Charlotte's Web

Written by E.B. White

Adapted for the Stage by
Joseph Robinette

An Educational Packet and Teaching Resource
Devised and Written by Kayla Gallik



Commissioned and Produced by LATTE Theater

Introduction

Hello there!

The following educational packet provides a base on which you can leap off of as your class explores the classic children's book *Charlotte's Web* by E.B. White and the stage adaptation by Joseph Robinette. This teaching resource has been produced to support the learning and instruction of students who have seen or are about to see the production of *Charlotte's Web* by LATTE Theater and to provide ideas in which to support teachers in the classroom. The content of the book is ideally intended for children in grades 3-5, but the core topics and messages of the book can easily be adapted and utilized in classrooms for all ages. Compassion, courage, empathy, and the willingness to help others are interwoven throughout Wilbur's story and are a great way in which teachers can incorporate intersectionality, culturally responsive teaching, and differentiated instruction that gets students thinking about themes of social justice, how to foster change, and inspire one another through our own humanity.

This packet has been composed and compiled by LATTE Theater to promote the education and emotional wellness of young people through live theater as well as increase their abilities and engagement in creative experiences. For more information, please visit https://www.lattetheater.com!

Thanks a latte!

LATTE Theater is a high-energy, educational 501(c)(3) NFP conservatory serving young creatives (ages 14-28) in Chicagoland. They blend professional acting rigor with socio-emotional wellness through their signature Pfluger Empathy Movement Method with educational enrichment for our community.



Vocabulary:

USEFUL CONCEPTS & TERMS





Listed below is a list of words that you may find helpful when exploring *Charlotte's Web* with your students. This list contains a variety of concepts, terms, and vocabulary that are all interlinked in some way and relate to Wilbur's story. These are not the end-all-be-all, but are meant to help while integrating the stage adaptation of *Charlotte's Web* and its core themes and ideas into your lesson plans and curriculum. The list is curated, but please use your knowledge of your students, their literacy levels, and rhetoric skills to pick and choose what will be most helpful for you! These words are just to help spark your own creativity!

All of the definitions in the table below come from the Merriam-Webster dictionary.

Word/Term	Definition
Humanity (n.)	1. compassionate, sympathetic, or generous behavior or disposition; the quality or state of being humane 2. the quality or state of being human
Humanism (n.)	1. a devotion to human welfare; humanitarianism

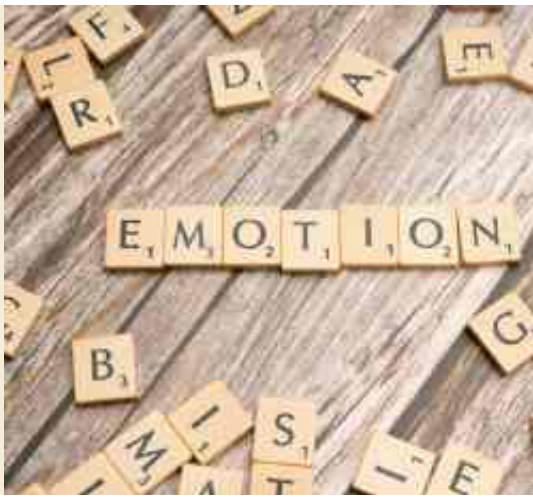
	2. a doctrine, attitude, or way of life centered on human interests or values; especially a philosophy that usually rejects supernaturalism and stresses an individual's dignity and worth and capacity for self-realization through reason; secular humanism
Morality (n.)	1. a doctrine or system of moral conduct 2. conformity to ideals of right human conduct 3. beliefs about what is considered right behavior and wrong behavior
Morality play (n.)	an allegorical play in which characters personify abstract concepts or qualities (such as virtues, vices, or death)
Personification (n.)	a literary device that uses figurative language to

	attribute human characteristics or attributes, emotions, and behaviors to animals, inanimate objects, or ideas to create imagery and give the reader a deeper understanding of that which is trying to be conveyed
Anthropomorphism (n.)	1. an interpretation of what is not human or personal in terms of human or personal characteristics; humanization 2. a literary device in which the writer assigns human qualities such as traits, emotions, or behaviors to an animal or object; a deeper transformation in which an animal or object completely behaves, talks, and thinks like a human (such as in cartoons, e.g. Bugs Bunny, Daffy Duck, the Brave Little Toaster, etc.)

