magic-paintbrush

Television
- "Liang and the Magic Paintbrush." Reading Rainbow. Dir. Larry Lancit. PBS, 1983. DVD. Note to teachers: This episode is also available on iTunes

Activities

Pre-performance
1. Before exposing students to the plot of the story, ask them to make predictions based on the title The Magic Paintbrush. What might make a paintbrush magical? What might it be able to do that an ordinary paintbrush couldn’t?

2. The Magic Paintbrush is based on an ancient folktale that was passed down in the oral tradition and there are many existing adaptations today. Discuss with your students what it means to adapt a story. Select a familiar tale, such as Little Red Riding Hood. Break your students into small groups and assign each group a format to retell the assigned story. Orally, through pictures, and using the written word are a few possibilities. Have each group present their story to the class. Then, have the students discuss the similarities and differences of each version of the story they shared.

Post-performance
1. Though she is poor and cannot afford to buy art supplies, Xiao Yue is a very talented artist. The magic paintbrush expands her abilities to colossal proportions, which she then turns into an opportunity to help others. Have students identify things they are good at, such as sports, language arts, music, listening to others, etc. Then, ask them to come up with a magical "tool" that could take their talent to a fantastic level. Next, have them write stories or create art based on their talent-turned-superpower. Have the students share their work with the class.

2. Thanks to books, movies, comic books and TV shows, students will probably recognize themes in The Magic Paintbrush from superhero stories they already know—themes such as the value of anonymous good deeds, or the everyday citizen who steps up to save the day. How is the play, The Magic Paintbrush, similar to today’s popular superhero stories? How is it different? Have students create a Venn Diagram comparing and contrasting Xiao Yue and their favorite superheroes. They can also create diagrams for the supporting characters, such as modern villains to the Emperor, or modern sidekicks to Chen. When they’ve finished, have them write and illustrate a comic book adaptation of The Magic Paintbrush.

For more information on this production, including a Crosswalk of Common Core Instructional Shifts and a downloadable Activity Page, please visit our website: www.MRGeducation.com

Student Learning Objectives - The Magic Paintbrush

The Magic Paintbrush

By Kyle Adkins and Rachel Benjamin

STUDY GUIDE

3RD GRADE

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Summary
Xiao Yue is a talented but poor young artist who lives in a small fishing village in China. Every day she wishes for a paintbrush to replace the dull charcoal she uses to make portraits. One day, a mysterious artist presents Xiao Yu with an incredible gift: a magical paintbrush that has the power to make her art come to life! But with the brush comes a stern warning: She must only use her new powers to do good deeds. Seeing poverty all around her, Xiao Yu immediately goes to work, helping the people of her town. When she is captured by the evil Emperor, Xiao Yu is locked away and forced to make a difficult choice: Will she help the Emperor to wage war across China and share in his vast wealth, or will she heed the artist’s warning that her magic must only be used for good? This Chinese folktale teaches the value of putting the needs of others before our own, and about how quick thinking and creativity can save the day.

The Immersive Environment of the Play
The Merry-Go-Round adaptation of The Magic Paintbrush will drop students into the middle of the story—literally! The performance has been designed with the audience seated in the center of the action, surrounded on three sides by the characters and scenery. In addition to providing a unique visual perspective, this gives students the chance to experience the story from multiple points of view, prompting them to sympathize with the characters and make personal connections to the story.

Pre-Performance Preparatory Workshop
With the goals of the Common Core Standards in mind, the purpose of the preparatory workshop (“prep”) is to give students the tools to “unpack,” or to dissect and think critically about, a text—the text in this lesson being the performance of The Magic Paintbrush. Rather than attempt to outline the performance in its entirety, the intent in the prep is to introduce students to the language, characters, settings and type of story they will see. Based on that knowledge, students will then be able to make their own predictions about the show, allowing for critical thinking to continue throughout the performance.

Key Vocabulary
Culture: the arts, language, etiquette, religion, food and other customs that define a society.
Folk tale: a traditional, fictitious tale that is passed down orally.
Adaptation: changing the form in which a story is told, such as from a book into a movie.
Imperial: of, like or pertaining to an empire.
Extort: to gain something through violence, intimidation, or abuse of authority.
Revenue: the income of a government through taxation.
Phoenix: a mythical bird of great beauty who rises from ashes after death; a symbol of reborn hope and idealism.
Famine: extreme scarcity of food; widespread starvation across an area.
Malevolent: wishing evil or harm upon others.

Meet the Characters
Xiao Yue (“Show Yu” or “Shao Yu”): A gifted young artist and the protagonist of our story. Xiao Yue is selfless, honest and kind.
The Artist: After the magic paintbrush drops out of her pocket, the Artist rewards Xiao Yue for her pure heart when she returns it to her. The Artist makes the paintbrush a gift to Xiao Yue, but warns her that she must only use it to perform good deeds.
Bao: Bao is a rope merchant and friend to Xiao Yue and her family. He encourages Xiao Yue to nurture her artistic talents.
Deshi: A poor fisherman who needs a new net to feed his starving family.
The Emperor: The Emperor is a greedy man who uses violence and intimidation to get his way. He wants rule over all of China and is willing to do anything to achieve that goal—even go to war.

Learn Chinese
With 850 million speakers, Standard Mandarin (the official language of mainland China) is the most widely-spoken language in the world. Students can practice these phrases in the classroom before hearing them in our show!
Zai jian (TZIGH-jee-enn)—Goodbye!
Ni hao (KNEE-how)—Hello!
Jieshu (Jee-EH-shu)—To end; to finish