



# EDUCATORS GUIDE



## *Cenicienta: A Bilingual Cinderella Story*

This guide is geared toward teachers of grades Pre K - 6.

Supported by:



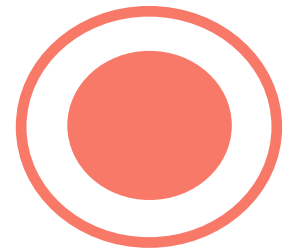
Rines Thompson Fund  
of the Maine Community Foundation

## About This Guide

Use this guide to help your students anticipate, investigate, and reflect upon your live performance experience. This guide is geared toward teachers of grades Pre K - 6.

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The great thing about the arts is that they can often evolve to meet their context. That means that many of the activities shared are flexible to a lot of different contexts depending on how you choose to frame them in your class. We know you all are experts on your classroom and students, so we invite you to use these lessons and activities as guideposts and adapt them to fit your classroom management style, range of student ability, and time constraints.

#### LEARNING CONNECTIONS

Social Studies/History: Latine Culture and Heritage  
Language Arts: Fairytales/Folktales, Poetry, Spanish, English  
Performing Arts: Storytelling, Object Puppetry

#### LEARNING STANDARDS ICON KEY



LANGUAGE ARTS



READING



SPEAKING &  
LISTENING



THEATER

**Educators**, we invite you to share with us what you did in your classroom around this guide or the production. You can email [eschildkret@portlandovations.org](mailto:eschildkret@portlandovations.org) or reach us via [Facebook](#) or [Instagram](#).

We want to hear and see what great learning is happening in your classrooms.

## Introducing the Performance

It is often helpful to share some context with your students before they attend a live performance. Read below for more information on the performance you're coming to see.

### About the Performance

Austin-based company, Glass Half Full Theatre shares its award-winning "story within a story" using Spanish and English in this whimsical, heart-felt play.

Ten-year-old Belinda is a budding poet and loves to tell stories, but when she's stuck in the basement preparing for a party upstairs that her stepmother and stepsisters will host, she'll have to get creative. It's a Cinderella story within a story; Belinda lives out her version while also re-enacting the classic tale of Cinderella, using whatever objects are at her disposal: napkins, teapots, and doilies, to name just a few. With these everyday items, a healthy dose of imagination, and a love of poetry passed down by her father, Belinda imagines a bigger world for herself. This captivating bilingual one-woman performance is a modern spin on the beloved fairy tale and explores themes of cultural heritage, family, and the power of language.



*Mariah Fonseca in Cenicienta*

## About the Company

Glass Half Full Theatre was lauded by the *Austin-American Statesman* for an “inventive blend of puppetry and physical storytelling that employs gestures and expressions in tandem with props and sets to convey the narrative along with a variety of puppetry techniques.” Based in Austin, Texas, the company creates original works for youth and adults, with a focus on social and environmental justice. They have received B. Iden Payne Awards for Direction, Design, Writing, Acting, Puppetry and Visionary Innovation, and Austin Critics Table Awards for Design, Acting and Best New Play. The company follows the rigorous physical theatre training of Jacques Lecoq and employs sophisticated puppetry forms including Tabletop, Shadow Puppetry, Body Puppetry, Hand and Rod, Czech marionette, and Object Puppetry. Their original works, including *Petra and the Wolf*, *Once There Were Six Seasons*, *Cenicienta*, and *The Orchid Flotilla* have toured nationally. Glass Half Full is known for their “precise, engaging, and humorous” approach to real world issues that enable audiences to experience complex ideas and imaginative solutions.



*Madison Polamo in Cenicienta, photo by Chris Owen*

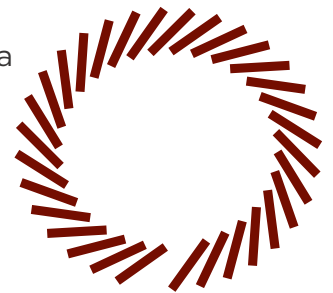
## What To Expect

### The Performance

- The performance is about 50 minutes long.
- The play is performed entirely by one woman. She plays Belinda, a 10-year-old Latina. The actress is also the puppeteer and voices all the characters played by puppets.
- Some characters, like Belinda's mother and stepsisters and her favorite author, Gary Soto, are played by off-stage voices. They never appear on stage.
- The play takes place in a basement where Belinda spends most of her time. The basement is full of things, like boxes, lamps, and wire dress forms.
- The performance will be sign interpreted.