Foreshadowing (n.)	1. a narrative device where an author places hints, clues, and other indicators about events that will happen later on in the story 2. an indication of what is to come
Mature (v.)	1. to bring to maturity or to ripen 2. to act like a responsible adult; showing emotional or mental growth 3. to grow up
Maturity (n.)	1. the state of being fully grown or developed 2. being responsible, sensible, and emotionally well-developed
Selflessness (adj.)	having no concern for self; unselfish
Impermanence (n.)	the quality of state of being impermanent

Pastoral (adj.)	1. of, or relating to, or composed of shepherds or herdsmen; devoted to or based on livestock raising 2. of or relating to the countryside; not urban 3. portraying or expressive of the life of shepherds or country people especially in an idealized and conventionalized manner 4. pleasingly peaceful and innocent; idyllic

SOCIO-EMOTIONAL EXERCISES



Prepared and Created by: Felicia Pfluger
Compiled by: Kayla Gallik

Introduction

LATTE Theater is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. It has been serving the Chicagoland area since 2009. The following exercises were created by Felicia Pfluger, the producer, artistic director, and founder of LATTE Theater, as part of the © *Pfluger Empathy Movement Method*. These exercises are meant for a classroom setting and are designed to promote socio-emotional wellness in students. The following exercises are tailored to fit alongside lesson plans and curriculum focused on *Charlotte's Web* by E.B. White, the stage adaptation by Joseph Robinette, and the LATTE Theater stage production.



Web of Kindness – The RADIANT Exercise

Required Materials

- [ ] Ball of yarn or string
- [ ] An open area to sit in a circle

Concept

- Mirroring Charlotte's encouragement of the words she wrote in her web that helped Wilbur
- Build self-esteem and empower classmates to see positive traits in each other
- Reframe negative "stinky thinking" while developing resiliency
- Take down walls created by bullying
- Show the interconnectivity of positive comments to strengthen group connection
- Help show that diversity of strengths and talents make us stronger as a whole

Execution and Action

- The recipient holds a piece of the string and tosses the ball to the next person.
- Pass a ball of yarn across the circle to someone else while stating a positive trait or "word in the web" about them (i.e., "I am passing this to Meg because she is humble and kind").
- You may add the person receiving the compliment accepts this out loud (i.e., I thank Jamal for seeing I am humble and kind). This helps us accept the good in ourselves as well as external validation.
- Start, if possible, by doing the external circle of the web, then criss-cross once the structure is established. Make the goal keeping Charlotte/the class safe with a sturdy web

Conclusion

By the end, a physical "friendship web" connects everyone, visually demonstrating how individual traits support the entire community.

To Every Season -
The Collaborative Generational Timeline

Concept:

- Explore how life changes seasons, aging, and life cycles affect us differently at various ages
- Create opportunities for resiliency in thinking by reframing crises

Execution and Action

- Pair students with an older adult, (i.e., parent, guardian, mentor)



- Have them interview each other starting by asking the prompt, “What was a big life transition you faced?”
  - At my age?
  - One that surprised you?
  - What comforted you?
  - How did you grow through it?
  - What makes you happy looking back?
  - How does this surprise you?
  - What do you wish someone would have taken the time to tell you then?
- Have older participants ask about events in the students' lives that are the reverse of these questions and honor their place in the life cycle.

    - What activities do you love to do?
    - What do you like to do now that you didn't think you would ever like?
    - How have your friends and family grown and changed?
    - How have you grown and changed through these changes?
    - How have you become a better friend or helper through these events?
- Ask both mentor and mentee:
    - How do these positive coping mechanisms help each of us as individuals?
    - How do they help us in a family, our classroom, or our community?
- For the classroom, have tree leaf cutouts. Have participants do one of the following activities on a leaf:
    - Write down a healthy resiliency/coping mechanism that the student wants to develop that their Mentor has.
    - Have the Mentor write down a resiliency/healthy coping mechanism they admire in the student.
    - Pin the leaves in a collaborative "Tree of Seasons" display to show shared resilience across generations.

Perception Filters – Templeton's Defense and Perspective Shifts

Concept and Execution:







To build empathy and understanding in relationships when dealing with difficult personalities. Understand the complex boundaries needed while staying emotionally aware in "big emotion" territory.

