



A Fashion Statement

By **George Howe**

Book by **Frances Limoncelli**

Based on the story by **Hans Christian Anderson**

PARKER ARTS EDUCATION STUDY GUIDE 2025

Curriculum: Literature and Language Arts, Folk Tales and Cultures,
Social Sciences, Family and Relationships, and Performing Arts.



HOW TO BE A #1 AUDIENCE MEMBER

The audience is the reason live theater exists! At Parker Arts, we cherish the actor/audience relationship, the unique give and take that exists during a performance which makes the audience an active participant in the event. The actors see the audience just as the audience sees the actors, and every, laugh, snuffle, chuckle and gasp the audience makes effects the way the actor plays his next moment. We want you to be engaged, and to live the story with us!

Here are a few guidelines for being a respectful audience member. Every person has a job to do to make sure the live performance goes on! Here is how you can play your part:

1. Stay sitting in your seat.
2. Keep your hands and feet to yourselves.
3. If the actors ask the audience questions, it's okay to answer!
4. You can laugh when something is funny!
5. Pay attention! Watch and listen carefully to what is going on.
6. Get ready to clap at the end of the show when the actors bow.
7. Have fun, enjoy the show, and be sure to share the story with your parents!

BEFORE THE PLAY: *Discuss Appropriate Behavior*

Have a discussion with your students about proper theater etiquette. For example, it's okay to clap and laugh, but it's not okay to talk to your neighbor. Have students compare and contrast the difference between watching a movie and watching a play. Ask if students have been to a play before. If so, what play? What was the experience like? Talk about the concentration that performing in a play requires, and ask the students what they find distracting when they are trying to accomplish a task in front of people. How can they help the actors succeed and do a good job? Let students know that in plays, actors sometimes play several different characters, and change roles by simply swapping out costume pieces and altering their voices and bodies.

AFTER THE PLAY: *Reflect on the Experience*

Ask students if they enjoyed the play. Based on this experience, would they like to see other plays? If they've seen plays before, how did this play compare? What happened that they weren't expecting? How was seeing a play a different experience than seeing a movie? Have the students write a review of the play. Use the attached form or have them write a paragraph or two on their own. Have them show their picture to the class and explain why that scene or character was their favorite. We invite you to send the reviews and pictures to Parker Arts – we enjoy reading them and learning from student feedback.



TRADITIONAL **PLAY** VS. LITERARY **ADAPTATIONS**

Parker Arts student productions are often musical adaptations of picture books and short stories for children. We encourage you to discuss the elements of each version and compare/contrast the two both before and after you see the play.

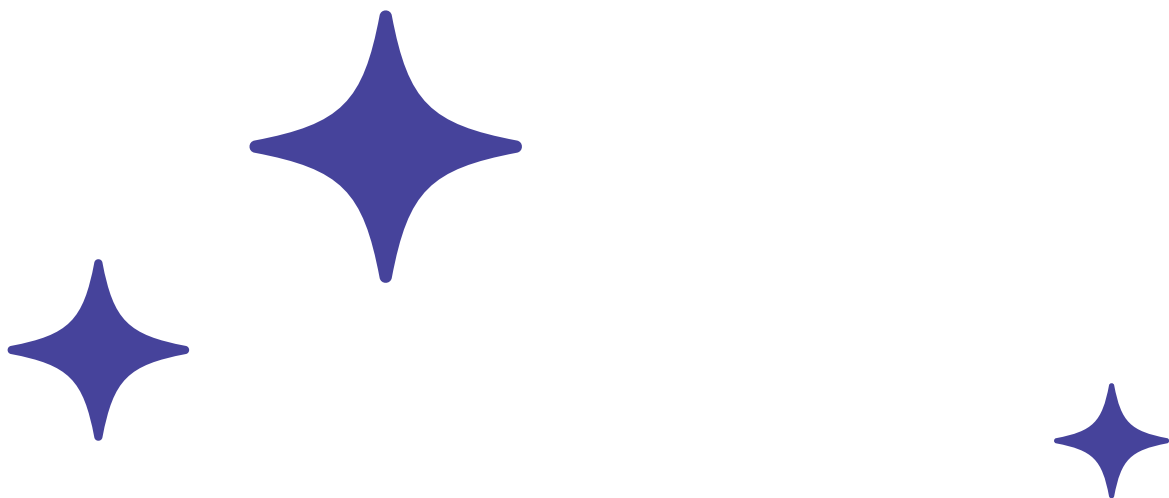
BEFORE THE PLAY: *Get to Know the Original Story*

