

The Pout-Pout Fish STUDY GUIDE



INTRODUCTION: LET'S ALL ENJOY THE SHOW!

Thank you for attending TheaterWorksUSA's production of *The Pout-Pout Fish*. We hope this guide will help your students learn more about the musical and its content, as well as give you creative ways to make the show part of your curriculum. A trip to the theater is always very special and unique, and it can create a lifelong passion for performance and storytelling. We hope our production will inspire your students. You may want to review some basic theater etiquette with your class, as this might be one of their first experiences attending a live show. Talking or being disruptive during the performance is distracting to the actors and fellow audience members. However, we highly encourage clapping, laughing, and cheering at the parts they enjoy.

Use this guide as a starting point for you and your students to explore the show and its rich content. Designed to enhance your students' experience of seeing *The Pout-Pout Fish*, it will provide discussion points after your class has seen the production, along with lessons and in-class activities. These activities will extend the topic-specific ideas within the show, and engage the students in a hands-on classroom project. We welcome you to adapt or change any discussion prompts or material to suit your classroom and style!

OUR STORY

The Pout-Pout Fish is an original musical based on the book series of the same name. Mr. Fish is a notorious mope with a perpetual pout—he believes that with a face like his, he is destined to be glum forever. Despite his friend Shimmerfish's attempts to get him to see the wonderful color around their reef, Mr. Fish can only see the world through a thick, grey cloud. It isn't until their old friend Ms. Clam returns with a mysterious pearl that Mr. Fish finds a glimmer of hope and wonders if it could hold the secret to his happiness. But when he is accidentally swept far away from his reef with the pearl in tow, he is forced to put his chance at happiness aside to find his way home and return Ms. Clam's precious possession. Along the way, he meets friends and foes, begins to see the ocean through new perspectives and learns that there is no magic formula to find happiness. Whether it's a pearl or a shimmer or even a pout, happiness looks different on everyone, and only we have the power to decide how it looks to us.



Jesse Markowitz. Photo by Jeremy Daniel

OUR CHARACTERS

Mr. Fish

A fish with a perpetual pout. He worries he will be glum forever.

Ms. Clam

A friend of Mr. Fish, and owner of a mysterious pearl.

Octopus

A trickster who plays a game with Mr. Fish to keep the pearl.

Bully-Bully Shark

A friendly shark who helps Mr. Fish on his journey.

Shimmerfish

A friend of Mr. Fish who tries to help him see the good things in the reef.



KNOW BEFORE YOU GO: PREVIEW DISCUSSION

- 1) Read *The Pout-Pout Fish* books as a class, and discuss the characters and themes.
- 2) Ask students if they have been to the ocean or an aquarium. What kind of sea creatures did they see? Do they have a favorite sea creature? Read about the ocean in class, and familiarize students with some different types of plants and animals that live in the ocean.
- 3) Discuss how pearls are made. Pearls are made by a shellfish, such as an oyster or clam, getting something stuck inside its shell; the oyster or clam releases a fluid to coat the irritant, and keeps coating it over and over again until the pearl has formed. This process can take many years! Show images of different types of pearls (saltwater and freshwater, which come in many shapes and colors).
- 4) A main theme of the story is accepting yourself as you are. Ask students what is something about themselves that they love? What's a special ability that they have? What personality traits like kindness, creativity, drive, or compassion make them unique?

FROM PAGE TO STAGE: BEHIND THE SEAWEED

Explain to your class that they are going to see an adaptation of *The Pout-Pout Fish* book series. In this adaptation, a playwright, composer, and lyricist have taken the themes, characters, and major plot points of the books and found a new way to tell the story.

Discuss some important terms about a play/musical:

There are also some important people who help make a play/musical:

- 1) Setting: Where and when the story takes place
- 2) Characters: The people in the story
- 3) Plot: What happens in the play
- 4) Theme: The main idea of the play
- 5) Structure: Acts and Scenes, how the play is built
- 6) Style: The way in which the story is told
(ex: realistic, fanstasy, futuristic, etc.)

