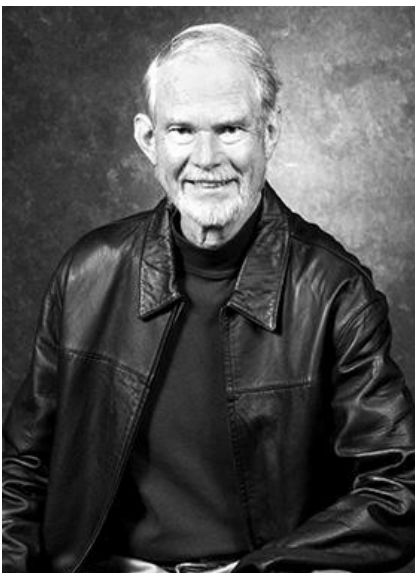


### About the Playwright

Joseph Robinette is a world-renowned playwright, tony nominee, and drama desk nominee for his work in the theatre. Throughout the course of his career, Robinette has written over fifty plays and musicals. He has even adapted E.B. White's *Charlotte's Web* into a play and a musical, alongside Charles Strouse (*Annie, Bye Bye Birdie*). Currently he is a professor in New Jersey.



# Charlotte's Web

## A STUDY GUIDE FOR PARENTS AND TEACHERS

### The Story

*Charlotte's Web* by E.B. White was adapted for the stage in the late 1980's by Joseph Robinette who has written countless children's plays adaptations. Robinette even made transformed this production into a musical. This show encounters the themes of friendship and living life in harmony on a farm.

We meet Wilbur at the beginning of the show born the runt of the litter. When Mr. Arable decides that it is time to go out to kill the runt of the litter, his daughter Fern steps in to raise the piglet all by herself. Soon the pig gets a name "Wilbur" and soon becomes too big to be cared for so is sent away to go live with on Homer's farm where Fern can go visit every day.

Upon arrival to the new farm, Wilbur meets new friends but ultimately learns what his true fate is. It is now up to his group of friends to save him from being turned into bacon. Then a friendly spider named Charlotte comes along and decides that it is time for something that is not ordinary, but a miracle, terrific, humble and radiant.

### Theatre Etiquette

*Throughout the show it is important to remember that this is not a prerecorded performance, and that all actors seen are live. Please remember the following when attending this performance:*

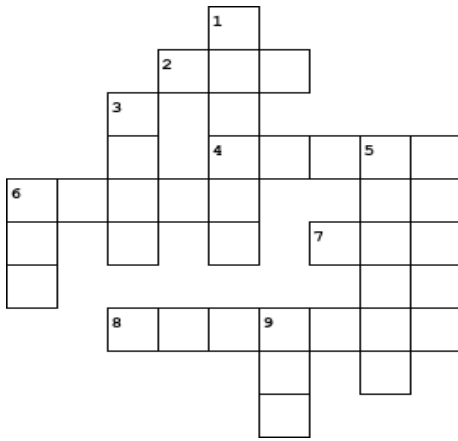
1. Please remain seated during the performance
2. Please hold applause until the end of the show
3. Please be courteous to the actors on stage and remain silent during the duration of the show.

### Pre-Show Discussion Questions

During the show you will be enriched in a culture filled with farm life, different animals, and immersed into an old town southern community where family and friendship is everything. With that being said:

1. Who would you say is your best friend and why?
2. What are three adjectives that you would use to describe your best friend?
3. To what extents will you go to help your best friend?

## What's on the Farm?



### **Down**

1. Works on the farm
3. Where the animals live
5. Makes a web
6. What animals eat
9. Can make milk

### **Across**

2. Hunts mice
4. Likes to eat cheese
6. Wears a saddle
7. Has a snout
8. Lays eggs

### Activity

#### *The Life Cycle of Charlotte*

#### *Standard 2.L.5*

Charlotte is a spider, we also call those creatures scientifically, arachnids. However, a lot of people do not understand what the life cycle of a spider is. For this activity in science class, students will create poster boards with construction paper, yarn, cotton balls, and plastic spiders to demonstrate their understanding of the life cycle of a spider from the time the eggs are laid, to the time metamorphosis occurs, until the end of the life of the spider.

## Vocabulary

*The following words are a list of adjectives used to describe Wilbur over the course of the show. Ultimately saving his life. The definitions provide a brief insight into what the show's message is about.*

- **Ordinary:** Having a common quality, rank, or ability.
- **Miracle:** An extremely outstanding or unusual event, thing, or accomplishment.
- **Terrific:** Unusually fine.
- **Humble:** Not proud or haughty, not arrogant or assertive.
- **Radiant:** Marked by or expressive of love, confidence, or happiness.

### Post-Show Discussion Questions

Throughout the show, we observe that all of Wilbur's newfound friends have decided to help so Wilbur would not be sent to his fate. The show also discusses what happens when we lose our best friend and how we are to cope with the sadness of our loss. We learn about what truly matters in our lives.

1. After watching the show, rethink, how far would you go to help a friend in need?
2. What do you believe the overarching theme of the show revolves around? Why?
3. Why do you think Wilbur decided to keep Charlotte's baby spiders as friends?

### Topics of Discussion

When we discuss *Charlotte's Web* there are two main overarching themes that stand out among the rest. The power of friendship and the importance of being kind. One must never underestimate what it means to be kind to each other. Also not forgetting who your friends are and the foundations that those friendships are built upon.

Charlotte and Wilbur had a friendship that could stand the strength of time. Charlotte used all of her might and her energy to do something no other spider has been known to do before; saving a friend's life by intricately weaving in adjectives to describe how much this new friend means to her. Take some time with your students or family and make sure they understand the importance of friendship and the importance of being kind.

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