Read the story to your students, or have them read the book themselves, before the production. After reading the book, discuss it with your students, using these questions as launch pads:

- Who are the characters in the story?
- What happens in the beginning of the story? The middle? The end?
- Is there a character in the story you don't like? What makes you dislike this character? How do you think they might be portrayed in the stage version?
- What do you think you will see on stage as the actors tell this story?
- How might the play be different from the story? How might it be the same?

AFTER THE PLAY: *Compare/Contrast the Story to the Play*

- How were the book and the play different?
- How were the book and the play the same?
- What elements of the play surprised you, based on your knowledge of the book?
- Which did you enjoy more, reading the book or watching the play?
- What was your favorite part of the play? Was that your favorite part of the book too?
- Were there any characters in the book that were not in the play, or vice versa?
- Why do you think the playwright added or subtracted certain parts?





BEHIND THE SCENES

BEFORE THE PLAY: *Prepare Your Students to Observe All Aspects of the Production*

When we create a play at Parker Arts, we have a community of artists working together to make a complete production. Ask students to be particularly observant during the performance for the parts of the show that are done by the various theater staff.

AFTER THE PLAY: *Discuss the Students' Observations*

Ask the students about what they noticed about the “behind-the-scenes” jobs:

- How did the costume designer make the actors look like the characters they're playing?
- What about their costumes helped you to know what kind of people or animals they were?
- Did you have a favorite costume in the show? Which one? Why was it your favorite?
- What are some of the locations the play took place in?
- How did the set designer make the settings look realistic?
- What sound effects did you hear in the play? How did those sound effects help you to know what was happening in the play?

THEATER IS A TEAM SPORT



The **PLAYWRIGHT** writes the script. Sometimes it is from an original idea and sometimes it is adapted from a book or story. The Playwright decides what the characters say and gives the Designers guidelines on how the play should look.

The **DIRECTOR** creates the vision for the production and works closely with the actors, costume, set and lighting designers to make sure everyone tells the same story.

The **ACTORS** use their bodies and voices to bring the author's words and the director's ideas to life on the stage.

The **DESIGNERS** imagine and create the lights, scenery, props, costumes, and sound that will compliment and complete the director's vision.

The **STAGE MANAGER** assists the director during rehearsals by recording their instructions and making sure the actors and designers understand these ideas. The Stage Manager then runs the show during each performance by calling cues for lights and sound, as well as entrances and exits.

The **SHOP** and **STAGE CREW** builds the set, props, and costumes according to the designer's plans. The Stage Crew sets the stage with props and furniture, assists the actors with costume changes and operates sound, lighting, and stage machinery during each performance.

The **FRONT OF HOUSE STAFF** welcomes you to the theater, takes your tickets, helps you find your seat and answers any question you may have on the day of the performance.

The **THEATER** is where it all takes place. The Mainstage Theater at the PACE Center, which opened in 2011, seats up to 534 people, and features a proscenium stage, motorized orchestra pit, the latest in theatrical lighting, sound and rigging systems, an orchestra shell and dance flooring.