Start By:

- Dividing the group into small teams.
- Assign them to pitch a defense for Templeton the rat
- From a survivalist perspective, ask why Templeton, even if selfish, was vital to the success of the farm community?

The Takeaway:

- This exercise allows space from reactionary behavior to hostile or toxic personalities, while allowing the student to reframe Templeton (and other potentially unpleasant interactions) from a place of compassion.... And not be reactionary.
- This also allows students to value people who see "differently", who express boundaries, motivations, or social styles different than their own.

Feelings Wheel Insight:

- Look at Templeton under the "mask of anger", and ask what he is most afraid of.

Does he feel appreciated or secure? What starts to change that? When does he finally feel secure?

- How do people respond to Templeton when he is having big emotions?
- Wilbur and Charlotte are unlikely friends. How do they help each other with their different gifts and strengths? (Charlotte saves Wilbur's life. Wilbur saves her egg sack.)



Charlotte's Web: Intergenerational Discussion Questions for Social-Emotional Wellness

Charlotte's Web is a timeless story about connection, transitions, and what it means to care for one another. These questions are designed to bridge generational gaps, encouraging children, parents, and grandparents to share personal stories and emotional insights.



Themes of Connection & Belonging

Fern and Charlotte both accept Wilbur exactly as he is

- **When have you felt completely accepted by someone?**
- **What did they do to make you feel that way?**

Charlotte tells Wilbur, "You have been my friend. That in itself is a tremendous thing."

- **How do you define a true friend?**
- **Does the definition change as we get older?**

Early in the book, Wilbur feels isolated in the Zuckerman barn.

- **When have you felt lonely?**
- **Do you need to be alone to feel lonely?**
- **What are some healthy ways you handle feelings of loneliness?**

- **How can we help others who might feel left out?**
- **Do we connect more with people with our strengths or with our weaknesses? Why?**

When Wilbur first arrives at the barn, he cries because he feels friendless. Loneliness is something every single human feels at some point, no matter how old they are.

- **What does loneliness feel like to you?**
- **What is a small comfort that helps you get through it?**

Managing Transitions & Grief

The changing of the seasons plays a massive role in the story.

- **What is a major change you've experienced in your life, and how did you adapt to it?**

Charlotte's death is a profound moment, but her legacy lives on through her children and Wilbur's memories.

- **How do we keep the memory of loved ones alive?**
- **When have sharing a story helped you through sadness and grief?**

Charlotte accepts her life cycle with grace.

- **How do you find peace or comfort when facing a situation that you cannot change?**
- **Think... What helped you through losing something special to you?**

Purpose, Self-Worth, & Identity

Charlotte labels Wilbur as "Some Pig," "Terrific," "Radiant," and "Humble."

- **If a friend were to spin a web describing your best qualities, what words would you want them to write?**
- **If you could imagine a new pal, what words written in a web would you want to describe the qualities you would want in them?**

Wilbur doesn't always believe he matches Charlotte's high praise.

- **How do you handle your own inner critic when you don't feel "terrific" or "radiant"?**
- **How do you allow yourself, or your friends, to focus on "progress, not perfection"?**

Charlotte is a small creature, yet she saves a life.

- **What is a "small" act of kindness you've witnessed or done that ended up making a huge difference?**

- **How do you feel when someone thanks you?**

Empathy & Perspective-Taking

Templeton the rat is often selfish, but the other animals still find a way to live alongside him and utilize his strengths.

- **How do you practice patience with people who are difficult to get along with?**
- **When was a time that you remember being grateful people were being patient with you?**

Fern speaks up for Wilbur at the very beginning because he is vulnerable.

- **When is a time you stood up for someone else, or when did someone stand up for you?**
- **How did you feel differently afterwards?**

Heart-to-Heart: Connection & Belonging

These questions invite us to look at the people who make us feel safe, and how we can be that safe space for others.

The Zuckerman barn is filled with different animals, sounds, and smells, but eventually, it becomes a true home for Wilbur.

- **Where is a place—or who is a person—that makes you feel completely safe to be yourself?**

Charlotte sees something special in Wilbur long before he sees it in himself.

- **Has anyone ever believed in you when you were struggling to believe in yourself?**
- **What did that feel like?**

Gentle Steps: Navigating Transitions & Loss

Change can be scary, but sharing our stories helps us see we never have to face life's changing seasons alone.

The book beautifully shows the cycle of seasons—the excitement of summer, the harvest of autumn, and the quiet of winter.

