

Charlotte's Web



EDUCATION GUIDE • GRADE LEVELS K-5

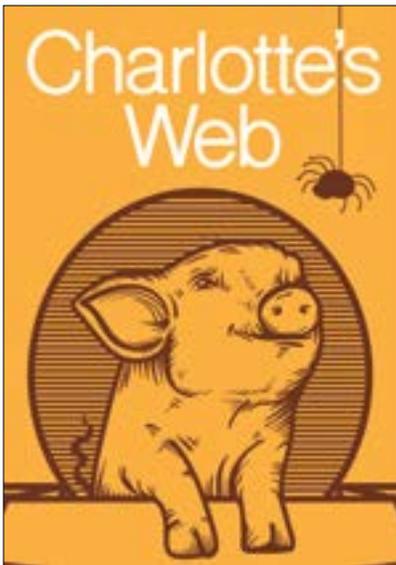
Education Guide Information by Derek T. Pickens

CHARLESTON STAGE “IT IS NOT OFTEN THAT SOMEONE COMES ALONG WHO IS A TRUE FRIEND AND A GOOD WRITER. CHARLOTTE WAS BOTH.”

Charleston Stage, now celebrating its 44th Season, is in residence at the Historic Dock Street Theatre. In this intimate setting no student is more than 50 feet from the stage. Charleston Stage is South Carolina’s largest resident professional theatre. More than a half million students have attended Charleston Stage’s fully professional productions at the Historic Dock Street Theatre over the past 44 years. Charleston Stage school shows feature dazzling scenery, stunning costumes, and casts of professional actors.

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Adapted by Joseph Robinette
Based on the Book by E.B. White

SYNOPSIS:

The enchanting and moving story of the special friendship between Wilbur the pig and Charlotte the spider brings E.B. White's immortal children's classic to the stage. To save Wilbur from going to market, Charlotte begins to spin words like "remarkable" and "some pig" into her web over Wilbur's pig pen bringing astonishment and wonder to a flabbergasted farmer and his daughter, Fern.

CHARACTERS:

- Fern Arable** - a young girl who understands what animals say to each other.
- Avery Arable** - her brother
- John Arable** - Fern and Avery's father
- Homer Zuckerman** - Fern's uncle
- Edith Zuckerman** - Fern's aunt
- Lurvy** - a hired hand
- Wilbur** - a pig and Fern's best friend
- Templeton** - a gluttonous rat who occasionally does the right thing
- Charlotte** - an extraordinary spider who helps to protect Wilbur
- Goose, Gander, Sheep and Lamb** - farm animals
- Ensemble** - reporters, photographers, spectators, judges, fairgoers, announcer, spiders

RECOMMENDED SUBJECT AREAS:

ELA:

- Allagory
- Imagery
- Robust Vocabulary

THEMES EXPLORED:

- Friendship
- Accepting Others
- Working Together
- Caring for Others
- Sacrifice
- Being Brave

GRADE LEVELS K-5

GLOSSARY

Adjourned - break off (a meeting, legal case, or game) with the intention of resuming it later.

Brutal - savagely violent.

Conspiracy - a secret plan by a group to do something unlawful or harmful.

Determined - having made a firm decision and being resolved not to change it.

Goslings - a young goose.

Miraculous - occurring through divine or supernatural intervention, or manifesting such power.

Spinnerets - any of a number of different organs through which the silk, gossamer, or thread of spiders, silkworms, and certain other insects is produced.

Unremitting - never relaxing or slackening.

BACKGROUND INFO

AUTHOR OF THE BOOK



Elywin Brooks (E.B.) White (1899-1985)

E.B. White the author of the beloved children's classics *Charlotte's Web*, *Stuart Little*, and *The Trumpet of the Swan*, was born in Mount Vernon, New York on July 11, 1899.

He graduated from Cornell University in 1921 and worked for United Press International and the American Legion News Service in 1921 and 1922. After briefly working as a reporter for the *Seattle Times*, White then worked at the Frank Seaman advertising agency as a production assistant and copywriter for two years.

