

# Teacher's Guide

*Based on New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards*

For



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## The Emperor's New Clothes, the Story and Its History

### **The Story:**

Once upon a time there lived an Emperor who cared too much about his clothes. One day, two swindlers came before him and said that they could make him a beautiful suit made of a fine magical cloth that was invisible to anyone who was either stupid or not fit to hold office.

The vain Emperor excitedly ordered a suit. However, he soon became nervous that he himself might not be able to see the cloth. The Emperor sent two of his trusted advisors to see it. They saw the weavers apparently hard at work at a loom but they did not see anything on it. Of course, neither would admit to the other or to the Emperor that they could not see the cloth, so they praised it.

When the suit was presented to the Emperor, he too would not admit that he was unable to see the cloth. He praised the suit as the swindlers dressed him in it. Even as he led a procession through town, having no idea what he was wearing, he told no-one. What kind of ruler could he be if he was too stupid to see his new suit?

The townspeople wildly praised the magnificent clothes of the Emperor, each of them also afraid to admit that they could not see the cloth, until a small child said, "*But he has nothing on!*" This was whispered from person to person until everyone in the crowd was shouting that the Emperor had nothing on.

The Emperor realized that the people were right, but how could he deal with being dressed only in his undergarments in the middle of town. He had to keep up the appearance that the townspeople were simply too stupid to see the suit. So he held his head high and finished the procession exactly as he was.

### **The History:**

The oldest known written version of this story was written by Don Juan Manuel in "Old Castilian" (an old form of a Spanish Dialect) and published in Spain in 1328. It was one of a collection of 50 stories entitled Libro de los enxiemplos del Conde Lucanor et de Patronio ("Book of the examples of Count Lucanor and of Patronio"). This book was published in English in 1868 with a translation by James York, MD under the title Count Lucanor or The Fifty Pleasant Stories of Patronio. Story number 7 in this collection was entitled Of That Which Happened to a King and Three Imposters.

In 1835, Hans Christian Andersen began having his fairy tales and stories published. On April 7, 1837, Eventyr, fortalte for Børn. Første Samling. Tredie Hefte was published in Danish (Andersen's native language). "Eventyr, fortalte for Børn" means "Fairy Tales, Told for Children". It was this book, his third collection, which contained Keiserens nye Klæder (The Emperor's New Clothes). While it is not clear when the first translation, of

Andersen's version into English was published, one of the oldest known translations (if not the oldest) was Tales and Fairy Stories, by Hans Christian Andersen, translated by Madame de Chatelain which was first published in London in 1852. There is some evidence of a version being published in the United States as early as 1856 by McLoughlin Bros. publishers but neither the publication nor the year could be confirmed.

In 1985, Theatreworks, USA, a New York –based, not-for-profit, repertory and touring company which specializes in theater for children and families, commissioned The Emperor's New Clothes by Stephen Flaherty and Lynn Ahrens. It was one of their first successful projects together (They have created several award-winning musicals since then including Ragtime, Once on This Island, Seussical, The Musical and many more).

Flaherty and Ahrens' version used 5 actors to play 9 roles. Music Theatre International, who now owns the production rights to F & A's The Emperor's New Clothes, granted Maurer Productions Onstage the right to expand the cast to use 15 actors to play 17 roles. This permission for this expanded cast version is limited to this particular production. This version, which will be shown at the Kelsey Theatre in West Windsor, NJ on October 11<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> is this one and only run.

***Sources include:***

The Devon Collection: Devon County Council (UK)

The Hans Christian Andersen Center

University of South Florida Library: Special Collections

South Coast Repertory Theatre Company

Theatreworks, USA

Alibris

Amazon.com

Wikipedia

York, James MD (1868) Count Lucanor or The Fifty Pleasant Stories of Patronio; Carl F. Braun, Alhambra, California, 1953

**Applicable New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards**

Note that many of the Core Curriculum Content Standards for writing are not included below. Depending on your choice of presentation of the activity and your choice of students' method of response, almost all of the NJ CCC Writing Standards (3.2) could be applied.

