

Study Guide prepared by
Catherine Bush
Barter Playwright-in-Residence

Alice in Wonderland

Adapted by Catherine Bush from Lewis Carroll's story *Alice's Adventure in Wonderland*

*Especially for Grades K-6

By the Barter Players – Barter on Demand

(NOTE: Standards listed below include those for reading *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, seeing a performance of the play, and completing the study guide.)

Virginia SOLs

English – K.1, K.5, K.8, K.9, K.12, 1.1, 1.5, 1.8, 1.9, 1.13, 2.6, 2.7, 2.8, 2.12, 3.4, 3.5, 3.9, 3.11, 4.1, 4.2, 4.4, 4.5, 4.7, 4.9, 5.1, 5.2, 5.4, 5.5, 5.7, 5.9, 6.2, 6.4, 6.5, 6.7, 6.9

Theatre Arts – 6.5, 6.7, 6.8, 6.10, 6.18,

Tennessee/North Carolina Common Core State Standards

English/Language Arts - Reading Literacy: K.1, K.3, K.5, K.7, K.9, 1.1, 1.2, 1.7, 1.9, 1.10, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.10, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.9, 3.10, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.7, 4.9, 4.10, 5.1, 5.3, 5.4, 5.9, 5.10, 6.2, 6.4, 6.7, 6.9

English Language Arts – Writing: K.1, K.5, K.7, K.8, 1.1, 1.3, 1.5, 1.8, 2.1, 2.3, 2.5, 2.8, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.7, 3.8, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.7, 4.8, 4.9, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.7, 5.8, 5.9, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.7, 6.8, 6.9

Tennessee Fine Arts Curriculum Standards

Theatre – K.1, K.3, K.4, K.5, K.6, 1.1, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 2.1, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 3.1, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 4.1, 4.3, 4.6, 4.7, 5.1, 5.3, 5.6, 5.7, 6.1, 6.3, 6.6, 6.7

North Carolina Essential Standards

Theatre Arts – K.A.1, K.AE.1, 1.A.1, 1.AE.1, 1.CU.2, 2.C.2, 2.A.1, 2.AE.1, 3.C.1, 3.C.2, 3.A.1, 3.CU.1, 3.CU.2, 4.C.1, 4.A.1, 4.AE.1, 5.C.1, 5.A.1, 5.AE.1, 5.CU.2, 6.C.1, 6.C.2, 6.A.1, 6.AE.1



A Brief History

Barter Theatre was founded during the Great Depression by Robert Porterfield, an enterprising young actor. He and his fellow actors found themselves out of work and hungry in New York City. Porterfield contrasted that to the abundance of food, but lack of live theatre, around his home region in Southwest Virginia. He returned to Washington County with an extraordinary proposition: bartering produce from the farms and gardens of the area to gain admission to see a play.

Barter Theatre opened its doors on June 10, 1933 proclaiming, "With vegetables you cannot sell, you can buy a good laugh." The price of admission was 40 cents or the equivalent in produce, the concept of trading "ham for Hamlet" caught on quickly. At the end of the first season, the Barter Company cleared \$4.35 in cash, two barrels of jelly and enjoyed a collective weight gain of over 300 pounds.

Playwrights including Noel Coward, Tennessee Williams and Thornton Wilder accepted Virginia ham as payment for royalties. An exception was George Bernard Shaw, a vegetarian, who bartered the rights to his plays for spinach.

Today, Barter Theatre has a reputation as a theatre where many actors performed before going on to achieve fame and fortune. The most recognized of these alumni include Gregory Peck, Patricia Neal, Ernest Borgnine, Hume Cronyn, Ned Beatty, Gary Collins, Larry Linville and Frances Fisher. The list also included James Burrows, creator of *Cheers*, Barry Corbin, and the late Jim Varney.

Robert Porterfield passed away in 1971. His successor, Rex Partington, had been at Barter in the 1950s as an actor and in the 1970s as stage manager. Rex returned as chief administrator from 1972 until his retirement in 1992. In March 2006, he passed away.