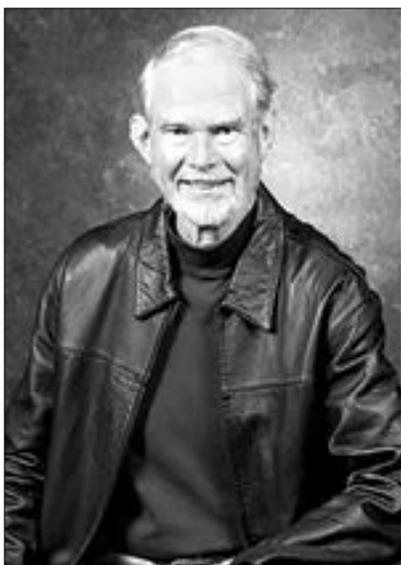
In 1925, E.B. White became a contributing editor of *The New Yorker* magazine in 1927, an association which continued until his passing in 1985.

E.B. White authored more than seventeen books of prose and poetry and was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters in 1973. In addition to writing children's books, E. B. White also wrote books for adults, as well as poems and essays, and he drew sketches for *The New Yorker* magazine. Some of his other books include *One Man's Meat*, *The Second Tree from the Corner*, and *Here is New York*. He revised and edited William S. Strunk's *The Elements of Style*, which is widely used in college English courses.

BACKGROUND INFO

Mr. White won countless awards, including the 1971 National Medal for Literature and the Laura Ingalls Wilder Medal, which commended him for making “a substantial and lasting contribution to literature for children.” Mr. White passed away on October 1, 1985, leaving behind a legacy that live on today through a stream of books, plays, musicals, and films, all produced in various languages.

PLAY DRAMATIZED BY



Joseph Robinette

Joseph Robinette is a Tony Award nominee for the libretto of the acclaimed *A Christmas Story, The Musical*. He is the author or co-author of 55 published plays and musicals. His works have been produced at the Lunt-Fontanne Theatre and Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts in New York, Pittsburgh Playhouse, The 5th Avenue Theatre in Seattle, the Goodman Theatre in Chicago, Kansas City Repertory Theatre, the BBC and in all 50 states and in 17 foreign countries. Twelve of his works have been translated into foreign languages, and another five have been anthologized. Robinette collaborated with E.B. White on the authorized stage version of *Charlotte's Web*, and he wrote the musical version with Charles Strouse (*Annie* and *Bye, Bye, Birdie*). Other dramatizations include *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, *Anne of Green Gables* and *Stuart Little*.

He is the recipient of the American Alliance for Theatre & Education's Charlotte B. Chorpensing Cup, the 2004 Distinguished Play Award for *Sarah, Plain and Tall* and the Children's Theatre Foundation of America medallion for his “body of dramatic works for family audiences in the United States and beyond.”

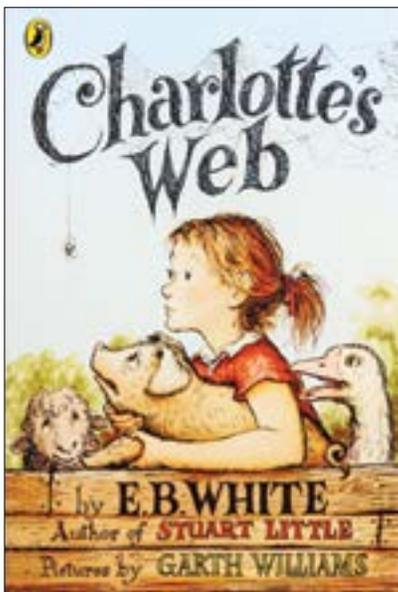
A regular contributor to several children's theatre publications, Mr. Robinette is also a founding member of the national organization Opera for Youth, and a member of ASCAP and the American Alliance for Theatre and Education. He has guest-lectured at several universities and has taught playwriting at the Cape Cod Writers' Conference, the Ohio State Writers' Series and the Philadelphia Writers' Workshop.

Mr. Robinette is now a Professor of Theatre at Rowan University in New Jersey. He holds a B.A. from Carson-Newman College and an M.A. and Ph.D. from Southern Illinois University.

THE STORIES BEHIND THE BOOKS

During his lifetime, many young readers asked Mr. White if his stories were true. In a letter written to be sent to his fans, he answered, “No, they are imaginary tales... But real life is only one kind of life — there is also the life of the imagination.”

