Suggestions for Staging

How to Stage the Play

A stage plan is shown below to give you an idea for staging the play “Cinderella” and the General Stage Directions that follow are based on this plan. These directions can be easily adapted to suit the space and facilities available to you. If there is no stage at your school, you can chalk a stage area on your classroom floor.

We have also included some suggestions for Scenery, Set Arrangement and Props which should be simple enough to find or make. It would be a good idea to involve the students in designing/making/finding sets and props, either as a whole class activity, or as a task for any students who do not wish to perform in the play.

Once you have an idea of how you want to stage the play, start assigning roles. The number of roles in this play can be adapted to fit the number of students you have available or who are willing to perform. For example, the role of the narrator could be performed by one student or split into parts to be performed by several students.

It is advisable to assign the narration to the older students in the class, and the non-speaking parts to younger or shyer students. The narrator(s) may stand to the right or left of the stage so as not to be in the way of the action, and may be dressed as royal guards and fairies to add to the atmosphere on stage.

Additionally, students who like to sing may perform in the choir. Depending on the number of students you have available, the choir can be separate from the cast, or, if necessary, members of the cast dressed as guests at the ball can serve as the choir.

As well as working on sets and props, students who do not wish to perform may work backstage on sound, lighting, makeup and prompting or as stagehands. In this way they will feel like an important part of the production, even if they are not acting on stage.
A very important part of any production is the rehearsal period, so you should start rehearsing the play well in advance of the actual performance. After completing all the lessons in “Cinderella”, students should have a clear idea of the story and should be ready to start working on the production.

Included in this book are some Drama Activities which can be used at the beginning of each rehearsal to relax and motivate students and give them a greater understanding of the skills which are used in acting. Students can use our audio recording to practise their lines at home. In class, details such as the way actors move, speak, enter or exit, etc, should be discussed at the beginning of each rehearsal. Then the actors can rehearse and get feedback from you on their performances.

Finally, before the actual performance it is essential to have one full dress and technical rehearsal with lighting and sound, etc, so that everybody knows exactly what to do in the actual performance.

**Scenery**

- **Scenes 1, 2 (Part 1) & 4: Cinderella's house.**
  
  Most of the set can be painted on the backdrop. The bedroom is ofstage right. The audience will have no view of it, but will assume it is there as the stepsisters will be entering and exiting stage right, to bring their gowns. The bedroom door or a wardrobe is painted on the backdrop. The living room is centre stage. Ornate staircase, window, wall lamps and paintings are painted on the backdrop. Actual furniture includes a table and chairs. The table is decorated with a bowl of fruit or a vase with fake flowers. The kitchen is ofstage left. Again, the audience will have no clear view of it, but assume it is there as Cinderella will be entering and exiting carrying tea trays, broom etc. Painted on the backdrop is the kitchen door, which may be open to show part of the kitchen (a table, a hearth with some pots and pans, etc.). Some tall houseplants can also be painted onto the backdrop as extra decoration. The downstage centre steps will serve as the grand staircase from which the Prince will enter and exit.

- **Scene 2 (Part 2): Outdoors – the carriage.**
  
  The stage is emptied and a backdrop is painted to show the outdoors at night. Dark blue sky filled with stars, the moon, trees, bushes and pumpkins on the ground. In the middle, a pumpkin-shaped carriage drawn by two horses. For drawing details, see the pictures on pp. 22-23.

- **Scene 3: Palace ballroom.**
  
  The entire backdrop is painted as a palace ballroom, including thrones. Chandeliers, small round tables with candles and a large clock are also drawn on it. Should there not be enough students to play the silent parts of guests and courtiers, they may also be painted on the backdrop to give the impression of a large crowd.
Set Arrangement

Scenes 1, 2 (Part 1) & 4 – Cinderella’s house

Scene 2 (Part 2) – Outdoors

Scene 3 – Palace ballroom
Script and General Stage Directions

Actors: Cinderella
Prince
Stepmother
Stepsister 1
Stepsister 2
Fairy Godmother
Royal Footman
Guests
Queen
King

Narrator(s): At least four Ss dressed as royal guards and fairies.