Activity / Assignment	New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standard(s) met
<p>Before attending the production, familiarize the students (or have the students familiarize themselves) with Theatre Vocabulary at the end of this packet. Encourage them to use this vocabulary in activities and assignments related to the production.</p>	<p>3.1.K: F-1, F-4            3.1.1: F-3            3.3.1: C-1            1.3.2: C-1            3.3.2: C-1            3.4.2: B-2</p>
<p>Before the performance begins, see that each student has a program. Help the students to find the title, the scene list, and cast list. Explain to them how the words and numbers explain what they will see.</p>	<p>3.1.K: C-5, C-6            3.1.3: A-3</p>
<p>See <u>The Emperor's New Clothes</u> musical.</p>	<p>3.4.K: A-2            3.5.1 A-3            1.1.2:A-1            1.4.4:B-1            3.4.4: A-1</p>
<p>Discuss the difference in clothing, behavior, tools, occupations, and sleeping quarters between the people of the varying social classes in the play.</p>	<p>3.3.1: B-1            1.1.2: B-1            3.3.2: A-2, 3, &amp; 4            6.1.2: A-1            3.4.1: B-3            3.4.2: A-3            3.5.2: A-1            3.3.3: A-1, 2, 3, &amp; 4; B-2            3.2.4: D-5, D-8, D-11            3.3.4: A-1, 2, &amp; 3            6.1.4: A-2</p>
<p>After having seen the production, have the students re-tell the story and/or answer some questions about the story which may include predictions for the future of the characters.</p>	<p>3.5.K A-2            3.1.K: G-2            3.3.K: A-1,2, &amp; 3; B-1; C-1            3.1.1: G-1, G-5            3.3.1: A-1 &amp; 2, B-1            3.5.2: A-1            6.1.2: A-1, 2, &amp; 4;            3.1.3: G-14            3.2.3: B-1, D-5            3.4.3: B-2</p>

Activity / Assignment	New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standard(s) met
<p>Read other versions of The Emperor’s New Clothes and/or watch films of the story and compare them with each-other and with the production. Discuss origins and authors of the various versions.</p>	<p>3.5.1 A-7 3.1.2: H-2 3.1.3: G-7, G-9, G-10 3.1.3: H-2, H-3 3.1.4: G-8, G-12, G-13 3.2.4: B-2, D-5, D-7 3.5.4: B-4 &amp; C-1 6.6.4 A-1 &amp; 5</p>
<p>Have the students describe the production and theatre using the Theatre Vocabulary mentioned above and qualitative terms. Ask the students how well was the set designed and constructed in each scene to imitate what the scene would have looked like if it were real? Have them discuss what emotions the students experienced through the play and how those emotions were elicited using music, lighting, acting/expression, &amp; etc. This will help the students to learn how they might elicit emotional responses from their own audiences in a class or school play.</p>	<p>1.3.2: C-1 1.4.2:A-1, B-1, B-2 3.5.2: B-1 1.1.4: B-1, B-2, B-4 1.4.4: A-1 3.2.4: D-5, D-7 3.5.4: B-3</p>
<p>Have students attempt to re-enact their favorite scenes from the play. Then ask them to try it again, this time having one of the characters be sad rather than happy, or moving very slowly rather than quickly to see how it changes the scene.</p>	<p>3.3.1: A-3, 3.4.1: B-3 &amp; 4 1.2.2: C-1, C-2 1.3.2: C-2 3.3.2: D-1 1.2.4: C-1 1.3.4: C-1 1.4.4: B-2</p>
<p>Discuss how the music of the show made the students feel. Discuss how it might have felt different if this had been a play (without music) rather than a musical.</p>	<p>1.2.2: C-4 3.3.2: B-2 3.3.3: A-4, B-2, C-2 &amp; 3 1.1.4: B-4 (partly) 3.2.4: D-11 3.3.4: A-1 &amp; 3,</p>
<p>Discuss the type of government used in The Emperor’s New Clothes, what was good/bad about it. Use various resources to research the difference between monarchy and democracy and report findings via a Venn diagram, comparative essay, or oral presentation. Conduct a class debate on the strong and weak points of both types of government.</p>	<p>6.2.2:A-1, 2, 3, &amp; 5; D-2 3.1.4: E-3 6.2.4: A-1 &amp; 2, D-2</p>