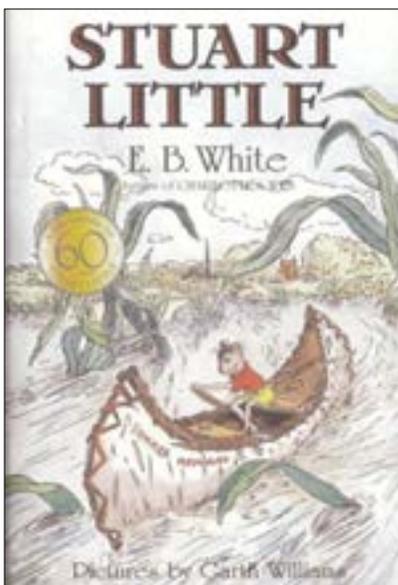
Mr. White lived on a farm in Maine where he kept animals, and some of these creatures made their way into his stories and books, like Stuart in *Stuart Little*, or Charlotte in *Charlotte’s Web*. After all, as E.B. White said, “I like animals, and my barn is a very pleasant place to be, at all hours!”



Charlotte’s Web

How did E. B. White think up the story for *Charlotte’s Web*? “I had been watching a big grey spider at her work and was impressed by how clever she was at weaving.

Gradually I worked the spider into the story that you know, a story of friendship and salvation on a farm.”



Stuart Little

“Many years ago,” E.B. White would say, “I went to bed one night in a railway sleeping car, and during the night I dreamed about a tiny boy who acted rather like a mouse. That’s how the story of *Stuart Little* got started.”



Kindergarten, First, and Second Grade

ELA Meaning and Context | Standard 5 - Determine meaning and develop logical interpretations by making predictions, inferring, drawing conclusions, analyzing, synthesizing, providing evidence, and investigating multiple interpretations.

Indicators - 5.1 & 5.2

ELA Meaning and Context | Standard 7 - Analyze the relationship among ideas, themes, or topics in multiple media and formats, and in visual, auditory, and kinesthetic modalities.

Indicators - 7.1 & 7.2

Third, Fourth, and Fifth Grade

ELA Meaning and Context | Standard 5 - Determine meaning and develop logical interpretations by making predictions, inferring, drawing conclusions, analyzing, synthesizing, providing evidence, and investigating multiple interpretations.

Indicators - 5.1 & 5.2

ELA Meaning and Context | Standard 7 - Analyze the relationship among ideas, themes, or topics in multiple media and formats, and in visual, auditory, and kinesthetic modalities.

Indicators - 7.1

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

NOTE TO TEACHER: Please feel free to adjust activities to meet the needs of your classroom.

PRE-SHOW ACTIVITIES

DISCUSSION PROMPTS

1. Have you seen the movie or Television versions of *Charlotte's Web*? If so, what do you remember about them?
2. The story takes place on a farm! How do you think the set will be designed? Do you think it will help you to feel as if the show is like you are "on a farm"? What scenic elements are essential in creating this feeling? What do you expect to see?
3. Have you ever been on a farm? What was your experience like? Did you pet any animals? Which animals were your favorites? Least favorite? Would you go again?

POST-SHOW ACTIVITIES

Discussion Questions

1. What scenic elements and/or props and costumes that you saw convinced you that the play took place on a farm? What would you have added to create this experience?
2. Dramatic Irony is a device used in plays when the audience knows something – a secret – that the characters in the play do not. What are some examples of "dramatic irony" in the play?
3. In *Charlotte's Web*, the animals play an important part of the story. What other plays, books, or movies that have animals playing lead characters? How are those stories and their characters different from those in *Charlotte's Web*?

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

NOTE TO TEACHER: Please feel free to adjust activities to meet the needs of your classroom.

POST-SHOW ACTIVITIES

Activities

1. Want to try designing your own *Charlotte's Web* set? Using a drawing or a diorama (perhaps in a shoe box, sideways), show how you would create the setting for this play. Feel free to use sand, dirt, grass, popsicle sticks, and figurines to set the mood of your set.
2. There have been many different productions of *Charlotte's Web* that contain major changes in script and with the songs—some add songs and some cut songs. If you were to put up a production, what would you cut or what could you add to make the piece more entertaining or make more sense.
3. What other animals may be at a farm that was not in *Charlotte's Web*? Pick your favorite farm animal and write a narrative about a day in the life of that animal, have classmates act it out. Try giving each of your characters one lasting emotion to play for the show.
4. Did you know that people actually keep pigs for pets? Teacup potbelly piglets have become very popular to keep as pets. They are as smart as dogs and cleaner than cats! What other information can you find out about farm animals kept as pets? Would you keep one? What would you name your pet?

CONTENT WARNINGS

Charlotte's Web is a classic tale for all ages, however it does depict rough housing and makes mention of killing Wilbur. There is also a scene that shows the death of Charlotte.