### The Puppets

- Belinda uses what she finds around the basement to tell the story of Cenicienta (Cinderella in Spanish). All the characters in the story are played by everyday objects. Cenicienta is played by a cloth napkin. Her step family is played by funnels. Her Madrina (her fairy godmother) is played by an upside-down teapot. The prince is played by a magnifying glass. There are other characters played by lamps, fans, candlesticks, and other objects.
- All the puppets are moved and voiced by Belinda as she tells her story.



### The Sound

- Belinda speaks in English and Spanish throughout the play
- When music plays, it is used as background for the scene taking place. The music is soft and fun.
- The off-stage voices of Belinda's stepmother and stepsisters are loud and nasal in quality.

### The Lights

- A general wash of light on the stage is used throughout.

### Resources

- Plan your visit to Westbrook Performing Arts Center: <https://portlandovations.org/about/accessibility-westbrook-performing-arts-center/>
- Learn more about accessibility at Portland Oventions: <https://portlandovations.org/about/accessibility/>
- Get the latest health and safety information for Portland Oventions productions: <https://portlandovations.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/School-Time-Performance-Health-and-Safety-Protocols-May-2023.pdf>

## Being an Audience Member

An audience member is a part of a larger community – an audience – and you all work together to create your theater experience. Audience members play a special and important role in the performance. The performers are very aware of the audience while they perform. Sharing their hard work and joy with you is one of the best parts of being a performer. Each performance calls for different audience responses. Lively bands, musicians and dancers may desire audience members to clap and move to the beat. Other performers require silent focus on the stage and talking from the audience can be distracting. A theater is designed to magnify sound and even the smallest whispers can be heard throughout the auditorium. Glass Half Full Theatre highly encourages clapping and laughing at the parts of the performance that you enjoy.

As you enjoy the show, think about being a part of the performance.

- What are the differences between attending a live performance and going to a movie or watching television?
- What are some different types of live performances? How many can you name?
- What kind of responses might an audience give to different types of performances?
- What are the different cues that a performer will give you so that you know how to respond? For example, might they bow or pause for applause?



*The interior of Westbrook Performing Arts Center*

## Essential Questions

### Who is Cinderella?

Cinderella is the heroine of a European fairytale. Thanks to Disney, perhaps the most familiar version of the fairytale in the United States is a translation of Charles Perrault's "Cendrillon," which appeared in his collection of fairytales, *Tales of Mother Goose* (Contes de ma mere l'oye) published in French in 1697 and in English in 1729. There are many versions of Cinderella's story told around the world. More than 500 versions have been recorded in Europe alone. One of the oldest known recorded Cinderella stories is a tale from China dating back to 9th century. These stories all share essential features: a youngest daughter who is mistreated by her jealous stepmother and elder stepsisters (or sometimes a cruel father), an intervention by a supernatural helper (often the spirit of the girl's dead mother or an animal agent sent by her; Perrault's version is one of the few with a fairy godmother), and a reversal of fortune brought about by a prince who falls in love with her.

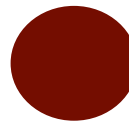


*The fitting with the prince onlooking, illustration in Les Contes de Perrault by Gustave Doré, 1862*



*Cinderella or Cendrillon in French. Gustave Doré's illustration for Cendrillon, 1867*

In many versions, the prince identifies the girl by a token. In Perrault's version, the token is a glass slipper, but in others the prince identifies her by a slipper made of silver or gold, or a ring.