- **What is a big change or "new season" you've had to navigate in your life?**
- **What helped you adjust?**
- **What can help you feel okay even when you are struggling?**

- **Who do you feel safest with?**
- **Does it ever help to write or draw about changes when words may not be easy to speak?**

At the end of the story, Charlotte is gone, but Wilbur loves her children and grandchildren fiercely because of his memory of her.

- **How do you keep the love and lessons of people you've lost alive in your everyday life?**
- **Does your family find ways to celebrate happy memories?**

Charlotte doesn't fight the end of her life; she accepts it as part of nature.

- **When something happens that we cannot fix or change, where do you find the strength to accept it and keep moving forward?**
- **Who do you turn to help you through tough times?**

Finding Your Shine: Identity & Self-Worth

It's easy to feel small in a big world. We explore that our worth is inherent, not earned.

Charlotte weaves incredible words like Terrific and Radiant into her web to save Wilbur.

- **If you could pick one word that you hope people see when they look at your heart, what would it be?**

Wilbur often feels humble and worries he isn't actually "terrific" enough to match Charlotte's praise.

- **Do you ever experience that inner voice telling you you're not enough?**
- **How can we gently talk back to that critical voice?**

Charlotte is a tiny spider, often ignored or disliked by the humans, yet her quiet, clever actions change the world.

- **What is a "quiet" or unseen way you like to show care for the world around you?**
- **Have you ever done a "random act of kindness" that makes people happy, but they did not know that you were the one who gave them the gift?**
- **How did it make you feel when you saw their reaction?**

Grace and Space: Empathy & Understanding

Real communities and families aren't perfect. These questions help us practice patience

with others and ourselves.

Making Room for the Templetons: Templeton the rat is grumpy, self-centered, and only helps when there's something in it for him. Yet, the barn community accepts him as he is.

- **How do you practice patience with people in your life who are difficult to love or have different motivations than you?**

Fern steps in front of an axe to save a little pig because it's the right thing to do.

- **When has someone stood up for you when you felt powerless?**
- **How can we look out for the vulnerable people in our own neighborhoods and schools?**

These questions are part of the © *Pfluger Empathy Movement Method* and were created by Felicia Pfluger ~ *Inspiring artistic excellence and emotional depth in every performer*

LESSON ONE



Subject: *Charlotte's Web* by E.B. White

The material located within this lesson plan is geared for and designed around Fourth Grade students. However, the material may be adapted to suit the needs of the students and their requisite grade levels. Some suggestions are provided towards the end of the lesson plan on how the material may be altered to make this lesson available to all students and classrooms.



State Standards

This lesson aligns with the following Illinois Common Core State Standards:

- **RL.4.2:** Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text; summarize the text.
- **RL.4.7:** Make connections between a text of a story or a drama and a visual or oral presentation of the text, identifying where each version reflects specific descriptions and directions in the text.



Learning Objective

Core Themes in *Charlotte's Web*

The students will be able to identify a theme such as friendship or empathy in Charlotte's Web, support that theme with story details, and examine how a live performance chooses to represent those details.

Materials



- [ ] A copy of *Charlotte's Web* by E.B. White
- [ ] White board
- [ ] Dry erase markers
- [ ] Loose-leaf paper
- [ ] Pen/pencil
- [ ] Power Point slides (optional)
- [ ] Worksheets (optional)
- [ ] LATTE Theater educational packet



Assessments

The teacher will provide the students time to write a brief written response. This response will state one theme, summarize a relevant moment, and use two story details to explain how a character shows friendship or empathy. They will also explain how a decision one of the actors made to bring that moment alive on stage. Should time permit, the teacher may also have the student write another brief written response on how a character in the play displayed a lack of empathy and how that relates to the overall themes of Charlotte's Web.



Lesson Opener

The teacher will open the lesson by asking the students a question similar to "When has someone helped you feel less alone? What did that person do?" The teacher will then invite the students to turn and talk to each other about their answers. Afterwards, the teacher will state what the learning objective of the lesson is in a "students will be able to"

statement. They will then frame the day's lesson by telling students they will be looking for examples of themes such as friendship and empathy in *Charlotte's Web* and be looking for ways in which the theater communicates those themes.



The teacher can use the following table to help get them started. Go ahead and modify the lesson based on the needs of your students!