RESOURCES

Film adaptations

Charlotte's Web (1973 film)

The book was adapted into an animated feature by Hanna-Barbera Productions and Sagittarius Productions in 1973 with a song score by the Sherman Brothers.

2003 sequel

Charlotte's Web 2: Wilbur's Great Adventure

This is the sequel to the 1973 film, released direct-to-video by Paramount Pictures.

2006 version

Charlotte's Web (2006 film)

Paramount Pictures, with Walden Media, Kerner Entertainment Company, and Nickelodeon Movies, produced a live-action/animated film starring Dakota Fanning as Fern and the voice of Julia Roberts as Charlotte, released on December 15, 2006.

Video game

Charlotte's Web (video game)

A video game of the 2006 film was developed by Backbone Entertainment and published by THQ and Sega, and released on December 12, 2006 for the Game Boy Advance, Nintendo DS, PlayStation 2 and PC.

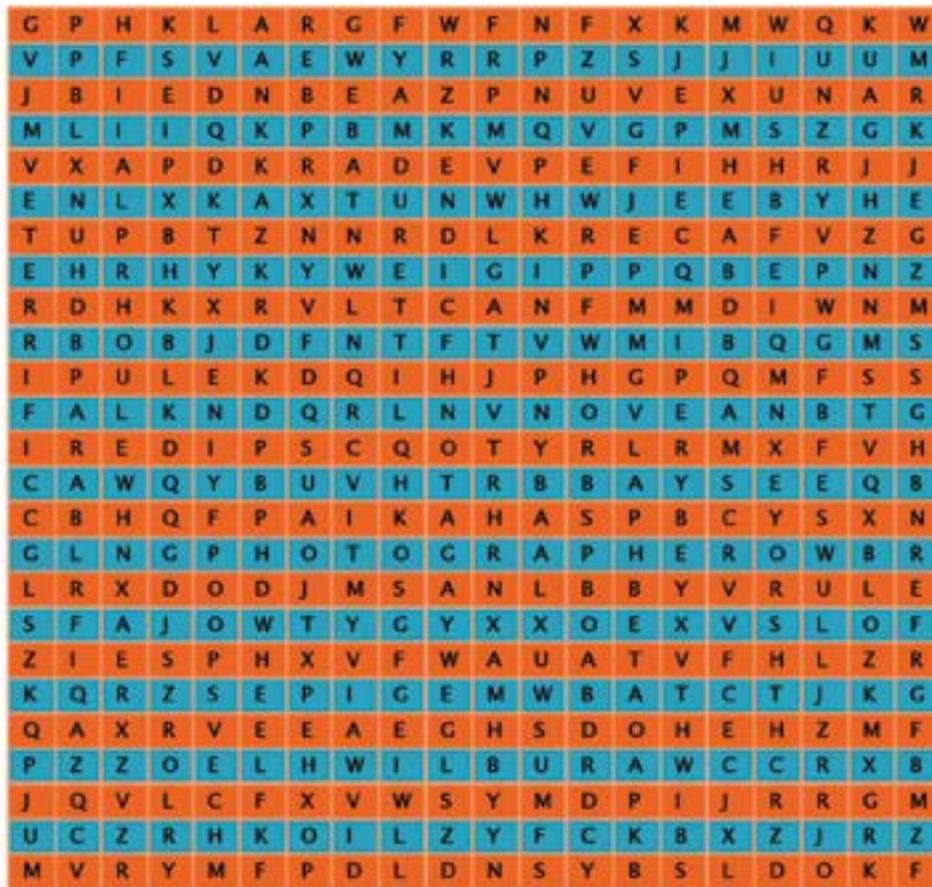
<https://www.dramaticpublishing.com/authors/profile/view/url/e-b-white>

https://prabook.com/web/joseph_allen.robinette/359057

<http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/contributor/e-b-white>

<https://www.dramaticpublishing.com/charlotte-s-web>

WORD SEARCH



Try to find all of the words!