For the purposes of this production, the narrator’s part has been divided between four Ss – two dressed as fairies (Narrators 1 & 2) and two as royal guards (Narrators 3 & 4). That is because the Fairy Godmother needs helpers on stage to carry and give Cinderella her gifts.

Scene 1 (Cinderella’s house)
Curtains open to show the interior of Cinderella’s house. Stage dark with spotlight on narrators.

Stage lights on. Daytime. Stepmother and stepsisters enter stage right and stop centre stage. Cinderella is following them, head down.
Stepmother and stepsisters, hands on hips, are mean when addressing Cinderella. Stepmother points offstage left and then waves a finger at her. Then, stepmother and stepsisters exit snobbishly stage right.

Cinderella moves stage left (the kitchen area), where she picks up a broom and begins sweeping.

Lights dim and Cinderella exits stage left.

Narrator 1: A pretty young girl,
Cinderella’s her name,
lost her mother and father –
what a terrible shame!

Narrator 2: Her stepmother’s daughters
were ugly and mean.
They told Cinderella,

Stepsisters: You must cook and clean!

Stepmother: Now you’re alone!
You must do as I say.
Go to the kitchen
and work there all day!

Narrator 3: So she cooked and she cleaned,
all day and all night.

Cinderella: I’m trapped in this kitchen!
This just isn’t right!
**Scene 2, Part 1 (Cinderella’s house)**

Lights up, same setting. Stepmother and stepsisters enter stage right and sit at dining table, Cinderella enters stage left, holding a breakfast tray.

A royal footman enters centre stage through the auditorium, carrying a silvery plate with a letter on it. Play SFX1 (horn toot).

Stepmother waves him into the living room, where he bows and presents her with the letter.

Stepmother opens letter.

Stepsisters are thrilled.

Stepsisters squeal with delight.

Stepsisters are very happy and clap their hands. Cinderella hears the news and turns to them, hopefully.

**Narrator 4:** Then one day a letter arrived at their gate. It came from the palace on a silvery plate.

**Stepmother:** It says that the Prince, …

**Stepsister 1:** … who’s handsome and tall!

**Stepmother:** … will choose a young bride tonight at the ball!

**Stepsisters:** A ball! Oh, what fun!

**Cinderella:** Please let me come, too!

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**Song 1: Poor Cinderella**

Oh, poor Cinderella!
In the kitchen all day!
She must cook and clean –
she can’t get away!

**Chorus:** She’s all alone!
She’s all alone!
She’s trapped in that kitchen!
She’s trapped in that home!

Oh, poor Cinderella!
She’s cleaning all day
the floors and the windows –
she can’t get away!

*Repeat chorus*
Stepmother puts her hands angrily on her hips. Cinderella drops her head. Stepsisters dance around Cinderella, making fun of her.

Cinderella remains with head down and is miserable, but does not speak.

Stepsisters laugh at Cinderella. Stepsisters gesture for Cinderella to leave them and go to the kitchen. She slowly walks offstage left.

Stepsisters turn to stepmother and speak, as the three of them move stage right. Stepmother remains on stage right, while stepsisters exit stage right to get their gowns. Stepmother shouts so they can hear her.
Stepsister 1 enters stage right showing her gown. Stepmother is thrilled.
Stepsister 2 enters stage right showing her gown. Stepmother claps her hands and smiles. They all exit stage right. Curtains close.

Cinderella enters stage left through the curtains with a broom, sweeping. Stops downstage centre, puts her chin on top of her broom and speaks dreamingly. Sniffling, she continues sweeping. Lights dim (night-time).

Narrator 1: But the stepmother said,
Stepmother: No! We’re not taking you!
Stepsister 1: Oh dear, Cinderella, so dirty and small!
Stepsister 2: You can’t have a dance with the Prince at the ball!
Narrator 2: They laughed and they laughed – they were both mean and bad. Cinderella said nothing because she was sad.
Stepsister 1: Go back to your kitchen! Don’t leave it at all!
Stepsister 2: We want to make plans for our night at the ball!*
Stepsister 2: O Mother, o Mother! What should we wear?
Stepmother: Silk gowns with silk ribbons and combs in your hair!
Stepsister 1: This is my best gown!
Stepmother: Oh, yes, it’s just right!
Stepsister 2: And what about this one?
Stepmother: So pretty and bright!