CAST

| | |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| DIRECTOR | Brandon Bill |
| STAGE MANAGER | Alex Woosley |
| SET DESIGNER | Brian Watson |
| SOUND DESIGNER | Matt Koenig |
| | Ross Hullender |
| LIGHTING DESIGNER | Bella Lewis |
| LIGHTING BOARD | Julian Brown |
| COSTUME DESIGNER | Susan Rahmsdorff-Terry |
| CHOREOGRAPHER | Dallas Slankard |
| SCENIC BUILD | Jeff Jester |
| | Bernie Richard |
| STAGEHANDS | Cade Anderson |
| | Hannah Shepard |
| | Shawna Colville |

EMPEROR Shannon McCarthy

KID Laken Richardson

MOM, JUNE/MARISSA,
PRIMP Shannon Foley

DAD, HUCKSTER, PREEN... Joe Steiner

SWING ACTOR Mary Kate Kearney



ABOUT THE PLAY

CHARACTERS

KID: an idealistic and civic-minded ten-year-old, who wishes her Mom and Dad had more time for her.

MOM: a cheerful, if fashion-obsessed, career woman.

DAD: a jovial, if fashion-obsessed, career man.

EMPEROR: a super cool cat and gorgeous fashion plate with a spoiled toddler's temper.

HUCKSTER: a charming, if disheveled con man.

JUNE SLITHERS/MARISSA SLITHERS: a mother/daughter TV team.
(note: Marissa is a puppet operated by June)

PRIMP: a groveling, scraping yes-man.

PREEN: a jaded, burnt out yes-man.

MODEL #1, MODEL #2, & MODEL #3: chic human clothes hangers; all dead inside.

SYNOPSIS:

A crazy quilt of mixed-up psychedelic fashion trends is the setting for this tongue-in-cheek retelling of the Hans Christian Andersen fairytale, set to a fun and sprightly score. The country is ruled by a foppish fashionista of an Emperor who has bankrupted the treasury with his clothing expenditures. Frustrated by the Emperor's slave-to-fashion mentality, Ten-year-old Kid's romantic dreams of being a hero make her determined to change everyone's materialistic views. She travels to the palace to reveal the superficiality of the emperor, only to end up revealing much more of him than she predicted.

IN THE CLASSROOM

STORY COMPARISON:

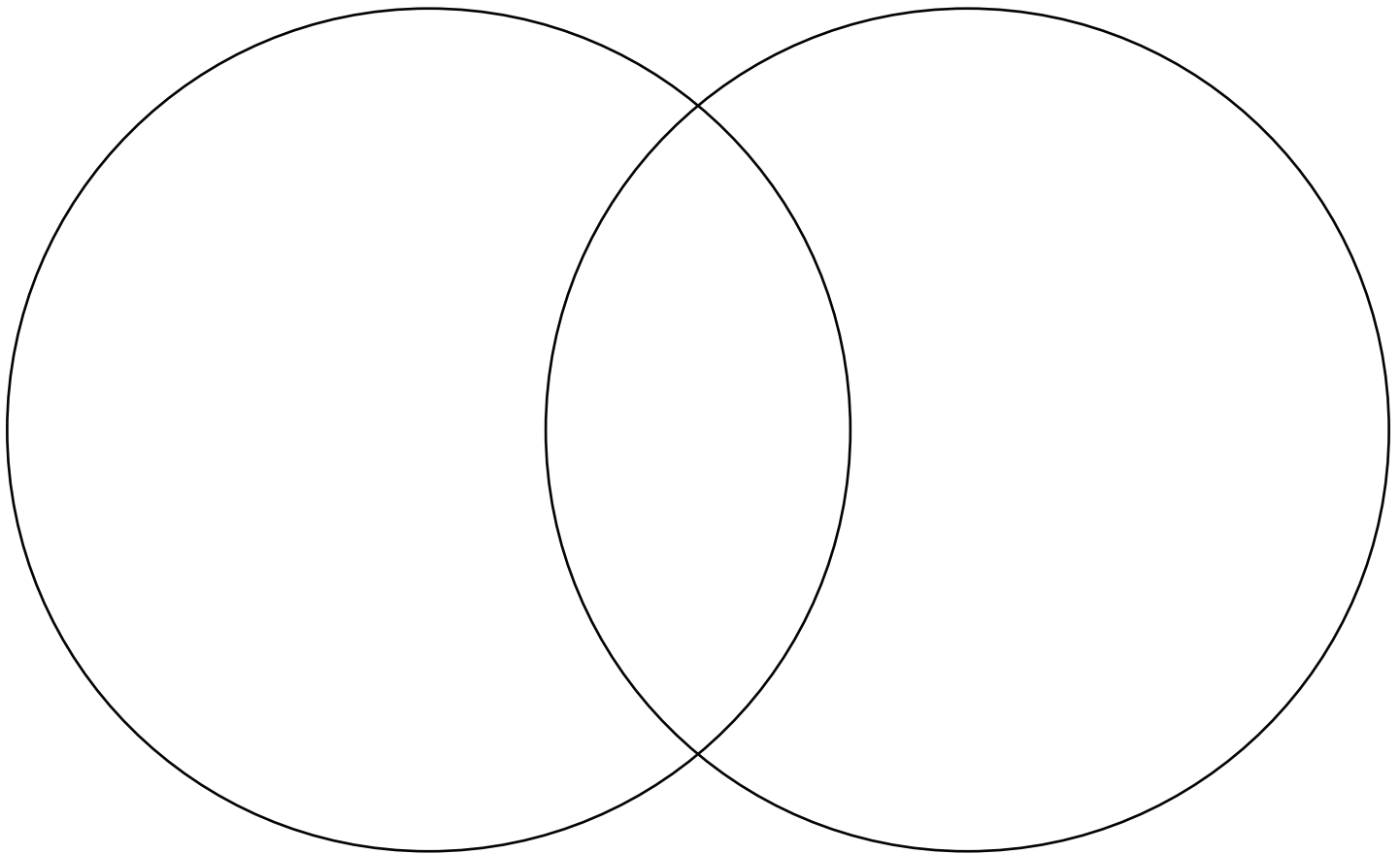
In *The Emperor's Groovy New Threads*, Kid and the Emperor discover that they have more in common than they it seems, and that they are actually more alike than they are different.

If you were to write those differences and similarities into two overlapping circles, it would look like this, which is called a Venn Diagram:

After you have seen the play, can you write down all the things that make them different and similar in your own Venn Diagram?

KID

EMPEROR





THE LEADER IN ME:

In *The Emperor's Groovy New Threads*, Kid realizes that the hero she is looking for, she can be herself. She wants to find someone brave, strong, and smart to teach the Emperor how to lead his country better. But SHE is brave, and strong, and smart!

She can be the hero! She can be leader!

Can you think of a time when you were a leader? Think of when you may have had to help someone out or solve a problem for someone. In the space below, write about that time and how it felt to be a leader.

A TIME I CAN REMEMBER WHEN I WAS A LEADER WAS...

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



IN THE CLASSROOM

DIFFERENT LEADERS:

In *The Emperor's Groovy New Threads*, the Emperor functions much like the President of the United States, serving as a leader for the country and helping to promote what they think is important to the nation! Many countries have different types of leaders—whether they're presidents, royalty, or something else entirely! The following are just a few types of governments:

Monarchy | Authoritarian | Constitutional Monarchy | Republic | Democracy | Aristocracy
Meritocracy | Theocracy

DIRECTIONS: Before beginning the activity, use dictionaries or the internet to define the above words.

- 1) In small groups, choose one of the types of government at random (from a hat or through a randomizer). No two groups should have the exact same type of government.
- 2) In your group and on a large sheet of paper, create your own country. Give it a name and official colors and pick a name for the leader(s).
- 3) Discuss the type of government that you chose, figuring out at least 5 laws that would be passed in your country. Write them down.
- 4) What is important to your country? Education? Jobs? Fun? Write a list of the top five priorities for your nation.
- 5) Present the information on your country and its laws to the class. On the board, make sure your top five priorities are listed so that you can compare them to those of other types of governments.