## **Sample Questions for Classroom Activities** *sorted by categories of Bloom's Taxonomy*

Note that these questions are based on the production of *The Emperor's New Clothes* by Maurer Productions Onstage at the Kelsey Theatre.

### **Knowledge:**

- What was Arno's job?
- What was the swindler's name?
- How many guards were there?
- How did the emperor decide to solve the problems of flooding and the hole in the road?
- What made the imperial suite (the Swindler's room) so special?
- What did the farmers grow on their farm?
- Who got stuck in the hole in the street?
- How old was the emperor?

### **Comprehension**

- How did Marcus feel about becoming Emperor at the beginning of the show?
- How did you know that the swindler was not going to make any clothes for the emperor?
- Why did William and Deena do whatever the swindler asked?

### **Application**

- How were the differences between social classes demonstrated in the show?
- Why was it significant that Emperor Marcus's crown was falling down at his coronation?
- Why was Marcus becoming Emperor?

### **Analysis**

- Compare Marcus' bedroom with Arno's. What did that tell you about these characters
- How was the stage split to indicate the different locations?
- How was the scenery changed during the performance?

### **Synthesis**

- What solutions would you suggest for dealing with the overflowing river and the hole in the road?
- What could Marcus do to learn how to be a better Emperor?
- How could Deena and William have exposed the swindler's fraud?
- How might the lives of Arno and the swindler change after this story?

### **Evaluation**

- Do you think Marcus will be a good Emperor? Why/Why not?
- What would you have done differently when the swindler came if you were Deena?
- What was the point of this story?

## **Alternate Versions of The Emperor's New Clothes**

There are thousands of versions of this story available in various media. Here are some which may be of particular interest.

- Burton, Virginia Lee (2004) The Emperor's New Clothes: Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston
- Calmenson, Stephanie (1991) The Principal's New Clothes. Scholastic, Inc, New York
- Canon Movie Tales: The Emperor's New Clothes Dir. David Irving. Writ. David Irving and Anna Mathias. Perf. Sid Caesar, Clive Revill, Robert Morse. DVD. Canon Films, 1987.
- DeLuise, Dom (1999) King Bob's New Clothes. Aladdin (Simon & Schuster) New York
- Demi (2000) The Emperor's New Clothes: A Tale Set in China. Margaret K. McElderry (Simon & Schuster) New York.
- The Enchanted World of Danny Kaye: The Emperor's New Clothes. Dir. Jules Bass, Writ. Romeo Muller, Perf. Danny Kaye, Cyril Ritchard, Imogene Coca. DVD Rankin/Bass Productions 1972
- Hersholt, Jean (1949) Hans Christian Andersen: The Complete Stories. The British Library, London 2000 (*Jean Hersholt is one of the English translators recommended by the Hans Christian Andersen Center in Denmark.*)
- Starbright Foundation (2000): Hans Christian Andersen's The Emperor's New Clothes : an all-star retelling of the classic fairy tale. Book and CD edition. Harcourt Brace & Company
- York, James MD (1868) Count Lucanor or The Fifty Pleasant Stories of Patronio; Carl F. Braun, Alhambra, California 1953(*a popular translation of the first known written version of the story by Don Juan Manuel in 1328*). *Story/chapter VII: Of That Which Happened to a King and Three Imposters*)

## Theatre Vocabulary

**Acting**-The process by which an individual uses the entire self—body, mind, voice and emotions—to interpret and perform the role of an imagined or assumed character.