Richard Rose was named the Producing Artistic Director in October 1992. During his tenure, attendance grew from 42,000 to more than 163,000 annual patrons. Significant capital improvements were also made, including renovation of the main stage (now Gilliam Stage) in 1995 and the 2006 addition of The Barter Café at Stage II (now the Smith Theatre). Rose retired in December of 2019 and Katy Brown, who had been at Barter since 1998 as the Director of the Barter Players and as an Associate Artistic Director, was named the fourth Producing Artistic Director – and is the first woman to hold the position.

Barter represents two distinct venues of live theatre: Barter Theatre’s Gilliam Stage, and Barter’s Smith Theatre. Gilliam Stage, with over 500 seats, features traditional theatre in a luxurious setting. Barter’s Smith Theatre offers seating for 167 around a thrust stage in an intimate setting and is perfect for more adventurous productions. Barter Theatre is also home to The Barter Players, a talented ensemble of actors who produce plays for young audiences throughout the year.

History is always in the making at Barter Theatre, building on legends of the past; Barter looks forward to the challenge of growth in the future.

Setting

A picnic near a river as well as various locations in



Wonderland....

Characters

Alice – a young girl with an enormous imagination

Lorina – Alice’s older sister

Freddy – Alice’s little brother

Mama – Alice’s mother

Papa – Alice’s father

Uncle Charles – Alice’s uncle, always late

White Rabbit – A rabbit Alice chases

Caterpillar – a pipe-smoking caterpillar



Pigeon – a protective mother bird
Cheshire Cat – a grinning feline
March Hare – a puzzling hare
Mad Hatter – an equally puzzling hatter
Two of Hearts – servant to the Queen
Queen of Hearts – rules Wonderland
King of Hearts – her husband
Knave of Hearts – Queen’s servant

Note: Cast Size and Doubling of Actors (“Doubling” means one actor plays more than one role in a production) In this production of *Alice in Wonderland* we will be using six actors; the actor playing Alice will play that role only; the other five actors will play all the remaining parts. Doubling (and tripling) of actors requires distinction between characters. In this production, characters will be distinguished by costume, voice and other physical character traits.

Vocabulary Words

proof		cumbersome
falsehood	Synopsis	riddle
punctualit	adventur	shrink
y wager	e barrow	confusing
croquet	retrieve	chrysalis
conversatio	frustrating	content
n	telescope	hedgerow
imaginative	impertinent	acquaintanc
waistcoat	disagreeabl	e curious
abide	e inquisitive	civil
tumbling	insistent	impudent

Alice is picking mushrooms when her brother and sister appear and insist that Alice join them in a game of tag. Alice does so, but soon their game is interrupted by the arrival of their parents, who bring her sister Lorina a birthday present – a beautiful hat. With no gift to give her sister, Alice becomes despondent – until Lorina suggests that Alice write her a story. She gives Alice a blank journal and leaves her to it. Unable to think of anything interesting to write, Alice lies back on the riverbank to rest. Suddenly a White Rabbit enters, wearing a waistcoat and carrying a pocket watch. White Rabbit claims that he is late for the Queen’s birthday party for which he needs a gift. Spying Alice’s book, he takes it and runs off. Alice gives chase and follows him down a rabbit hole, where she discovers a Wonderland full of magical creatures such as a pipe-smoking Caterpillar, a grinning Cheshire Cat, and a maddening Mad Hatter with his equally frustrating sidekick the March Hare. Alice journeys from on to the next, seeking the thieving White Rabbit, until she eventually finds herself at the birthday party of the infamous, croquet-playing Queen of Hearts who, upon meeting Alice, orders “off with her head!” Alice is able to save herself by solving the riddle of who stole the tarts, and then wakes up to find herself back on the riverbank with an amazing story to give to her sister.

Biography of the Author

Lewis Carroll was born Charles Lutwidge Dodson in Daresbury, England on January 27, 1832. His father, a clergyman, raised Charles and his ten brothers and sisters in a rectory. As a child, Charles excelled in mathematics, which earned him a scholarship to Christ Church, Oxford, and eventually he became a lecturer in mathematics.