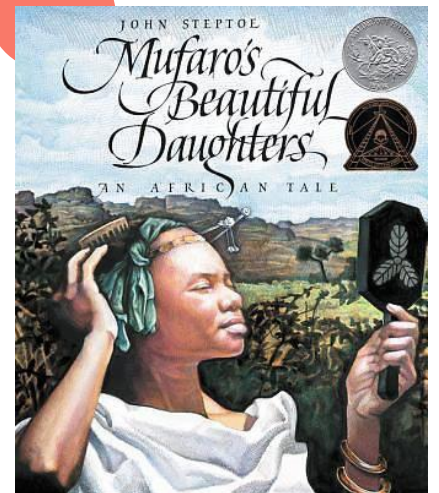
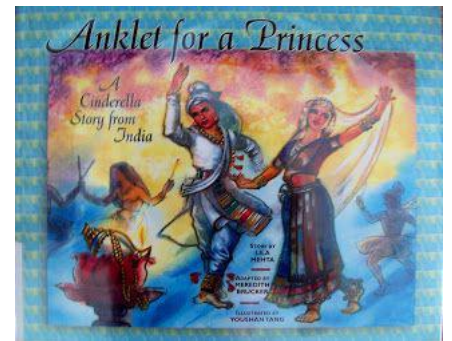


## Essential Questions

### Book List: Cinderella around the World

Explore Cinderella stories from around the world through these books!

- *Abadeha: The Philippine Cinderella* by Myrna J. de la Paz, illustrated by Youshan Tang
- *Adelita* by Tomie dePaola
- *Anklet for a Princess: A Cinderella Story from India* by Lila Mehta, illustrated by Youshan Tang
- *Cendrillon: A Caribbean Cinderella* by Robert D. San Souci, illustrated by Brian Pinkney
- *Cinderella: An Islamic Tale* by Fawzia Gilani
- *Estrellita de Oro/Little Gold Star: A Cinderella Cuento* (English and Spanish) by Joe Hayes, illustrated by Gloria Osuna Perez and Lucia Angela Perez
- *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters: An African Tale* by John Steptoe
- *Raisel's Riddle* by Erica Silverman, illustrated by Susan Gaber
- *The Golden Sandal: A Middle Eastern Cinderella Story* by Rebecca Hickox Ayres, illustrated by Will Hillenbrand
- *The Golden Slipper: A Vietnamese Legend* by Darrel H. Y. Lum, illustrated by Makiko Nagano
- *The Irish Cinderlad* by Shirley Climo, illustrated by Loretta Krupinski
- *The Rough-Face Girl* by Rafe Martin, illustrated by David Shannon
- *Yeh-Shen: A Cinderella Story from China* by Ai-Ling Louie, illustrated by Ed Young
- *Interstellar Cinderella* by Deborah Underwood





## Who is Gary Soto?

In the play, Belinda is a big fan of poet and novelist, Gary Soto, and dreams of meeting him. Born and raised in Fresno, California, Gary Soto is the author of thirteen poetry collections, most notably *New and Selected Poems* (1995), which was a finalist for the Los Angeles Times Award and the National Book Award. He has also written numerous novels, picture books, and short stories for young people. He wrote the libretto for the opera, *Nerdlandia* for Los Angeles Opera, and worked on two films based on his work. Both Soto's poetry and prose focus on creating a realistic picture of daily life, drawn from his own experiences as a Mexican American. He has won several awards for his work and advocacy, including the Human and Civil Rights Award from the American Education Association, the Literature Award from the Hispanic Heritage Foundation, and the PEN Center West Book Award for his young-adult short story collection *Petty Crimes*. In all, his books have sold five million copies, with eight titles translated into French, Hindi, Italian, Japanese, Korean, and Spanish.

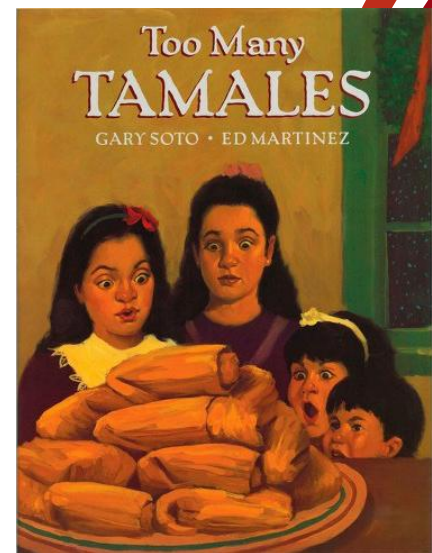


Gary Soto

## Book list: Prose and Poetry by Gary Soto

Interested in reading Gary Soto's work? Here's a list of some of our favorites to get you started.