Key Points, Terms, or Vocabulary

Theme (n.) - a message about life that a story develops through its characters and events

- Friendship (n.) - the state of being friends; acts of friendship include care, trust, and support
- Empathy (n.) - noticing another's feelings and trying to understand them

- Story details are things such as character's words, choices, and actions that help readers explain a theme

- A play utilizes acting, speech, movement, sound, stage visuals, and other acts of dramaturgy to bring a story to life

- Time permitting, the teacher can point out the differences between sympathy and empathy, terms which are often confused



Introduction to New Material

The "I Do" Activity

1. The teacher will be sure to clarify that theme is a message readers infer from details and not simply a topic such as friendship. The teacher will remind students of the difference between themes and topics.
   a. Misconception: A theme is just one word such as "friendship."
   b. Correction: A theme expresses what the story suggests about friendship, supported by events and character choices.
2. The teacher may choose to work together with the students to come up with a theme about friendship in *Charlotte's Web*. The teacher will write that theme on the board for ease of access during the rest of the lesson.
3. The teacher will briefly revisit a moment from *Charlotte's Web* or other related media that students are familiar with in which one character acts with care towards another. The teacher will have students recall what happened using their own words.
4. The teacher will then model for the students how to connect a character's action or words to a possible message about friendship or empathy.
5. The teacher will ask the students to silently choose a character from Charlotte's Web and show, with a gesture, how that character might feel in the moment modeled.



Guided Practice

The "We Do" Activity

1. The teacher will ask the students to work in pairs. These pairs of students will revisit a teacher-selected passage. The students will read the passage provided aloud. The students will then identify a moment that shows friendship or empathy. It is recommended that four to five different passages be provided and distributed evenly amongst the small groups. The students will choose a detail from their provided teacher-selected passage, write it down in their notebook or on a sheet of loose-leaf paper and decide together how that detail helps readers discover the theme.
2. While the students work together in pairs, the teacher will walk around the room and

observe their work. While observing, the teacher will ask the students scaffolded questions such as:
    - "What happens in the moment you read together?"
    - "Which words or actions show how a character feels or responds?"
    - "What message about friendship or empathy does this detail support? How might and actor show it on stage? How does this help us discover the theme?"
3. The teacher will circulate and listen for accurate retellings, text-based evidence, and a clear link between evidence and theme; the teacher will prompt students to return to the passage when needed.



Independent Practice

The "You Do" Activity

The students will complete an assessment response independently. The teacher will have the students use a piece of loose-leaf paper or provide a worksheet they can write on. The students will be asked to write what they think the theme of *Charlotte's Web* is and support their claim by summarizing a moment in the story. Their support should include two key details in which a character in *Charlotte's Web* shows friendship or empathy.

Potential Extension: The teacher may ask students to make one prediction about how the upcoming live production by LATTE Theater could show the moment from the story they chose through acting, speech patterns, movement, sound design, or visuals (such as costume, set design, prop choices, etc.).

Listed below are potential ways in which the teacher may adapt the assessment and material to suit their students and class. These suggestions are made in relation to whether the students are below or above the suggested grade level.

Possible Differentiation Methods:

Below Grade Level: The teacher will provide the students a short excerpt, a feelings word bank, and a sentence frame that connects a detail to a theme.

Above Grade Level: The teacher will ask the students to compare two characters' responses to the same challenge or event of their choice from *Charlotte's Web*. The students will then explain how these differences shape the theme.

- Above-Grade Challenge: The teacher will have students write a short director's note for theater production of *Charlotte's Web*. They will propose how to stage their selected moment, challenge, or event as if they were the director. The students will be asked to explain how their choices would communicate the theme while remaining grounded in the source material.

LESSON TWO



Subject: *Charlotte's Web* by E.B. White

The material located within this lesson plan is geared for and designed around Fourth Grade students. However, the material may be adapted to suit the needs of the students and their requisite grade levels. Some suggestions are provided towards the end of the lesson plan on how the material may be altered to make this lesson available to all students and classrooms.