ARABLE

AXE

BARN

CHARLOTTE

FAIR

FERN

FERRIS

GRASS

LITTER

LURVY

PHOTOGRAPHER

PIG

RADIANT

RAT

SHEEP

SPIDER

TERRIFIC

WEB

WHEEL

WILBUR

DOCK STREET THEATRE



For almost 300 years audiences have delighted in performances at the Historic Dock Street Theatre which stands on the site of the very first theatre building in America which opened its doors in 1736. The current building, originally The Planter's Hotel was built in 1803 and in 1937 was converted into the Dock Street Theatre know today. Charleston Stage presents over 150 performances at the Historic Dock Street Theatre playing to theatre goers from every state in the union and many foreign countries. The Dock Street Theatre, newly renovated in 2010, is currently owned and managed by the City of Charleston. Other

performing arts groups including Spoleto Festival USA perform here annually.

On February 12, 1736 the Dock Street Theatre opened with a performance of *The Recruiting Officer*. Built on the corner of Church Street and Dock Street (now known as Queen Street), the Historic Dock Street Theatre was the first building in America built exclusively to be used for theatrical performances. Flora, the first opera performance in America, took place at the Historic Dock Street Theatre.

The original Dock Street Theatre was probably destroyed by the Great Fire of 1740 which destroyed many of the buildings in Charleston's French Quarter. In 1809, the Planter's Hotel was built on this site and in 1835 the wrought iron balcony and sandstone columns of the Church Street facade were added. A number of notable persons worked and patronized the Planter's Hotel including the noted 19th Century actor Junius Brutus Booth (father of Edwin and John Wilkes Booth). Robert Smalls, an African-American Civil War hero, who stole a steamboat in the harbor and sailed it out past the Confederate-held Ft. Sumter and turned it over to the blockading Union Fleet, served as a waiter in the hotel's dining room prior to the war. Charleston's famed Planter's Punch was first introduced here.

After the Civil War, the Planter's Hotel fell into disrepair and was slated for demolition. But in 1935, after Milton Pearlstine made the property available to the City of Charleston and at the urging of Mayor Burnet Maybank and other notable citizens, the original building became a Depression Era WPA (Works Progress Administration) project. At that time, the present theatre was constructed within the shell of the

DOCK STREET THEATRE



Planter's Hotel. The hotel's grand foyer became the grand foyer of the theatre and the hotel's dining room now serves as the box office lobby. The beautiful woodwork and mantels of the second floor drawing room were salvaged from the Radcliffe-King Mansion (circa 1799) which stood at the corner of George and Meeting Streets and was razed to build the College of Charleston gymnasium, another WPA project. Modeled on eighteenth century London playhouses by Charleston architect Albert Simons, the present Dock Street Theatre's new stage house and auditorium were built in the hotel's courtyard. The local carpenters who were put to work as a part of this Depression era relief effort utilized locally grown and milled native black cypress for the beautiful warm wooden interior. Following this \$350,000 renovation, The Historic Dock Street Theatre's second grand opening took place on November 26, 1937. Notables in the audience included author DuBose Heyward (*Porgy*) who was named writer-in-residence.

The Historic Dock Street Theatre reopened for the third time on March 18, 2010 after a three year, \$19 million dollar renovation by the City of Charleston. This extensive full-scale renovation brought the historic theatre into the 21st century with state-of-the-art lighting and sound, modern heating and air conditioning, and new restrooms and seating. In addition, the theatre was made seismically secure and fully handicapped accessible. Extensive sound-proofing was added to ensure that outside noises no longer intruded on performances inside.

INTRODUCTION

Everyone wants to have a great time at the theater, but many students are unaware of how to do so while also being respectful. The first thing you must do is define what theatre etiquette is. Here are some general guidelines that are followed in the theater:

- Be respectful of performers during the show. The audience is very close to the stage, and the actors are aware of all movement and noise. So, please no talking during the show.
- There should be no eating, drinking, or gum chewing during the show.
- Hats should not be worn in the theatre. This includes baseball caps.
- There should be no movement in and out of the theatre during the performance unless it is an emergency.
- Make sure to turn off all electronic devices.
- There should be no audio or video recording during the performance.
- Most importantly, ENJOY THE SHOW!

These rules can sometimes seem negative, so to make learning about it fun, use the following activity to introduce your students to audience etiquette.

OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

- Act out their behavior and dress at four different types of performances.
- List appropriate modes of behavior and dress for each event.
- Identify people in the group who advance, hinder, or add nothing to the group's purpose.

- Identify the type of performance from the actions and attire portrayed.
- Explain why each type of conduct and clothing is appropriate for the venue.
- Produce a poster and brochure outline audience behavior for the theatre.