- *The Afterlife*—novel, recommended for ages 12+
- *Baseball in April and Other Short Stories*—Anthology, recommended for ages 8-12
- *Buried Onions*—novel, recommended for ages 12+
- *Chato's Kitchen*—Picture book, recommended for ages 4-8
- *Petty Crimes*—Anthology, recommended for ages 8-12
- *Too Many Tamales*—Picture book, recommended for ages 3-8
- *A Fire in my Hands*—Poetry collection, recommended for ages 10 and up.

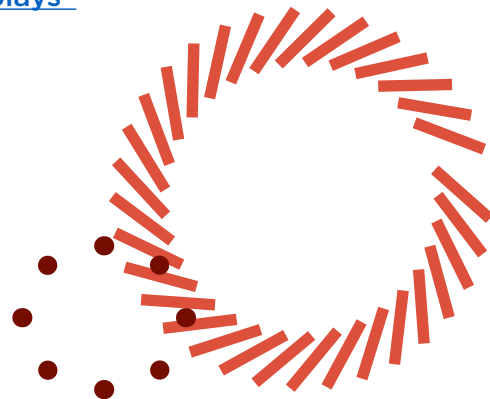


## How do you write a Bilingual Play?

Curious about what it's like to write a bilingual play? In the video below, *Cenicienta* co-playwright Rupert Reyes describes his process for writing a play in Spanish and English and offers advice for writing your own bilingual stories.



[WATCH "Rupert Reyes talks about writing bilingual plays"](#)



## What is object puppetry?

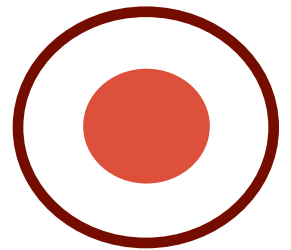
Object puppetry uses everyday objects to create characters, like the napkins, lamps, cutlery, and pots that Belinda uses in the play to tell the story of *Cenicienta*. Puppeteers use their bodies and voices to bring objects to life using the puppeteer's tools: Focus, Movement, Changes, and Voice.



*Madison Polamo in Cenicienta, photo by Chris Owen*

**Focus** tells the audience where the character is looking. When working with objects, a puppeteer has to decide which part might be the face, then direct the audience's attention by using clear motions to make the object look around and focus on different parts of the stage. Puppeteers use their own eyes to follow the puppet's gaze to help show where the puppet is "looking."

**Movement** is how a puppeteer makes an object seem alive, by using the body to physically move the puppet through space. Puppeteers decide how an object travels from place to place (does it fly? Bounce? Walk? Drag?) and show that motion by manipulating different parts of the object. Even when an object isn't traveling from place to place, movement is still important. Puppeteers make objects come to life by making them appear to breathe. As you watch the play, notice how the puppeteer makes the objects breathe with her own breath.



**Changes** in movement help to show what a character is feeling. Once a puppeteer has determined the "normal" way a puppet moves, they can make changes to that movement to show emotion. For example, think about the way Kermit the Frog flails his arms and legs when he's nervous or excited. The puppeteer might move the puppet more quickly to show fear or excitement, or more slowly to show sadness. There are limitless possibilities.

**Voice** helps a puppeteer tell the story of the object. When speaking as a puppet, puppeteers change the pitch and quality of their own voices to emphasize that the character is speaking. Is the puppet's voice are high or low? Does it speak slowly or quickly? What sounds does it make when it is focusing, moving, and feeling different emotions?

*Want more object puppetry? Check out the activity on page 15 for a guided lesson in bringing objects to life with Director Caroline Reck.*

## PRE-PERFORMANCE LESSON ACTIVITIES

Here are some ideas for lesson activities that expand on the essential questions, topics, and themes of *Cenicienta*.

### Vocabulary

*Cenicienta* is told in both English and Spanish. It might be helpful to prepare your students with Spanish vocabulary before they see the performance. Here are some words and phrases they will hear during the play.