State Standards

This lesson aligns with the following Illinois Common Core State Standards:

- **LS1.A-E1:** Plants and animals have both internal and external structures that serve various functions in growth, survival, behavior, and reproduction.
- **RL.4.1:** Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
- **RL.4.3:** Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., a character's thoughts words, or actions).
- **RL.4.7:** Make connections between the text of a story or drama and a visual or oral presentation of the text, identifying where each version reflects specific descriptions and directions in the text.
- **SL.4.6:** Differentiate between contexts that call for formal English (e.g., presenting ideas) and situations where informal discourse is appropriate (e.g., small-group discussion); use formal English when appropriate to task and situation.
- **L.4.6:** Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, including those that signal precise actions, emotions, or states of being (e.g., quizzed, whined, stammered) and that are basic to a particular

topic (e.g., wildlife, conservation, and endangered when discussing animal preservation).

- **W.4.9.A:** Apply grade 4 Reading standards to literature (e.g., "Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text [e.g., a character's thoughts, words, or actions].").
- **TH:PR4.1.4.B:** Alter voice and body to expand and articulate nuances of a character in a scene.
- **TH:PR6.1.4.A:** Communicate for a specific purpose through a drama/theatre work with peers as an audience.



Learning Objective

Real Features to Stage Performance Adaptations

The students will be able to use text evidence to describe an animal's external features and how each helps it survive, behave, or grow. The students will then be able to design a stage portrayal (costume, movement, voice, prop, set, or sound) that shows those features. The students will be able to explain how a stage portrayal reflects specific descriptions in the text and present it using formal speaking language.

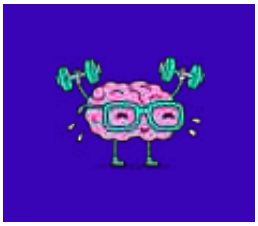
Materials



- [ ] Copies of a read-aloud passed (Suggested passages are: Charlotte spinning her web or Wilbur in the barn)
- [ ] Feature-to-function chart
- [ ] Chart paper and markers
- [ ] Sticky notes
- [ ] Scrap fabric, paper, and found props (optional)
- [ ] Art supplies (markers, colored

pencils, crayons, etc.)

- [ ] Exit ticket slips



Assessments

The teacher will have the students complete an exit ticket. The students will pick one animal and write 1) a real feature from the text of *Charlotte's Web*, 2) its function, and 3) one staging choice that could show that feature. The students should support their staging choice with a quote from the text. The teacher will score the exit slips with the rubric below.

Criteria	Meets (3 Points)	Approaching (2 Points)	Beginning (1 Point)
Text evidence	Accurate quote or detail	Vague detail	None
Feature → function	Correct and explained	Feature named only	Incorrect
Staging choice	Clearly shows the feature	Loosely connected	Missing



Lesson Opener

The teacher will catch the attention of students by miming and acting out an animal, such as fingers crawling around like the eight legs of a spider. The teacher will then ask the students a question along the lines of "What animal am I?" Before moving on, the teacher will have the students explain how they knew that they were acting out the animal they

chose. The teacher will then frame the day's lesson. The teacher will explain that today the students are both scientists and theater directors; they will be proving features of animals within the text and then show those features on the stage.



The following table includes vocabulary that the teacher may find helpful while conducting the lesson. The definitions are short and kid-friendly. Please modify the vocabulary and the definitions depending on the needs of your students!

Vocabulary Word	Definition
external structure	a body part on the outside of an animal, like legs, fur, or a tail
function	the job a body part or thing does
survival	staying alive by finding food, staying safe, and growing
adaptation	a body part or behavior that helps an animal live in its environment
text evidence	a quote or detail from the book that proves your idea

costume	clothing and accessories an actor wears to look like a character
movement	how an actor moves their body, such as walking, crawling, or hopping, to show a character
prop	an object an actor holds or uses on stage
set	the scenery and objects on stage that show where the story takes place



Introduction to New Material

The "I Do" Activity

1. The teacher will start by handing out copies of the chosen passage to the students and then reading that passage aloud. The teacher will ask the students to follow along as they read and to underline detail's about the animals' bodies and features as they read, such as Charlotte's spinning, her legs, and her web.
2. To guide the students, the teacher will create a chart on the board including the character name, the varying features that define that character, and their function. The teacher will also include the textual evidence from *Charlotte's Web* in the chart as well. The teacher will model an example for the students, such as:
    - Character: Charlotte
    - Feature: spinneret and silk
    - Function: catches food and builds a safe home
    - Evidence: a quote from the passage
3. The teacher will then provide an example of how they think the director may design Charlotte's costume and the set to display some of these features.



