



Thalian Association
Official Community Theater of North Carolina
PO Box 1111 • Wilmington, NC 28402 • 910/251.1788 • www.thalian.org

A Guide to Pre and Post Show Discussions

We recommend providing a brief description of the plot, a list of the cast and characters, and an acknowledgement of the playwright, production team, actors, musicians, and technicians.

A discussion about theater vocabulary and protocol is also helpful. Here is what your students need to know:

-Dimming of the lights

A signal that the performance is about to begin.

-Curtain up/open

A signal that the performance has begun.

-Curtain down/closed

This indicates the end of an act (often followed by an intermission) or the end of a performance.

-Blackout

May be used for a special effect or to show the passage of time or change of location at the end of a scene or an act, all of the lights will be turned off momentarily.

-Intermission

A brief pause in the performance (five to fifteen minutes) during which the audience members may stand up, go to the restroom, get a drink of water, or talk quietly.

-Curtain Call

After the performance is over, the actors come on stage to take their bows acknowledging their appreciation of the audience.

-Applause

Audience members express their approval and enjoyment of a performance by clapping their hands. Applause is usually reserved for the end of scenes and acts, the end of a performance, and curtain call. *However, sometimes an especially exciting or satisfying moment during a show merits applause.*

Going to a play is a special experience, one that you will remember for a long time. There is a big difference in going to a play and going to see a movie. The actors are performing for you live onstage, and they can see and hear what goes on in the audience just as you can see and hear them. Here are some things that can help to enhance your theatrical experience.

What You Need to Know About Attending a TACT (Thalian Association Children's Theater) Performance

Discuss with your class how critical the involvement of the audience is to live theater. Stage actors (unlike television and film actors) are present and sense audience reactions. Their performance alters according to that response. A good audience is a major component of a great performance. Your discussion may focus on commonalities and differences between the conventions of film, television, and live theater.

Suggestions for General Questions to Ask **Before** Attending a TACT Performance

- Have you ever heard of this play before? Where? Was it a book or movie? If so, how do you think this play will be different?
 - What kind of characters do you expect to see? Why?
 - What kind of costumes do you expect to see? Why?
 - What kind of set do you expect to see? Why?
- What questions do you have about the play?

AUDIENCE ETIQUETTE

- Arrive promptly
 - Take care of bathroom business and drinks of water before taking your seat.
 - Deposit any food, drinks, and chewing gum in trash receptacles in the lobby.
 - Enter the theater and take your seats in a quiet and orderly manner
 - Be considerate of those around you and keep your hands and feet to yourself.
 - Do not distract your neighbor's attention from the stage by talking or making noise during the performance
- Please note: *With the exception of taking to one's neighbor, responses are expected and encouraged of audience members. Laughter, tears, and gasps of surprise are common reactions. Teachers should not instruct their students to "sit still and be absolutely quiet" during a performance. Such controlled behavior is unnatural and deprives both the audience and the performers of the joy of positive interaction during a production.*
- Dimmed lights and blackouts are part of the performances. Encourage students to sit calmly when the lights go out.
 - Avoid leaving your seat during a performance unless it is an emergency situation.
 - Show respect for the actors by giving them you full attention during the performance.
 - Flash photography is strictly prohibited during a performance. It is distracting and dangerous to the actors.
 - All teachers and students will be asked to turn off their cell phones during the performance.
 - Show your appreciation to the actors, musicians, and technicians through applause and positive reactions.
 - When the performance is over please exit the theater in an orderly fashion.

Suggestions for Discussion **After** Attending a TACT Performance

You may want to open the discussion by asking students if they would recommend the play to a friend who hasn't seen it? Encourage students to think analytically and critically. Do not settle for "The play was great" or "I didn't like it". Address the reasons for individuals' varying opinions. Discussion thrives on thought provoking questions. Remember that open-ended questions do not have right or wrong answers.

REVIEW

- Conflict- The problem(s) in the play that then characters are trying to solve
- Dialogue- The words spoken by the characters
- Plot- The story in the play that has a beginning, middle, and end
- Resolution- The act of solving a problem or conflict; how is the conflict resolved?
- Setting- The where and when of the play
- Spectacle- The things that appeal to our sense of sight: costumes, lights, scenery
- Theme- The idea of the play; what the play means

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS

- Who was your favorite character in the play? Why?
- Who was your least favorite character in the play? Why?
- What was the plot of the play?
- What was the conflict in the play?
- How did the characters try to solve the conflict? What was the result?
- Did any of the characters change by the end of the play? What did they learn? What did they teach others?
- What was the main theme of the play?
- What was your favorite spectacle element? Why?
- How did the designers of the scenery, props, lights, sound, costumes, and makeup use their imagination? In what ways did they ask us to use our imaginations?
- How would the play change if it were presented on film or television?
- How attentive was the audience? How did they respond to the performance?
- If you were going to direct this play, how would you change it?
- If you were going to design the set, props, lights, sound, or costumes for the play, how would you change them?
- If you were playing one of the characters in the play, would you have acted it differently? How?