**La Almohada:** Blanket

**Cenicienta:** Cinderella

**El Embudo:** Funnel

**Las Estrellas:** Stars

**La Fiesta:** Party

**Hada Madrina:** Fairy Godmother (a literal translation-Hada is “Fairy” and Madrina is “Godmother”)

**La Hermanastra:** Step sister

**La Madrastra:** Step mother

**La Poesia:** Poetry

**Ponte a trabajar:** Get to work

**Que maravilloso:** how wonderful/how marvelous (an exclamation of joy)

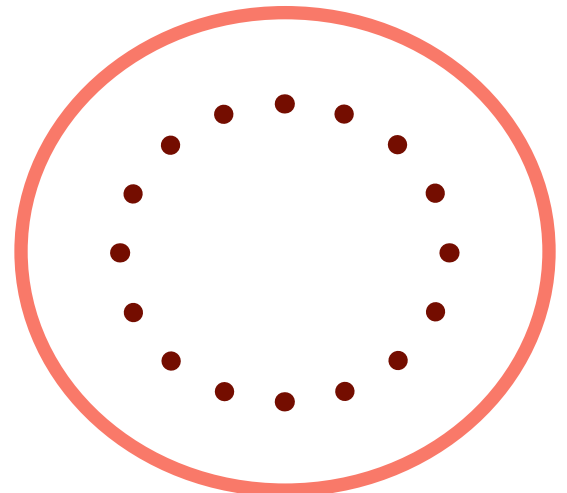
**El Río:** River

**Sana sana colita de rana:** a common expression used to cheer up a child. It literally means “heal heal little frog’s tail.”

**El Sótano:** Basement

**La Tetera:** Teapot

[CLICK HERE TO LISTEN TO PRONOUNCIATION](#)



## ACTIVITY: Fairytale Beginning/Middle/End Images

This activity uses a drama-based strategy (Tableau) and draws on the parts of a story to examine fairytales. This activity can be done alone or in small groups.



### Materials:

Open space



### Procedure:

1. Begin by practicing a few simple frozen images, or tableaux. Invite students to find an open space in the room where they have enough space to move their arms and won't be distracted by other people. Invite students to brainstorm what makes a good picture and write suggestions somewhere they can be seen. For example, a good photo or picture might have levels, lots of facial expressions, frozen action, etc.
2. Give students an interesting or accessible prompt and ask them to create a single, frozen image with their bodies using the qualities they brainstormed. You might suggest something like "summer time" or "our school" or a subject the students are studying. Consider offering a few prompts to get students used to creating tableaux.
3. Once students are comfortable, ask them to think about a favorite fairytale or folktale. Give students a few minutes to select a fairytale and remember the plot. They should think to themselves or make notes, rather than share the fairytale out loud.
4. Ask students to think about what happens first in the fairy tale. What is the beginning of the story? Create a frozen image of that moment.
5. Skip to the end of the story (it's often easier to define the "middle" once you've got the beginning and end). Create a frozen image of that moment.
6. Practice the beginning and the end images, then ask students to think about what happens in the middle, and choose one moment to present as a frozen image. Practice all three images in sequence: beginning, middle, and end.
7. When students are ready, invite half the class to become presenters and half the class to become audience. Invite the presenters to share their images while the audience observe, then switch.

### Reflection

- What were bodies doing in these images? What did you see? (begin with just observations about how the bodies were shaped. You may need to bring students back from interpretation a few times. Just observing is hard!)
- What did the images have in common? How were they different?
- What inferences can we make about fairytales? What are some qualities many fairytales might share? How are some ways these stories are all different?

## ACTIVITY: Pre-Show Poetry

In the play, Belinda recites poems she wrote in honor of her mother and father, describing the way these important people in her life make her feel by comparing them to objects. Before you see the play, share these poems with your students. Practice writing poems using the *Where I'm From Poem Template* on page 18.