Narrator 3: Cinderella went back to the kitchen and cried.
Cinderella: Oh, I want to be there when he chooses a bride!
Fairy Godmother enters centre stage through the auditorium, flying (waving her arms).

Cinderella is shocked, stops sweeping and wipes her tears.
Fairy Godmother waves her magic wand.

Play SFX 2 (magic jingle). Narrator 1 approaches and gives Cinderella the gown. Cinderella takes the gown and holds it up to herself. Fairy Godmother waves her wand again (play SFX 2). Narrator 2 approaches and gives her the slippers. Cinderella takes everything and goes offstage through the curtains to change clothes.
Fairy Godmother remains downstage centre, facing the audience. The narrators approach her again as they say their lines. Narrator 1 presents the white mouse and Narrator 2 presents the pumpkin.

Fairy Godmother takes them both, casts the spell waving her wand (play SFX 2), and goes with the Narrators 1 and 2 through the closed curtains.

**Part 2 (Outdoors - The carriage) Curtains**
open to show the empty stage and backdrop with carriage drawn. Fairy Godmother and Narrators 1 and 2 are on centre stage. Fairy Godmother speaks, addressing the left wing, where Cinderella is still changing her clothes.

Cinderella enters stage left with her new gown and slippers, bows or combs in her hair, some jewellery and lipstick. Fairy Godmother looks proudly at Cinderella and Narrator 1 brings a cloak.

**Narrator 4:** And just when she thought there’s no hope anymore, her Fairy Godmother flew in through the door.

**FG:** Don’t cry, Cinderella! Your godmother’s here. You can go to the ball at the palace, my dear! Look! Here is your gown. Try it on, my dear.

**Cinderella:** But I haven’t got shoes!

**FG:** Your glass slippers are here!

**Narrator 1:** Then the Fairy Godmother cast a wonderful spell on a little white mouse …

**Narrator 2:** … and a pumpkin as well.

**FG:** A driver and carriage tonight you must be, and take Cinderella to the palace for me!

**FG:** Cinderella, remember! You mustn’t be late! At twelve o’clock midnight, be home at your gate. Jump into your carriage and do not look back, or your gown will turn into an ugly old sack.

**Cinderella:** Thank you, Godmother. Don’t worry at all. Before it is midnight, I will leave the ball.
Fairy Godmother puts cloak on Cinderella and curtains close as the narrators go back to their places.

The choir starts singing the song.

Song 2: Away to the Ball!

Narrator 3: And so Cinderella went off to the ball, in her gown and her slippers – the prettiest of all.

Young Cinderella will now have a chance, to meet the young Prince, to have fun and dance.

Chorus: Away to the ball! Away to the ball! Now Cinderella’s the prettiest of all!

She’s got a new gown and glass slippers, too. Look at her now! She’s pretty, it’s true!

Repeat chorus

Good luck, Cinderella! Now go to the ball, and find the young Prince, who’s handsome and tall!

Repeat chorus
**Scene 3 (Palace ballroom)**
Play SFX 3 (waltz music). Curtains open to show the interior of the palace hall. The choir, dressed as guests, enter centre stage, up the stage steps. They join the stepmother and stepsisters, and the King and Queen, who are all talking and walking around the stage. Some guests may be dancing. Prince enters stage left and walks about the stage, looking at the girls. He is not impressed. Disappointed, he stops downstage left and thinks.

Music stops when Cinderella enters through the auditorium to centre stage. Everyone turns and stares at her. Guests, especially stepmother and stepsisters, are astonished to see someone so beautiful. No one recognises her.

The Prince sees Cinderella and walks quickly to her.

He takes her hand. Play SFX 3 (waltz music). A courtier takes her cloak. They both start to waltz on stage. Music lowers when Narrator 3 speaks.