Guided Practice

The "We Do" Activity

1. The students will complete the feature-to-function chart that the teacher began modeling on the board. The class will work together to complete the chart for Wilbur, Templeton, and the barn animals (geese, sheep, cow, horse, etc.).
2. The teacher will have students come up to the board to write their answers on the class chart. As the class completes the chart, the teacher will have them copy the chart either in their notes or on a separate loose-leaf page. The teacher may also create and provide a simple worksheet for their students based on the needs of their class.
3. The teacher will be sure to ask scaffolded questions as the students work on completing the chart together. Some suggestions for these questions are as follows:
    - What does this animal look like? What does it do? What are we told about it in the text?
    - What do you think that feature is for? Is it for survival? Growth? Is this a behavior?
    - Which line in the story shows us this feature? How could an actor show it on stage?
4. The teacher will monitor the class and make sure that the students are copying the chart for themselves. The teacher will check that each feature has a function and is supported by textual evidence via a quote.



Independent Practice

The "You Do" Activity

1. The students will get into groups of 3 or 4. Each group will be assigned a different animal from *Charlotte's Web* by the teacher.
2. The teacher will tell the students that they are acting as a theater director and that it is their job to help bring the story of *Charlotte's Web* alive on stage. The teacher will explain to the students that each group will choose one costume, movement, voice, prop, set piece, or sound idea that shows a real animal feature and its function.
3. The students will sketch out their ideas on a blank piece of paper and with the art supplies provided. The students should label their designs and clearly show which

feature and function they are focusing on.

4. Every member in the group has a role to play: designer, performer, or presenter.
5. After each group has completed their sketches, the class will present together. Each group will post their sketches up on the board or at an easily accessible location around the room. The groups will then take turns performing or presenting their demonstrations. If time should permit, the teacher will have students leave sticky notes next to the sketches posted on the board. These sticky notes should follow the sentence frame: "I noticed the feature ___ because ___."
    a. While presenting to the class, the teacher will make sure that the presenters are using formal English and will compare their staging to the exact text details it is supposed to reflect.

Potential Extension Challenge:

The teacher will have the students write a director's note arguing which feature of one animal is the most important for the audience to see. The students will need to justify their decision with two pieces of text evidence and a staging decision.

Homework Activity:

The students will observe a real anima, such as a pet, a cute animal video online, or a phot of one. They will record one external feature on a loose-leaf sheet of paper. They will also include its function and how they would show it on stage.

Meet the *Cast*

WILBUR THE PIG - *Isidora Kowalchuk*
(Willowbrook, 17)

"I play Wilbur, the character whose journey we explore in the play. It's cool to play a pig!"

Isi, (Willowbrook) at 16, is thrilled to return to LATTE! When not on stage, she enjoys Scouting America, horseback riding, and being outside. She is so very excited to be in her sixth LATTE show. "This show connects so much with the audience. I love this book so much, and I am so excited to bring it to life! There is so much emotion in it!" Isi thanks Mrs. Pfluger for helping her through her journey as an actress! And thanks to all her loving family and friends for supporting her. Isi "hope[s] people leave the show with a little more empathy and decide to be a bit kinder."



CHARLOTTE – *Isla Baker (Downers Grove, 15)*

“I’m playing Charlotte, a wise and graceful spider who befriends Wilbur.”



Isla, 15, from Downers Grove, is thrilled to be back for another LATTE show! “I love being able to play Charlotte, but I find portraying her challenging. I try to embody a spider’s movement, capturing its grace and agility. At the same time, I work to bring human elements to add depth and relatability,” she says. When not on stage or running lines, Isla can be found horseback riding, swimming, or camping with her Scouting America troop. In her free time, Isla enjoys sketching random creations or reading with a coffee in her hand and a cockatiel on her shoulder. She would like to thank her family for their support and Mrs. Pfluger for all the work she puts into making LATTE the wonderful program it is. Finally, Isla is grateful for this fall's extremely talented and kind cast members. Isla explains that “[d]espite being written in the 1950s, *Charlotte’s Web’s* themes remain timeless because they explore universal topics like friendship, loyalty, and the inevitability of change. These ideas continue to resonate just as strongly today as they did decades ago.”