- 1) Playwright: Writes the play
- 2) Director: In charge of putting all the elements of the show together
- 3) Actors: Play the characters on stage
- 4) Designers (set, costume, lighting, sound props): Create the non-performance elements on stage
- 5) Book Writer: Writes the spoken words in a musical
- 6) Composer: Writes the music
- 7) Lyricist: Writes the words in the songs
- 8) Choreographer: one who creates the dances in a musical

AFTER THE SHOW: DISCUSSIONS AND ACTIVITIES

- 1) What was the story about?
- 2) Who are the main characters?
- 3) What problems do the characters encounter?
- 4) How do they create solutions to the obstacles they face?
- 5) Have you ever felt the dreary-wearies like Mr. Fish does? What helps turn your pout upside down when you're feeling glum?
- 6) What does Mr. Fish learn about himself by the end of the show?
- 7) Colors play a big role in our musical. What do dark colors like grey and black make you feel? What about bright colors like orange and yellow?
- 8) Think about *The Pout-Pout Fish* books compared to the musical you saw. What is the same in both the books and the musical? What is different?

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

UNDERWATER EXPLORATION

Make your own oceanic sensory bin! Take one large bin or several small bins and cover the bottom with whatever you like to build your own ocean. Fill the bin with water high enough to more than cover all your items, but leave enough room for a little bit of splashing! Let students explore, and verbalize how each object feels. Below are some possible items to incorporate into your sensory bin.



Sand
Plastic Fish Toys
Water Beads
Floating Boat Toys
Real Seaweed
Seashells
Pebbles

MAKE YOUR OWN PUPPET SHOW

This production feature large puppets to portray the characters and tell the story. Make your own puppets and tell your own story! You can use paper plate puppets, sock puppets, or whatever works best for your class! Have each student make a few small puppets and act out a 30-second story on their own; break into two groups and have the students take turns performing and being an audience. Alternatively, plan one large puppet show as a class and assign each student a more intricate puppet to make that will play a part in the show. Perform for grownups or other students in the school!

MYSTERIOUS PEARL JEWELRY

Pout-Pout goes on a journey to rescue Ms. Clam's mysterious pearl, which is admired by many sea creatures. Take pipe cleaners or yarn and pearl beads, along with other types of beads, and make a bracelet or necklace. You can incorporate natural elements, such as pebbles or seashells, into your jewelry!

Feel free to take pictures or video of your class performing these activities and email it to marketing@twusa.org. We'd love to see your works of art!

FACIAL EXPRESSIONS ACTING EXERCISE

Mr. Fish has a permanent pout, but still finds a way to be happy. Practice making different facial expressions. What does it look like when you are happy/sad/angry/excited/confused/tired/etc.? Play a guessing game where one student picks an emotion and the others guess what emotion is being displayed. Follow up by drawing out different emotions. You can either encourage students to draw how human faces look when expressing different emotions, or work more abstractly and have students create their own art, picking different colors and shapes to express different emotions. Discuss as a class: What events make you feel certain ways? How does your body feel or look when you feel the emotions of happiness/sadness/anger/etc.? What are some ways people express emotions?

PHYS ED: BIG, BIG OBSTACLE COURSE

Mr. Fish got swept away and had to make it through the Big, Big Dark to get home, where he encountered many challenges. Create an obstacle course using some of the elements of the story. This can be done individually or as a relay! Have students balance a "pearl" on a spoon as they go through obstacles, mime swimming while standing or on their belly, walk a section with eyes closed or play blindfolded "pin the tail" equivalent to mimic the Big, Big Dark, run through seaweed streamers, volleyball/bounce a balloon in the air like the worms, return the "pearl" by shooting it through a hoop, and run through pool noodle "octopus tentacles." The possibilities are as endless as your imagination!

HAPPIEST SELF

The mysterious pearl can show your happiest self in its reflection. What does your happiest self look like? What are you doing? Who is with you in your happiest life? Write a paragraph describing your happiest self, draw it, or act it out!

ACTIVITY SHEETS

The following pages contain activity sheets designed to supplement the above activities. Feel free to use any or all of these activity sheets to further bring *The Pout-Pout Fish* into your daily learning!