The stepsisters are angry and put their hands on their hips.

Stepmother throws up her hands in frustration. Turn music up. Prince and Cinderella are still dancing.

**Narrator 4:** With her beautiful gown and her long golden hair, when she entered the room, they all stopped to stare.

**Guests:** Just look at that girl!

**Narrator 1:** ... said the guests at the ball.

**Stepsisters:** Who can she be?

**Stepmother:** I don't know her at all!

**Narrator 2:** When the Prince saw her, he loved her at once. He walked quickly to her.

**Prince:** May I please have this dance?

**Narrator 3:** The sisters were jealous.

**Stepsister 1:** We want to have fun!

**Stepsister 2:** It's our turn to dance!

**Stepmother:** She can't be the one!
Music lowers when Narrator 4 speaks. Cinderella and the Prince dance around the palace hall, smiling. They are in love. They do not notice anyone else in the room. Everyone around them is looking and whispering.

Music stops.
Play SFX 4 (12 chimes) - clock strikes midnight. Cinderella reacts in panic.

She puts her hand to her face and looks very worried.

Cinderella looks at the Prince. She pulls her hand away from his and runs to the steps of the stage. She trips slightly on her way and loses one slipper.

The Prince is astonished and so are the guests. He runs after Cinderella and stops to shout downstage centre.

Cinderella runs down the stage steps and exits through the back of the auditorium.

The Prince picks up the slipper and looks at it sadly.

He holds it up with both hands.

The Prince walks thoughtfully towards the thrones. Lights off. Curtains close.
**Song 3: Where is my Princess?**

The ball was too short.
And now you're not here.
I really must find you.
Where are you, my dear?

**Chorus:**
Where is my Princess?  
Oh, where can she be?  
I really must find her.  
She must marry me!

This is your slipper.  
It's tiny and small!  
I'll use it to find you.  
I won't rest at all!

**Repeat chorus**

**Narrator 2:**  
So he searched every hill,  
he searched every valley,  
he searched every street  
and every small alley.

**Narrator 3:**  
He went everywhere  
in the land far and wide.

**Prince:**  
I really must find her  
and make her my bride!

**Footman:**  
There are no more houses.  
This is the last one.

**Stepsister 1:**  
Please, come in, my dear Prince!

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**Scene 4 (Cinderella’s house)**
*Curtains remain closed.*

*Spotlight on the Prince as he enters through the auditorium followed by his royal footman, who is carrying the slipper and a tiara on a pillow.  
Prince stops just before the stage steps, turns to face the audience and his footman before he speaks.  
Royal footman points to the stage.*

*Curtains open to show Cinderella’s living room, where stepmother and stepsisters are sitting around the table.  
Stepsister 1 stands up and goes downstage centre, to the stage steps and invites the Prince in.*
The Prince looks at his footman in dismay when he sees the ugly stepsister.

After trying the slipper on the stepsisters, the footman, with hand cupped over his mouth, whispers loudly to the Prince.

The stepmother throws her hands in the air in frustration, when addressing the footman.

Cinderella pops out her head from the curtains on stage left. She coughs lightly.

The Prince hears her and, turning around, sees her.

Cinderella comes out from behind the right wing curtains.

She sits and tries on the slipper, which fits perfectly. The footman smiles and throws his arms up with joy.

Stepmother and stepsisters look on in horror.

The Prince bows to Cinderella and takes her hand.

Cinderella looks into the Prince’s eyes.

The Prince pulls Cinderella from the chair to her feet and they walk together downstage centre. They look into each other’s eyes and smile. The footman brings the tiara on the pillow and, bowing, gives it to the Prince. The Prince takes it and puts it on Cinderella’s head.

Curtains close as the narrators speak.

The choir starts singing the final song.
**Song 4: Don't Give up Hope**

When things are hard,  
or people are cruel,  
remember one thing,  
just one simple rule:

**Chorus:** Don’t give up hope.  
You should smile and dream.  
Things are not always  
as bad as they seem.

When someone’s mean,  
or very unkind,  
try to be friendly –  
they may change their mind.

