



GALAPAGOS GEORGE

Footnotes Learning Guide

ABOUT THE SHOW

Barefoot Puppet Theatre's *Galapagos George* is a 50-minute performance is based on the true story of "Lonesome George," a one-on-a-kind tortoise from the Galapagos Islands. George's story is brought to life on stage with puppetry, original music, and narrative verse.

Who is George? He is a tortoise, a GIANT GALAPAGOS TORTOISE! The audience will see George hatch from an egg and grow up surrounded by sea turtles, lizards, hungry goats, sea lions, crabs, and dancing birds with blue feet. But there are no other tortoises on his island. As the story unfolds, you experience his story as the last tortoise on Pinta Island.

Described by *The Smithsonian* as "an uplifting eco-fable," this engaging theatrical piece shares a timely message about humanity's impact upon the environment balanced with hope for the future.



Photo Credit: Warren Johnson

Dear Educator,

We are thrilled to be sharing our work with you and your learners. This guide is just for you and your students, so you will know what to expect during our performance. Inside you will find FUN FACTS about the show, ART JARGON about puppetry, VOCABULARY related to the performance, THEATRE ETIQUETTE, and a MEET THE ARTISTS section, too. The excitement of a live performance can spark curiosity and ignite the imagination. We know you are busy, so none of these are necessary to do in advance, but some might be helpful to young learners.

Your feedback is always welcome and deeply appreciated. If you or your class have questions, please visit www.barefootpuppets.com and click CONTACT US. Those emails reach us quickly! We love to "talk shop" and share!

See you soon!
Heidi Rugg & Co.



This show was funded, in part, by a grant from the *Puppeteers of America* Endowment Fund. In 2005, "Galapagos George" was also recognized with an *UNIMA Citation of Excellence*, the highest award in American Puppetry.

THEATRE ETIQUETTE

A live **performance** is different from watching a movie or TV. The **performers** will be in the same room as you. They can see and hear you! As a member of the **audience**, you are an important part of the show. Below are FOUR ways to be a great audience member:

1. Stay quiet and seated during the performance so everyone around you may also see and hear.
2. Eyes and ears open wide! Watch and listen to the performers (and puppets). Remember what you see and talk to your friends and family about it AFTER the show.
3. If the performer (or a puppet) asks a question, you can answer it if you are called on. If something funny happens, it is OKAY to LAUGH!
4. At the end of the show, **applaud** to show your appreciation.

Questions to Explore:

Have you seen a live show before?

Can you think of any other ways to be a great audience member?



Photo Credit: Warren Johnson

VOCABULARY

Words in **BOLD** will be used during the performance.

GEOGRAPHY:

Archipelago, **Ecuador**, Equator, **Galapagos**, **Island**, **Ocean**, **Sea**, **Shore**, **South America**, **Species**, **Volcano**

SCIENCE:

Algae, **Cactus**, **Extinction**, **Endangered Animals**, **Invasive** (or **Introduced**) **Species**, **Native**, **Reptile**, **Tortoise**, **Turtle**

SEL:

Alone, **Hungry**, **Hope**, **Lonely**, **Lonesome**, **Wish**

OTHER:

Mist, **Veiled**

FUN FACTS:

There are EIGHTEEN different puppets in the show.

THREE of the characters in the show have “stunt double” puppets or multiple puppets to show how they look when they are older.

All of the puppets were made by the **puppeteer**, Heidi.

The moving mouth **mechanism** in the puppets is one that Heidi invented after dreaming about it!

Heidi started building puppets when she was TEN years old after checking out a book from the library about making puppets.

There are NINE puppets with **springs** and SIX puppets with SLINKIES inside them that help the puppet move.

It takes about six months to build a puppet show, but you cannot begin building until after you have a script.

TYPES OF PUPPETS

There are three types of puppets in this show. Watch carefully and maybe you can figure out what kind of puppet you are seeing on stage!

Hand Puppets work by putting your hand inside the puppet. When you move your hand, you move the puppet, too.

Rod Puppets have a rod or a stick attached to the puppet. The rod can be attached to the top of the puppet, below the puppet, or behind the puppet. When you move the rod, you move the puppet. Sometimes a puppet can have more than one rod.

Shadow Puppets use light. When you place an image between a light and a surface, a shadow is cast onto the surface. If you move the object, the shadow moves in the same way.

MEET THE ARTIST: HEIDI RUGG



Photo Credit: Warren Johnson

PUPPETRY MATERIALS

The puppets in the show are made using a variety of materials that include: fabric, feathers, foam rubber, slinkies, papier-mâché, latex rubber, cardboard, wool, wood, springs, dowel rods, thread, fishing line, and different kinds of glue.

Heidi began building puppets at the age of ten. Her fifth grade teacher assigned book reports that were required to have (gasp!) visual aids. After a trip to the library, she built her very first puppet: a marionette of Anne Frank. For the rest of that year, she made puppets for all of her book reports.

Years later, she attended *Virginia Commonwealth University* (VCU) and studied both Art and Art History. Feeling the pull of “something more,” she took off “a semester” to follow her curiosity about puppetry. The semester turned into a two year apprenticeship with Master Puppet Builder, Barry Gordemer.

In 1997, she founded her own company, *Barefoot Puppet Theatre*, with a mission to create shows that spark curiosity and ignite imaginations. She has now been touring for 25-years. Heidi loves working with her hands, experimenting with new materials, designing puppet mechanisms, and doing the deep research needed to develop new works.

In 2020, she returned to VCU to finally finish up her degree during lockdown. She graduated *magna cum laude* in 2021 with a Bachelors of Interdisciplinary Studies in Arts Integration and a minor in Art History. She is thrilled to be back on stage with YOU!

RECOMMENDED READING

The Lorax by Dr. Seuss, 1971: I know you've read this one! Share it with your class again! This book was written the same year that George was discovered. Coincidence?

Hey! Get Off Our Train by John Burningham, 1994. Ages 4-9. A boy and his stuffed-toy dog rescue various endangered animals during a nighttime trip aboard a toy train.

Worlds of Shadow by David and Donna Wisniewski. Englewood: Teacher Ideas Press, 1997. This is THE BEST BOOK on shadow puppetry in the classroom with information for all grade levels.

WRITER'S BLOCK

Writing letters is timeless. Ask your students to write a letter to their favorite character from the puppet show. Was it George the tortoise, Penny the sea lion, the blue-footed booby bird, the crab, the marine iguana (Iggy), or maybe the goats? Something else? We love to hear about the parts of the show that really stand out to young people.

CONTACT US!

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E-mail us from www.barefootpuppets.com if you or your students have questions. Just click CONTACT US on the menu. Thanks!

ABOUT THE COMPANY

Celebrating 25 years of touring excellence!

Barefoot Puppet Theatre is on a mission to spark curiosity and ignite imaginations. The company has toured award-winning programs to theatres, schools, libraries, children's museums and more since 1997. Children, families, educators, librarians, and theatre directors give enthusiastic reviews of our programs and invite us back again and again. Audiences appreciate their imaginative storytelling, the hand-crafted puppets, and beautifully built staging and scenery.

The company has performed throughout the country (and a bit beyond!). Notable venues include *The Smithsonian Discovery Theater*, *The Puppet Showplace Theatre* in Boston, *The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts*, and *The Center for Puppetry Arts* in Atlanta. We have also performed at numerous puppetry festivals throughout the country.

SHOW CREDITS

Heidi Rugg: Script, Puppet Design, Puppet Construction, Set Design

Sam Rugg: Set Construction, Troubleshooting, and Technical Support

Eric Weinberg: Music Composition, Mixing, and Recording

Warren Johnson: Photography