Charles was afflicted with a stammer, a speech impediment which disappeared when he would converse with children. As a result, he had many friendships with young people, including a friend’s daughter, Alice Liddell, who he used to entertain for hours with fantastical stories of made-up worlds. When Alice asked him to write them down, he did so – the

outcome of which is two of the most famous children's books of all time –

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland (1865) and *Through the Looking Glass and What Alice Found There* (1871).

Charles continued to write both fiction and mathematical treatises. He was also a photographer of some repute. Shortly before his 66th birthday, Charles developed pneumonia. He died on January 15, 1898 and is buried in the Mount Cemetery in Guildford.

Biography of the Playwright

Catherine Bush lives in Abingdon, Virginia where she is Barter Theatre's Playwright-in-Residence. Her plays for young audiences include *Cry Wolf!*, *Sleeping Beauty*, *Rapunzel*, *Frosty*, *The Scarlet Letter*, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, *All I Want for Christmas is My Two Front Teeth*, *My Imaginary Pirate*, *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*, *The Call of the Wild*, *The Princess and the Pea*, *The Red Badge of*



Courage, *Aesop's Fables*, *Santa Claus is Coming to Town*, *Mother Goose: The Musical*, *'Twas the Night Before Christmas*, *Old Turtle* and *the Broken Truth*, *Jingle All the Way*, *Antigone*, *Robin Hood*, *Great Expectations*, *Clementine the Musical*, and the upcoming *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. www.catherinebushplays.com

WORD SEARCH

Find the following words below:

Wonderland, rabbit hole, Alice, Caterpillar, Cheshire Cat, Lorina, White Rabbit, mushroom, March Hare, Mad Hatter, Queen of Hearts, croquet, raspberry tarts, Lewis Carroll, Freddy, Pigeon, Uncle Charles, pocket watch, birthday, adventure, Knave of Hearts

U H M T E U Q O R C A M D O S
N C A A I A R H Y D A N C S T
C T R N C B D G V D A A T Y R
L A C I H O B E H L T R Y A A

E W H R H G N A R E A D A D E
C T H O E T T E R E D Q L H H
H E A L U T D P H E E O I T F
A K R R E N I F R R T T C R O
R C E R O L O F C M E I E I N
L O T W L E P I G E O N H B E
E P Y A V M O O R H S U M W E
S T R A T Y R R E B P S A R U
P Y N T A C E R I H S E H C Q
M K L E W I S C A R R O L L S
R A B B I T H O L E L J R Z K

Color the picture!



True and False

After seeing the play, answer these questions.

Write **T** if the statement is **True** and **F** if the statement is **False**.

1. ___ *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* is a story written by Hans Christian Anderson.
2. ___ The White Rabbit carries a pocket watch.
3. ___ The Cheshire Cat never grins.
4. ___ Alice followed the March Hare down the rabbit hole.
5. ___ Pigeon accuses Alice of trying to eat her eggs.
6. ___ Alice has tea with the Mad Hatter and the March Hare.
7. ___ Caterpillar advises Alice to eat the mushroom.
8. ___ The Mad Hatter wants to play croquet with Alice.
9. ___ The Two of Hearts is painting the red roses white.
10. ___ Alice grows and shrinks constantly in this story.
11. ___ Alice accuses the Knave of Hearts of stealing the Queen's tarts.
12. ___ Freddy is Alice's older brother.
13. ___ The King of Hearts constantly says "Off with his head!"
14. ___ The Cheshire Cat swims in a river of tears.
15. ___ The White Rabbit is always on time.



Questions/Activities

1. Read the story *Alice's Adventure in Wonderland* in class. How does it compare to the production you saw? What was Alice's motives for going down the rabbit hole in the story? What was her motive for going down the rabbit hole in the play? **Discuss.**

2. In this play, Alice follows the White Rabbit down the rabbit hole because he stole something important from her. What is your prized possession? Would you chase a rabbit down a rabbit hole to retrieve it? **Write a story** about your most prized possession, explaining its significance. **Present your story to your class.**



Draw a picture of what you imagine Wonderland to look like!