And even if  
they don’t change their ways,  
something may happen  
to bring better days.

*Repeat chorus*
Props

The broom, silver plate, tray, toy mouse and pillow may be brought in by students. The tea set may also be brought in by students but it should be a toy set to avoid accidents. The letter can be a plain sheet of paper folded in three and sealed with wax or a plain round red sticker. The stepsisters' gowns should be the costumes the actors will wear in Scene 3. The magic wand can be a toy brought in by students, or a plain wooden stick painted silver/wrapped in aluminium foil with a silver star made of paper attached to one end. Cinderella's gown, slippers and cloak should be the costume the actor will wear in Scene 2. Optionally, there can be a second pair of slippers available for Scene 4. The pumpkin can be a small plastic toy or a small orange balloon blown up with brown stripes drawn every 3-4 cm. The tiara can be a plastic toy brought in by students, or it can be made of thick silver paper.

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<th>Props</th>
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Costumes

Narrator(s): Boys may be dressed as royal guards in blue jackets, so as to differentiate from the Prince. White trousers; brown or black boots. Boots should be the same colour for all. Girls should be dressed as fairies in light-coloured, short-sleeved leotards, matching tights, and long skirts made of tulle with plastic/paper flowers attached around the waist. A band with the same flowers should decorate their heads and fairy wings can be made of wire and light-coloured tights and attached with elastic bands to the shoulders. Glitter should be sprinkled on the wings and on the fairies' heads.
Cinderella: Grey short-sleeved leotard with a plain old long pinafore covered with patches of different colours. The pinafore should be baggy enough for the actor to take off quickly in order to put on the party gown. A pair of old shoes to match her servant’s outfit. Her hair could either be worn up in a ponytail or down, but uncombed. Her party dress will be a long full gown, preferably with a zipper at the back so she can put it on quickly during Scene 2. Clear plastic shoes to resemble glass slippers. Fake jewellery and combs in her hair, which in Scene 3 should be well combed. For the ball, she should also be wearing some lipstick.

Stepmother: Long, full dress in dark colours, fake jewellery. A long dark cape for the ball.

Stepsister 1: Her day dress should be composed of a long-sleeved leotard with a matching pair of tights and a long gathered skirt on top of it. Matching shoes. At the ball, she should only change skirt, to wear a darker one. She should also be wearing combs in her hair at the ball and some fake jewellery.

Stepsister 2: Her day costume should be a light-coloured, long-sleeved leotard with a matching pair of tights and a long gathered skirt on top of it. Matching shoes. At the ball, she should change only her skirt, to wear a lighter one. She should also be wearing combs in her hair at the ball and some fake jewellery. As an option, her ball skirt could be decorated with big plastic/paper flowers. Should the actor be thin, padding should be added underneath her clothes to make her look plump.

Fairy Godmother: Long chiffon dress, light colours, such as pink and blue or whatever is available. Her sleeves should be long and in A-shape so as to make up for the lack of wings. A wand made of a stick wrapped in aluminium foil, covered in glitter and with a star attached to one end.

Prince: Red jacket (cut away if possible) with gold braid across the chest and gold epaulettes; white shirt and white trousers, high black (or brown) boots. A cape for Scene 4.

Guests at ball: Ladies should wear long dresses, with matching shoes and fake jewellery. Men may wear jackets with matching trousers and white shirts. Bow-ties and dark shoes.

Royal footman: Blue or red coat (different shade from the guards), white trousers, black or brown shoes; blue hat.
Drama Activities

1 Line up!

Aims: To help Ss to get to know each other.

Preparation: You need to know all the Ss’ names and dates of birth.

Materials: None.

Description: 1 Ask the Ss to arrange themselves in a line from the tallest to the shortest.
2 Ask the Ss to arrange themselves in a line: people whose names begin with a letter at the start of the alphabet at one end, etc.
3 Ask the Ss to arrange themselves in a line from the oldest to the youngest. Now Ss will have to find out in which month and year their peers were born.

2 First-time listening and reading

Aims: To familiarise Ss with the story they are going to perform.