MATERIALS

- Colored tickets to different events
- A hat

SC Academic Standards for the Visual and Performing Arts

Theatre - Valuing and Responding | Standard 7 - The student will analyze, evaluate, and derive meanings from improvised and scripted scenes, live theatre performances, and theatrical performances on film, television, and other electronic media.

Indicators - T7.1 | Identify, demonstrate, and use audience etiquette to be used during theatre activities and performances.

Aim

How do we behave differently for a live theatre production than we do at other types of performances?

ACTIVITY (30-45 MINUTES)

- Divide class into four groups by having students pull tickets from a hat to four events on four different colors of paper (e.g., white, pink, yellow, green) reading "Admit One."
- Students get together with those with the same color tickets. Write on the board:

Those of you with the following colors will attend the following events:

- 1) White = A private screening of [insert title of popular movie]
- 2) Pink = A live concert by [insert name of relevant pop/rock band]
- 3) Yellow = A Broadway Musical or Play
- 4) Green = An interactive Improvisation show

- Distribute brainstorm sheet to each group.
- Instructor's prompt: Discuss what you believe is the appropriate way to dress for your event as well as the appropriate behavior for the audience. You are to select a recorder from your group who will write the group's responses. Next, plan a brief (one-minute) scene in which you act out your even, showing the audience's behavior. You will have ten minutes to complete this task.
- After 10 minutes, have each group act out their event for the class without revealing it. Ask the students: What event were they demonstrating? How did you know which event was being portrayed? How many of you have been to an event like the one you portrayed in class?
- Have reporters tell the class what each group decided about dress and behavior at the event it attended.
- Ask: How many of you have ever been to a performance that began with announcements to the audience? What were they? Why were they made?

SUMMARY

How is dress for the four events different? Why is audience behavior different in a participatory even than it is an audience? How do you think our behavior should be at the Dock Street Theatre?

BRAINSTORM SHEET

GROUP MEMBERS: _____

RECORDER'S NAME: _____

EVENT: _____

APPROPRIATE DRESS

REASONS

APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR

REASONS

Please make sure the following information and bus parking map is given to your bus company before your scheduled performance.

1) Dock Street Theatre is located at 135 Church Street in downtown Charleston. The area of Church Street that Dock Street Theatre is located on is a one way street. Please access Church Street via Broad Street. (See attached map)

2) IMPORTANT - You may load/unload passengers on Church Street in front of Dock Street Theatre. There are additional bus zones located by St. Philip's Church located 1/2 block away from the theatre. (See attached map) Police officers and staff will be there to assist with traffic flow. Bus drivers will be advised as where to stop and load/unload passengers.

3) Do not travel on Chalmers Street. The residents on this street along with the City are trying to preserve the historic cobblestones, and the weight of buses can damage these stones, which align the street.

4) There is a designated bus parking zone on Concord Street where you can park. (See attached map) You can also park near the Aquarium. No buses are allowed to park in front of Dock Street Theatre or by St. Philip's Church during the performance. School Matinees are typically one hour long. Dock Street Theatre staff will be in contact with the bus driver to arrange pick up of students. Bus drivers be prepared to provide cell phone number.

5) There are multiple City Parking Garages near the Dock Street Theatre if traveling by car. (See attached map)

6) The side streets surrounding Dock Street Theatre also have metered parking spots if traveling by car. Parking here is free after 10pm and all day on Sunday.

7) If you have any questions, there will be police officials and Dock Street employees to further direct you once you arrive to the scheduled performance.

Thank you for taking the time to review our bus policy and procedures. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Erika Greco, Box Office Manager, at 843.647.7363 or by email at egreco@charlestonstage.com.

DRIVING DIRECTIONS TO DOCK STREET THEATRE

From North Charleston/Airport:

Take I-26 towards Charleston. Take the Meeting Street Exit (221B). Turn right onto Meeting Street. Continue on Meeting Street and travel to Broad Street. Turn left on Broad Street. Turn left on Church Street. Dock Street Theatre will be on the left hand side just past Chalmers Street.