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS:

- 1) What did some of the laws presented have in common?
- 2) What were some major differences?
- 3) Which type of government is the United States? Is it a combination of several types?
- 4) Which type of government does the Emperor rule?

TESTING IT OUT:

See if you can identify what the following songs from *The Emperor's Groovy New Threads* and what their function is:

SONGS:

"The Emperor's Clothes"
"The Hero of the Story"
"Opportunity"
"Slave to Fashion"
"The Emperor's Clothes (Reprise)"
"So Much In Common"



Helpful Hint:

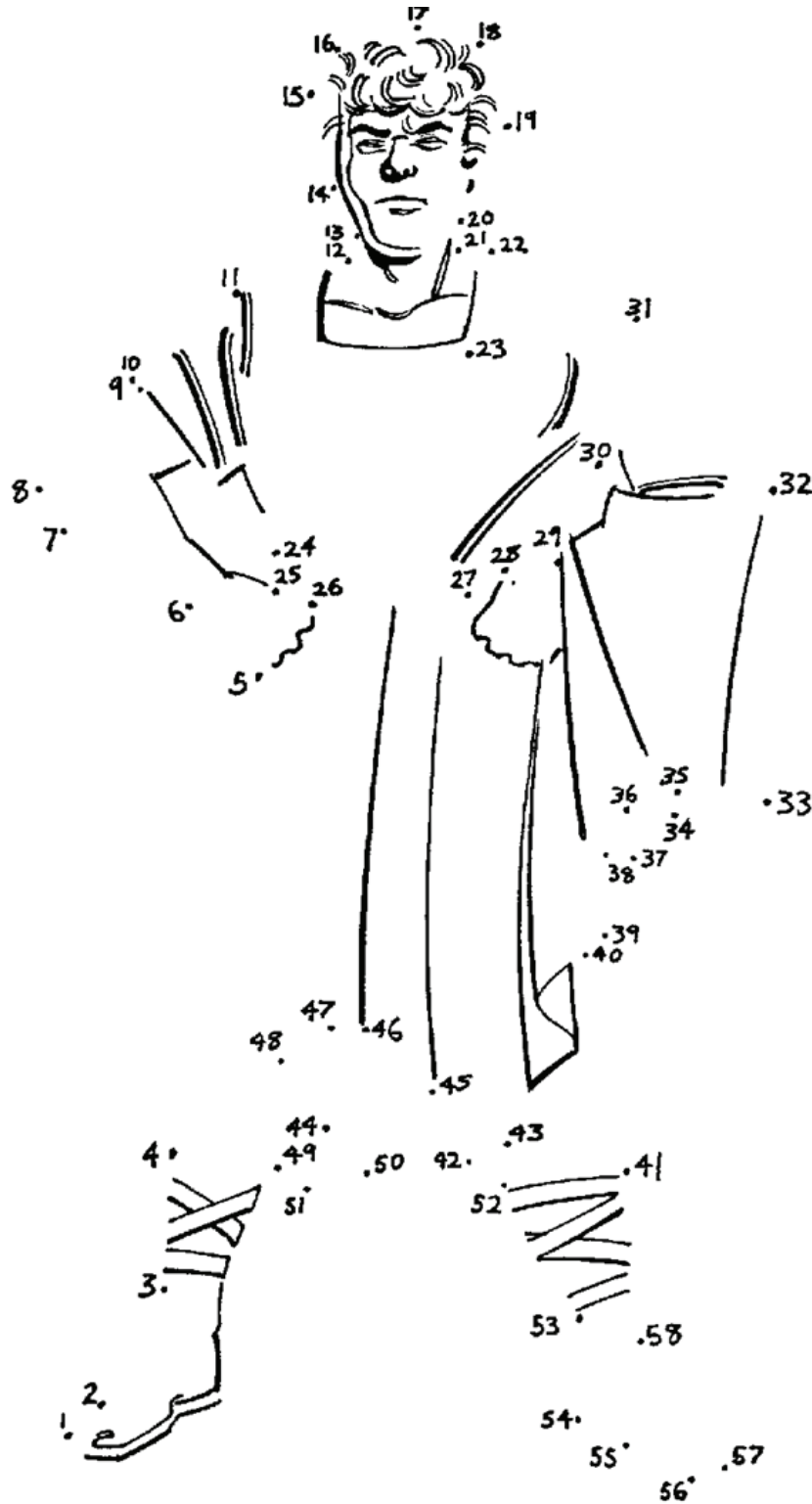
*If you need a refresher to help remember the context of the above songs, it can be fun and helpful to find audio and/or lyrical excerpts from *The Emperor's New Threads*! Contact the Magik Theatre directly for lyrical excerpts.*