### Mi Mamá

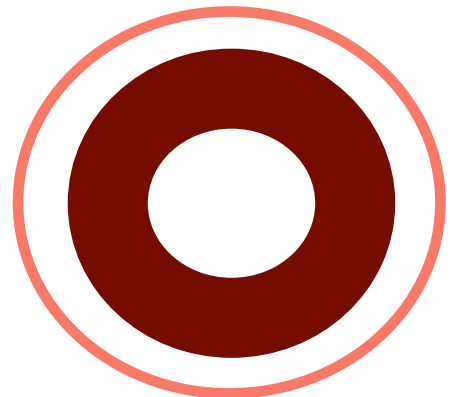
My mother is like a blanket  
 She protects me  
 And keeps me calientita  
 Mi Mamá es como cristal.  
 Sharp, strict,  
 Beautiful and delicate.  
 Mi Mamá es como un río  
 She smooths out  
 All my rough spots  
 Is graceful  
 And constantly moving.  
 Reflejando la mujer  
 Que quiero ser.  
 Mi Mamá es como las estrellas  
 She is always everywhere,  
 Holding up the universe.  
 She lights up the sky, even when the moon  
 goes into hiding.

### Mi Papá

My father is like a furnace,  
 Even though sometimes  
 He can get too hot,  
 He always keeps  
 The house warm with love.  
 Mi Papá es como una almohada  
 He comforts me when I am sad.  
 He keeps my head upright  
 And reminds me to dream.  
 My father and I are like  
 A partly cloudy day.  
 We may have our moments of darkness  
 and gloom,  
 But when we are together  
 The sun always peeks thorough.  
 Mi Papá es como un libro de poesia.  
 He taught me how to read  
 And to love words  
 He is sweet, lyrical  
 And paints a beautiful world.

### Reflection

- What emotions to the objects in Belinda's poems remind you of?
- What is it like to read a poem in English and Spanish?
- How do the similes in these poems help convey strong emotions?



## POST-PERFORMANCE LESSON ACTIVITIES

### Post-Performance Discussion Questions

1. What challenge is Belinda facing in the story?
2. How does Belinda use her imagination?
3. How does Belinda demonstrate bravery?
4. When Belinda is upset, she works through her problems with her (imaginary) friends, Gustavo, Ernesto, Hada Madrina, and Cenicienta. What do you do when things don't go the way you want or expect?
5. When Hada Madrina asks Belinda, "What would your ball be like?" Belinda imagines getting to meet her hero, writer Gary Soto. What would your ball be like? Who would you want to be there to celebrate with you?

### ACTIVITY: Create your own object puppetry performance with Director, Caroline Reck

Because it uses everyday objects, object puppetry is a great way to introduce puppeteer techniques and storytelling to your students. In the video below, *Cenicienta* co-playwright and director (and Artistic Director of Glass Half Full Theatre), Caroline Reck offers step-by-step instructions for making objects come to life.



[WATCH "Speedy Object Puppetry lesson for All Ages with Caroline Reck \(director of Cenicienta\)"](#)

## RESOURCES

- Learn more about Glass Half Full Theatre: <https://www.glasshalffulltheatre.com/>
- Learn more about author and poet Gary Soto: <https://garysoto.com/>
- Access a full lesson plan about Cinderella Stories from around the world: <https://www.kennedy-center.org/education/resources-for-educators/classroom-resources/lessons-and-activities/lessons/3-5/cinderella-a-cross-cultural-fairy-tale/>
- Read about Disney's 1950's animated Cinderella: <https://www.waltdisney.org/blog/history-debut-and-impact-disneys-classic-cinderella>



*Madison Polamo in Cenicienta, photo by Chris Owen*



## ABOUT PORTLAND OVATIONS

**Portland Oventions**, founded in 1931, produces dynamic performing arts events including classical music, jazz, opera, dance, theater, and Broadway. We believe that cultural enrichment should be high quality and accessible to all. Oventions collaborates with other nonprofit organizations, education systems, and the business sector to promote lifelong learning while celebrating the power and virtuosity of the performing arts. We bring the exhilaration of the performing arts into our communities with free events as part of Oventions Offstage, connecting artists and audiences. Join us at unexpected “art happenings,” classroom workshops, masterclasses, community discussions, and pre-performance lectures to explore together the relevance and connection of the performing arts to our lives.