TEMPLETON/ARABLE/LURVY - *Noah Veldt (Willowbrook, 18)*

"I am playing Templeton, Arable, and Lurvy in *Charlotte's Web*. Templeton is the rat on the outside looking in trying to stand out to the other animals. Arable is a fatherly figure who works to find a balance of setting consequences for his kids but also making sure they are living their best lives. Lurvy is a lively farmer who helps feed Wilbur and works for Mr. Zuckerman. "



Noah (Willowbrook) is an eighteen-year-old senior performing in his second show at LATTE. Offstage, Noah goes to Hinsdale Central High School, where he enjoys playing percussion in the band, and being a part of the drama club. He loves to sing, dance, and draw in his free time. Above all, he enjoys the ability to grow and learn from his experiences through art. Noah explains, "I have learned from playing Templeton that even though his character appears selfish on the outside, he actually does care deep down about the other characters. He helps find words for Charlotte and brings back Charlotte's egg sack. This made me realize that even though people may appear selfish on the outside, they most likely have more layers to them and we should look deeper for the good in people." Noah is grateful for his family and friends for their continued support through his acting journey.

NARRATOR/ SHEEP/PRESIDENT OF THE FAIR/UNCLE – *Nathan Bell (Chicago, Columbia College)*

"Being the narrator is challenging since you 'are' the embodiment of the story that you want the audience to fall in love with."



Nathan (Chicago) is extremely happy to be on the Chicagoland stage. When he is not acting, this new *Columbia College* freshman enjoys writing, art in its many forms, and singing lead and in his church choir. When asked about the story of *Charlotte's Web* and the stage play, Nathan had this to say, "Wisdom is imparted by unlikely characters. It reminds us to live for more than the moment and for more than ourselves." He would like to thank his mom, his director, Mrs. Pfluger, and all his castmates for their love and support.

FERN/GOOSE - *Audrey Ollier (Westmont, 13)*

"I am Fern, and the Goose. Fern is a caring young girl who loves animals and can understand them. The goose is one of the many animals on the Zuckerman farm and is the partner of the gander, who has many goslings."



Audrey is extremely excited to shine on stage as the youngest LATTEer. Audrey explains that "What [she] really enjoy[s] about playing Fern is her determination; when she sets her mind to something, she will strive to get it done (no matter how much begging it takes). Playing Fern is fun; you cannot only see, but feel how she slowly grows up." Outside of the theater world, Audrey takes part in singing classes, cheer, lots of time with friends, and much more. Audrey enjoys being the only girl among her 3 brothers, who all play funny jokes on each other; for example, one time Audrey's phone was hidden in a tub of tomatoes! Audrey cannot express how happy she is that she found LATTE and can't wait for this show. "Hard work pays off. I prepared by practicing my costume changes even before it was necessary. I found that getting ahead of memorizing lines really helps in the long run," Audrey says.

GANDER/AVERY - *Jacob Strohmaier (Westmont, 13)*

"My roles are Gander, husband of the goose, and Avery, Fern's brother."



Jacob, age 13 (Westmont), is so excited to be making his debut in LATTE Theater. He explains that "It's fun playing both amazing roles from quick costume changes to hilarious mishaps." When not on stage, Jacob likes to hang out with great friends and read beloved books. He also loves to sing, play with his dogs, and play volleyball. He would love to thank his mom and friends for always being here, and LATTE for being so welcoming. "The director and the cast all laugh together while working on the scenes with each other. We developed strong bonds and friendships. It's about progress, not perfection. We are all encouraged to help each other – and never criticize. It's surprising how much growth we've experienced in such a short amount of time," Jacob says when describing his time in LATTE working on *Charlotte's Web*.

HOMER ZUCKERMAN - *Micah Phillips*
(La Grange Park, Hospital Project Manager)

"Charlotte's Web brings understanding and childlike wonder to an adult mindset."



Micah, new to La Grange Park from Florida, holds a BA in Theater and a Master's degree in Business. A UI Health project manager, he enjoys bringing stories and characters to life on the LATTE stage. Micah mentions that in this production of *Charlotte's Web,* "Charlotte and Wilber have separate life cycles, but they still celebrate humanity in supporting each other." Growing up, Micah traveled with his father, a pastor and magician, who instilled in him a love of adventure and connecting with people. When he's not working or performing, he enjoys spending time with his two beloved dogs and beautiful wife. Micah is grateful for the opportunity to continue sharing his love of theater with the community! "Fun, heartfelt and deep moments come every minute of rehearsal. The kids show up asking 'What can we learn?'"