IN THE CLASSROOM

FIND AND DESIGN THE EMPEROR'S CLOTHES:

First, connect the dots to find the Emperor's clothes. Then color it in to give him some fashion sense!





DRAMA GAMES RELATING TO THE EMPEROR'S NEW THREADS

WHO STARTED THE MOTION? *(for following the crowd)*

Number of Players: Full Group

Objectives: Focus, Physicality, Ensemble

HOW TO PLAY: The class stands in a circle. One student is chosen as the leader of the movement, with the rest of the class mirroring the movement. The motions should be slow and easy to follow and primarily using the upper body. Then one student is chosen to leave the room. In their absence, a new leader is chosen and the movement begins again. The student in the hall returns to the room and must guess who is starting (or leading) the motion. Encourage the students to look at the student opposite them, NOT at the leader. The idea is that everyone is doing the same thing so precisely that it is impossible to tell the leader from the group. Once back in the classroom, we encourage you to maximize your students' experience at Lifeline by using drama to teach drama! In our residency program, we use theatre games to not only teach the basics of performance, but also to explore themes in the student matinees. Below are some games you can play with your class that touch upon some of the concepts conveyed in the story.

GOO *(for making up imaginary objects)*

Number of Players: Full Group

Objectives: Imagination, Pantomime, Focus

HOW TO PLAY: This is an imagination exercise. Student A comes to the center of the circle and shapes an object with his or her imaginary Goo (clay). Once the object is formed, Student A then uses the object to pantomime an action that can be repeated. A second student comes to the center of the circle and tries to guess what the object is by taking the Goo creation and using it in the same way as Student A. If the student is correct, he or she will then get the opportunity to sculpt a new Goo creation. The steps repeat. There is no talking in this game. This game then can be used to create group environments. Teacher assigns environment to create on stage (i.e., jungle), and each student then creates an element of the jungle out of Goo, and it remains on stage. At the end the students can call out what is in their jungle.

FLOCKING *(for following others)*

Number of Players: anywhere from 4-12

Objectives: Physicality, Ensemble, Reflexes

HOW TO PLAY: Organize students in a diamond pattern evenly spaced with enough room to move their arms freely, all facing in the one direction. Allow several students to stand out to observe. Using slow music, ask students to follow the student at the leading point, students should be instructed to keep the movement even and slow (similar to tai chi) as it is not a race nor is this exercise to trick others. Encourage students to use different levels and backward movements. The leader changes as, for example, the person facing front pivots to the left, then a new person is in front and begins leading. The goal is to follow and change leaders with as little disruption as possible to the group movement.

STUDENT REVIEW OF “THE EMPEROR’S GROOVY NEW THREADS”



BY: _____

I GIVE THIS PLAY: *(Circle the number of stars)* ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

MY FAVORITE PART OF THE PLAY WAS:

because _____

MY FAVORITE CHARACTER WAS:

because _____

IF I HAD TO CHOOSE WHAT I LIKED BEST, I WOULD CHOOSE: *(Circle one)*

The Story

The Characters

The Music

The Costumes

The Scenery

because _____

Teachers – We would love to hear from your students! Please mail in your student review of
The Emperor’s Groovy New Threads to:

Parker Arts, c/o Education Department
20000 Pikes Peak Ave.
Parker, CO 80138.