### Land Acknowledgment

Portland Oventions’ programs are presented on Wabanaki land, home of the Maliseet, Mi’kmaq, Passamaquoddy, Abenaki and Penobscot Nations, their elders past and present, and future generations.

We encourage you to learn more and take action in support of Maine’s Indigenous communities through the following organizations

#### [Abbe Museum](#)

*Maine’s premier museum dedicated to indigenous history and culture. Their mission is to inspire new learning about the Wabanaki Nations with every visit.*

#### [Maine-Wabanaki Reach](#)

*A Native-led non-profit that supports the self-determination of Wabanaki people through education, truth-telling, restorative justice, and restorative practices in Wabanaki and Maine communities.*

Created and written by Dr. Liz Schildkret

Additional information and images provided by Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia

Designed by Katie Day

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I AM FROM POEM

*Use this template to draft your poem. Read your poem through a few times and make changes if you like. When you're happy with your poem, write a final draft on blank paper.*

WHERE I'M FROM

BY: \_\_\_\_\_

I am from \_\_\_\_\_  
(a favorite thing to hold)

From \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_  
(a favorite smell) (a favorite thing to see)

I am from \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_  
(the name of a family member or friend) (another family member or friend)

From \_\_\_\_\_  
(a favorite tradition)

And from \_\_\_\_\_  
(a feeling you have when you're somewhere you feel safe)

I am \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_  
(three adjectives that describe you)

I am from \_\_\_\_\_  
(something you love about yourself)

And I am \_\_\_\_\_  
(a dream you have)

---

We want to know what  thought about the performance. You can write your answers below or draw a picture on the back of this page. Thank you!

PERFORMANCE  Cenicienta: A Bilingual Cinderella Story

SCHOOL NAME

TEACHER NAME:

May we use your name  share your comments

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What did you

did you like that part

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t was something that you learned during the performance?

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What would you like to tell other kids about

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What types of performance would you like Portland Oventions to offer in the future? (Feel free to share what type of art you are interested in (theater, dance, music), what cultures you might like to see, what topics the art might connect with, or specific artists.)

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MAIL RESPONSES TO: Portland Oventions 120 Exchange St Portland, ME 04101  
EMAIL SCANNED RESPONSES TO: [offstage@portlandovations.org](mailto:offstage@portlandovations.org)

We want to know what thought about the performance.

Draw a picture of a part of *Cenicienta: A Bilingual Cinderella Story* that you liked. Thank you!



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Please scan and email to [offstage@portlandovations.org](mailto:offstage@portlandovations.org) or mail to Portland Ovations 120 Exchange St Portland, ME 04101

Please take a few moments to fill out this survey after you attend the performance. You can also [online here](#). Your response provides valuable insight on the impact, accessibility, and relevancy of the School Time Performance Series and will allow us to improve and strengthen the program. Thank you.

PERFORMANCE **Cenicienta: A Bilingual Cinderella Story**    **March 5, 2024**

TEACHER NAME \_\_\_\_\_ GRADE(S) OF STUDENTS \_\_\_\_\_  
SCHOOL NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ CITY/TOWN: \_\_\_\_\_  
EMAIL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

From your perspective as a teacher, how would you rate

- 

. What made this a valuable experience for your students? (If it wasn't, what can we do

\_\_\_\_\_ was your primary reason for choosing to bring your students to

- wanted my students to experience the performing arts.
- The performance \_\_\_\_\_ with my curriculum goals.
- The date and time \_\_\_\_\_ performance fit our schedule.
- The ticket price \_\_\_\_\_
- Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

How did this live performance connect to or enhance your curriculum?

Did you use the Educators Guide provided by Portland Ovation before or after the performance                         

Why or why not?

What improvements could we make to the Educators Guide to serve you and your classroom better?

. How would you rate the following components of attending the School Time Performance?

Reserving & paying for tickets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Communication performance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Arrival at the	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Departure from	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

What types of performances would you like to bring your students to in the future? free to share art forms, topics/themes, specific artists, etc

A number of individuals and organizations make it possible for Portland Ovation these School Time Performance tickets at extremely discounted rates. Is there anything you'd like them to know in terms of your experiences or its impact on your students?