**Ad-Lib**-To extemporize stage business or dialogue; to make it up as you go along.

**Apron**-The area of the stage that extends toward the audience, in front of the main curtain.

**Arena Stage**-A theatre with a central playing area and the audience seated around the perimeter, also called "theatre in-the-round."

**Black Box**-A bare room used as a versatile theatre space in which the seating and production elements can be presented in any configuration.

**Blocking**-The movement and stage business, designed by the director and performed by the actors.

**Business**-Any action performed on stage.

**Character**-The role played by an actor as she or he assumes another's identity.

**Choreography**-The art of creating and arranging dances onstage.

**Conflict**-The problem or incident that creates the action and is resolved by the end of the play.

**Costume**-The carefully selected clothing worn by the actors.

**Cross**-The actor's movement from one stage location to another.

**Cue**-The last words or action of an actor immediately preceding the lines or business of another actor.

### **Curtain-**

- The movable screen or drape in a theater or hall that separates the stage from the auditorium or that serves as a backdrop.
- The rising or opening of a theater curtain at the beginning of a performance or act.
- The time at which a theatrical performance begins or is scheduled to begin.
- The fall or closing of a theater curtain at the end of a performance or act.
- The concluding line, speech, or scene of a play or act.



**Cyclorama-** A large backdrop at the rear of a theater stage, sometimes extending around to the proscenium arch in a U-shape; usually painted or lit to simulate the sky.

**Dialogue-** The stage conversation between characters.

**Diction-**The clarity with which words are pronounced.

**Downstage-**The part of the stage closest to the audience. At one time stages were raked, or sloped, with the lower ("down") part closest to the audience, and the higher ("up") part further away.

**Ensemble-**A cast of actors working together effectively to present a theatrical performance.

**Flats-**Canvas or wood-covered frames that are used for the walls of a stage setting.

**Green Room-**A room near the stage where actors await entrance cues and receive guests after the performance. The room's traditional color comes from Elizabethan times, when actors waited on a real "green" (or nearby patch of grass).

**Monologue-**A solo speech. Often, this takes the form of a soliloquy, in which the character reveals personal thoughts, either while alone on the stage or unaware of the presence of other characters.

**Mugging-**A derogatory term for exaggerated, unnecessary facial expressions or physical gestures.

**Pit -**

- The section directly in front of and below the stage of a theater, in which the musicians sit.
- The group of musicians playing the music at a theatrical performance

**"Places"-**Direction given by the Stage Manager to signal actors to be in position for the beginning of an act.

**Plot-**The "what happens" in a story: beginning (the setting, characters, and problem); middle (how the characters work to solve the problem); and the ending (resolution of the problem).

**Project-**To speak loudly so the entire audience can hear you.

**Props-**All the objects, including furniture, that are physically used by the actors.

**Proscenium Stage-**A traditional theatre with the audience seated in front of a proscenium arch framing the stage.

**Run**-Length of time the play will be presented (i.e. two weeks, two months, two years).

**Script**-The text of the play, including dialogue and stage directions, all written by the playwright.

**Set**-All of the scenery—walls, platforms, doors, etc.—that makes up the physical environment of the world of the play.

**Stagecraft**-The knowledge and skills required to create the physical aspects of a production; i.e., scenery, lighting, costumes, and props.

**Stage Left**-That part of the stage to the actor's left when the actor faces the audience.

**Stage Manager**-The person who supervises the physical production of a play and who is in charge of the stage during the performance.

**Stage Right**-That part of the stage to the actor's right when the actor faces the audience.

**Strike**-Dismantling the set, costumes and props at the end of the RUN of a show.

**Theme**-The central thought, idea, or significance of the action of a play.

**Thrust Stage**-A theatre with audience seated around three sides of the stage.

**Upstage**-The area of the stage farthest way from the audience and nearest to the back wall.

**Wings**-The space off stage masked by the drapes, often used for exits and entrances.