Preparation: Read the story and decide at which points it would be suitable to stop and ask Ss to speculate on the story.

Materials: The audio CD and the Pupil’s Books.

Description: 1 Introduce the story to the Ss by showing them the Pupil’s Book cover and front page. Point to the characters and ask for Ss’ speculations on both story and characters.
2 Play the audio CD while Ss follow in their books. When you reach the first stopping point, ask Ss to close their books and tell you what they think is going to happen next. Accept all answers and then continue.
3 After listening to the development of the story, stop again and ask Ss which of their suggestions were correct. Then play the story until the next stopping point.
3 Chanting

Aims: 1 To practise in a group before speaking alone.
2 To help Ss learn their lines.

Preparation: Cut out the script pages from the Pupil’s Books.

Materials: A copy of the script for every S.

Description: 1 Divide the class into groups so that each group plays a different character. Read out the scene you have decided to practise while the Ss follow on their copies. Change your own voice as you change character.
2 After every page, stop and allow the Ss to chant the page in their character groups.
3 Go through the play, page by page initially.
4 Then read a scene and allow the Ss to chorus the scene.
5 By this stage, Ss should be able to chorus the play while you listen.

4 Listen for the cue!

Aims: To help Ss learn their lines and identify when to say them.

Preparation: Cut out the script pages in the Pupil’s Books.

Materials: The scripts from the Pupil’s Books.

Description: 1 Point out that knowing when to speak is important in a play and that in order to do that, they should identify the lines of the characters who speak before them (i.e. the cues).
2 Allocate the roles and ask Ss to underline their lines in one colour and circle the lines before them. Ss who do not wish to act can work as prompters.
3 Ask Ss to read out the play. Prompters can help out those who confuse their lines.
4 You can repeat the reading, focusing on intonation, pronunciation, clarity etc.
5 **Stop - Start - Action!**

**Aims:**
1. To help Ss to get visual clues from what is happening on stage.
2. To help Ss to work co-operatively.

**Preparation:**
Read the story and memorise the position and movements of the characters in each scene.

**Materials:**
The audio CD and the Pupil’s Book.

**Description:**
1. Pick a S to come to the front and start miming a scene while the class listens to its recording.
2. After about 15 seconds shout, “Freeze!”, which tells the actor to hold their position. Point to another S and have that S replace the frozen S in their exact position and shout, “Go!” This S then continues and extends the action that the previous S was in the middle of performing.
3. Continue until all the Ss have had a turn.

6 **Who am I?**

**Aims:**
1. To encourage Ss to work together and practise co-ordination.
2. To revise lines from the play they are about to perform.

**Preparation:**
Practise miming a simple scene from the play.

**Materials:**
The Pupil’s Book.

**Description:**
1. Revise the basic plot of the play with the Ss.
2. Mime the scene you have prepared and ask them to guess who you are. After they have guessed, see if they can remember the lines of the character in that scene. Allow Ss to check their guesses by finding that scene in the book.
3. Divide the class into teams of 3 or 4. Tell them that now they have to do the same. Give each group time to prepare a different part of the play.
4. When they are ready, each group performs their scene. The rest of the class try to guess who is who and what is said.
7 Mirrors

Aims: To encourage Ss' powers of observation and concentration.

Preparation: None.

Materials: None.

Description:
1. Ask Ss to sit or stand in pairs facing each other. Explain that one of them, S A, has to act as if he/she is looking in a mirror, and the other, S B, has to mirror their exact movements.
2. Ss start practising in pairs. After a few minutes, ask Ss to change roles and S B takes over the lead while S A mirrors the movements. Point out that concentration is important and monitor the class, watching each pair.
3. This activity can be turned into a game, where the best pair wins, by eliminating pairs if they do not mirror the exact movements of their partners.

8 On my way to school today ...

Aims: To encourage Ss to memorise things.

Preparation: None.

Materials: None.

Description:
1. Ask Ss to sit in a circle.
2. Select a S to start by saying, "On my way to school today, I saw a ... (e.g. dog)."
   In turns, each S in the circle continues by adding an item to the list.