From Mt. Pleasant:

Take Coleman Blvd. to Hwy. 17 South or take Hwy. 17 South across the Cooper River Bridge towards Charleston. There are two ways to get to the theatre from the bridge:

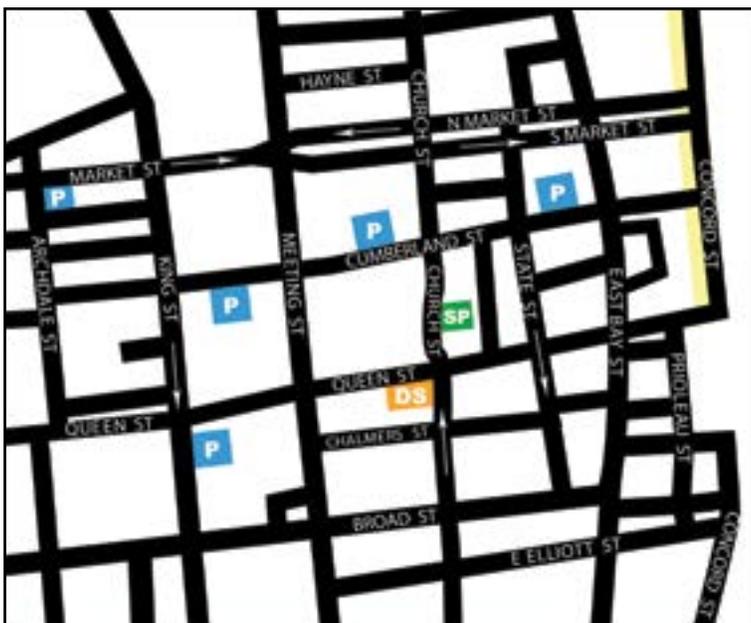
1) Take the Meeting Street Exit. Turn left onto Meeting Street. Continue on Meeting Street and travel to Broad Street. Turn left on Broad Street. Turn left on Church Street. Dock Street Theatre will be on the left hand side just past Chalmers Street.

or

2) Take the East Bay Street Exit. Turn left onto East Bay Street. Continue on East Bay Street and travel to Broad Street. Turn right on Broad Street. Turn right on Church Street. Dock Street Theatre will be on the left hand side just past Chalmers Street.

From West Ashley, Kiawah, Seabrook and James Island:

Take Hwy. 17 North across the James Island Connector and exit onto Lockwood Drive South. Take Lockwood Drive South which turns into Broad Street. Travel down Broad Street and cross over Meeting Street. Turn left on Church Street. Dock Street Theatre will be on the left hand side just past Chalmers Street.



Map Key:

-  Dock Street Theatre (135 Church St.)
-  St. Philip's Church
-  City Parking Garages
-  Concord Street Bus Parking Zone

HAVE KIDS WHO'D LIKE TO TAKE THEATRE CLASSES?

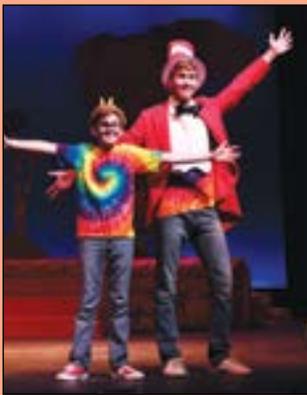


Acting Classes

200+ Students Attend Acting Classes After School

Charleston Stage's TheatreSchool offers classes year round for students from kindergarten through high school at Charleston Stage's West Ashley Theatre Center. Acting classes for students of all ages and abilities are taught by members of Charleston Stage's Professional Resident Acting Company. Classes range from beginning classes to performance workshops and performance troupes. Classes culminate in mini-performances held at the West Ashley Theatre Center. Tuition scholarships are available for need-based students.

Register online today at CharlestonStage.com/Education!



ArtReach In-School Workshops

Bringing Professional Actors Into the Classroom

Charleston Stage's Resident Professional Actors provide dynamic workshops in area schools through a partnership with Engaging Creative Minds. Workshops use theatrical skills to teach academic subjects and can be combined with a school matinee performance experience. For information on booking ArtReach workshops, contact Marybeth Clark, Director of Education, at (843) 225-3900 or mclark@charlestonstage.com.



TheatreWings High School Apprenticeships

A Tuition-Free Apprentice Program For Teens

The TheatreWings High School Apprentice Program is designed to allow talented young people the opportunity to work directly with theatre professionals and gain first-hand experience in professional theatrical production. Students explore stage management, lighting and sound, as well as set and costume design and construction. Designed for highly dedicated students, TheatreWings requires more than 100+ hours of apprenticeship each season. For more information, email TheatreWings Co-Coordinator Ravyn Meador or Caleb Garner at wings@charlestonstage.com.

For more information on our programs, call the Education Office at (843) 225-3900 or visit CharlestonStage.com/Education.