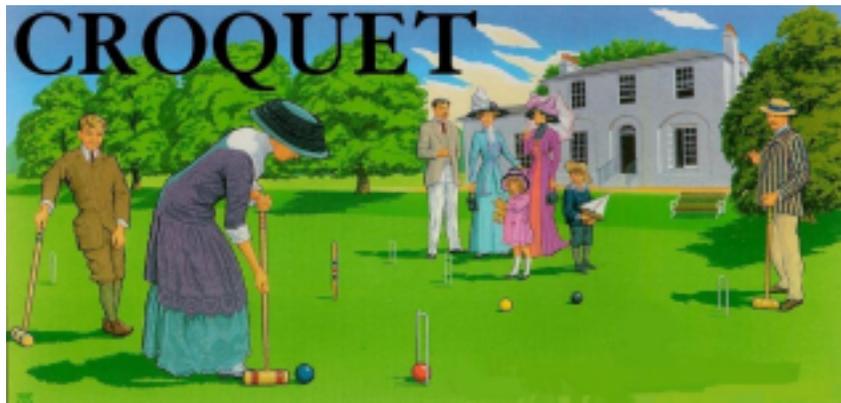
3. In this play, two of the characters we meet are the White Rabbit and the

March Hare. Using the internet, research the differences and similarities between rabbits and hares. **Present your findings to the class. BONUS QUESTION:** What are the origins of the expression “Mad as a March Hare?”



Rabbit Hare

4. In this play, Alice has two opportunities to play croquet – one with her family, and the other with the Queen of Hearts. **Using the internet, research the history of croquet.** Where was the game invented? How do you play? What are the rules? What is the equipment called? **Make an oral presentation to your class.**



5. Define the **vocabulary words** found on the top of Pg. 4 then write sentences using them. Remember: anyone reading your sentence should be able to understand the word from the context in which it is used.

6. In this story, Alice’s curiosity gets the better of her and she does impulsive things like going down the rabbit hole, and eating and drinking unknown food and drink. What were the results of these actions? Do you think what Alice chose to do was the wisest course of action? Divide the class in two: assign one half of the class a paper defending the idea that “curiosity is necessary for growth.” Assign the other half of the class a paper defending the idiom “curiosity killed the cat” Pick one representative from

each group and let them debate the topic.



7. Lewis Carroll was born in England. **Research the people of England and their culture.** What foods do they eat? What is their climate? The population of the country? What sort of government does it have? **Present your findings to the class.**

8. In this play, Alice is the middle of three children. Her sister Lorina is older, and her brother Freddy is younger. As a middle child, Alice sometimes wishes she was smaller, and sometimes wishes she was bigger. How is this reflected once she goes down the rabbit hole? Have there been circumstances in your life when you wished you were either older or younger? What are they, and what made you feel that way? **Discuss.**

WRITE YOUR OWN CHILDREN'S STORY!

Imagine you went down a rabbit hole... or clambered into a cave... or opened a mysterious door into a Wonderland of your own making!

Read it to your class

9. Read this other story by the Lewis Carroll: *Through the Looking Glass and What Alice Found There*. Now compare it to *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. **What themes do the two stories have in common?** How are they different? What are these stories trying to tell us? **Discuss.**



10. This play, *Alice in Wonderland*, is adapted from a well known children's story. Pick another favorite childhood story: *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*, *Little Red Riding Hood*, etc. **Divide the class into groups and assign each group a scene from the story. Have each group adapt their scene into the scene for a play.** Try to avoid using a narrator. Instead, tell the story through action and dialogue (conversation between two or more people). **Design the appropriate costumes, props and set needed.** Now have each group present their scene in chronological order. Is the story told? How different is your play from the book/story? How difficult is it to take a piece of literature and turn it into a play?

11. Write a letter to your favorite actors from this production. Tell them what you liked about the play, their performance, etc. Mail your letters to:

The Barter Players
C/o Barter Theatre
P.O. Box 867
Abingdon, VA 24212-0867
ATTN: Alice in Wonderland

Suggested Further Reading/Links

Other stories by the Lewis Carroll:

Through the Looking Glass and What Alice Found There

The Hunting of the Snark

Sylvie and Bruno

To find out more about Lewis Carroll, check out this link:

<http://www.lewiscarroll.org/>