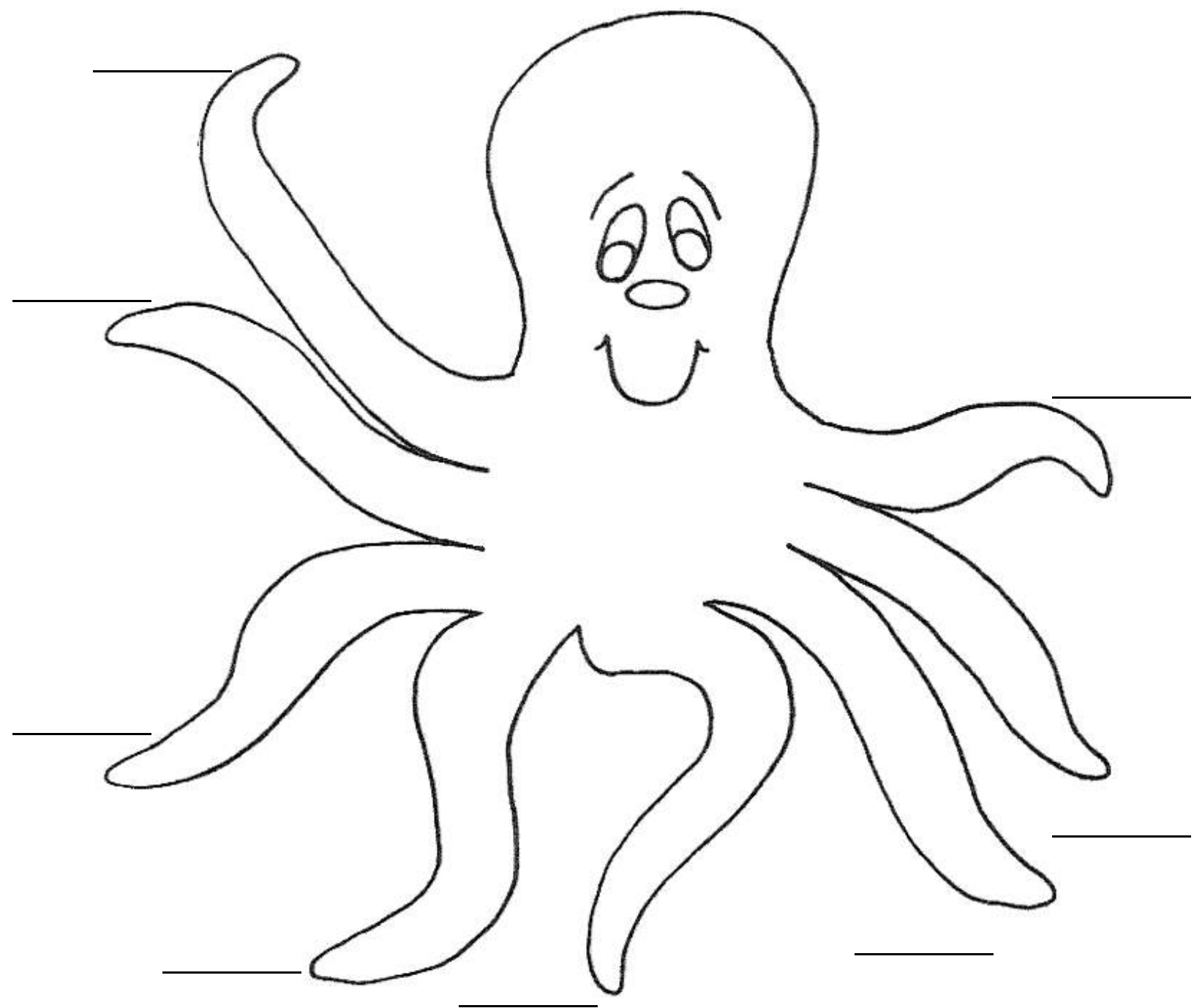
Plenty of Fish in the Sea

There are many different types of plants and animals in the ocean. Circle the fish in the sea, and put a square around other sea life that is not a fish. There are **7** fish and **5** other types of sea creatures. Can you find them all? Bonus: Color all that you find in the sea!



Counting Tentacles

An octopus has eight tentacles. Count the tentacles and number each one on the lines from left to right. Make each tentacle a different color!



Create a Sea Creature

There are so many sea creatures out there in the deep blue sea! Imagine your very own sea creature. It can be a type of fish, have tentacles like a octopus or squid, have sharp teeth like a shark, move slowly like a sea cucumber, have a shell like turtle, have no bones at all like a starfish, or need air to breathe like a dolphin or whale. The only rule is that your animal has never been seen before! Write a few fun facts about your sea creature and draw what it looks like!



My sea creature is called:

Things to know about my sea creature:
