



Now Online!  
July 23 - August 2, 2020  
[aacte.com/2020](http://aacte.com/2020)

Saturday, July 25th  
Session Block 3: 1-2:15pm ET

## Crafting Stories that Serve Your Diverse Classroom, Curriculum, and Life

Session Chair: Shawn Shafner with Robin Cannon Colwell



[www.arts-for-all.org](http://www.arts-for-all.org)

Workshop Host: Jenn Katona

# Session Overview

- Welcome, Acknowledgements
- Introduction, Housekeeping, Agreements
- Community Check-In
- Context: What is Arts For All?
- Prime the Lens
- Storytime!
- Story Analysis: Mark the Arc
- Story Deconstruction: “The Simple Story”
- Story Reinvention
- Classroom Adaptations and Extensions
- Questions
- Closing

# Agreements

## AATE Diversity Statement

“AATE believes in equity, justice, and inclusion for all. We believe our work is stronger by the many voices, perspectives, and experiences we bring to the organization and the field. We actively welcome and include all people regardless of race, socioeconomic class, color, national origin, religion, diverse perspectives, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, neurological or physical ability, veteran status, legal status, or education level”.

# What is Arts For All?

## WHO WE ARE

Arts For All offers accessible artistic opportunities to children in the New York City area who face socio-economic, physical, or emotional barriers to exploring the arts. Through Arts For All, professional artists work with youth organizations to build self-confidence, self-expression, teamwork, resilience, and creativity in children.

## VISION

Arts For All is working towards a world in which:

- All children have access to artistic opportunities
- All children gain self-confidence, self-expression, and the ability to work in teams
- All children share in a stronger society and are better prepared to face life challenges and opportunities
- The arts are valued in their own right and as a means of developing skills

# Arts For All

Arts For All serves approximately 3,000 children each year through its programs.

- **Artistic Residency Program**
- **Artistic Exposure Program**
- **Audience Project**
- **Literacy Through the Arts**
  - Literacy Through the Arts builds students' reading, writing and verbal expression skills through a multi-arts curriculum in theater, literature, music, visual arts and dance. Through art, K-2 students develop critical and creative thinking and a vocabulary to express ideas, stories and emotions.

## More Information

- Website: [www.arts-for-all.org](http://www.arts-for-all.org)
- Facebook: [www.facebook.com/artsforallinc](https://www.facebook.com/artsforallinc)
- Twitter: [twitter.com/artsforallinc](https://twitter.com/artsforallinc)
- YouTube: [www.youtube.com/channel/UCQ5FiWO2Dk-3t8f9uYrr7ug](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCQ5FiWO2Dk-3t8f9uYrr7ug) (ArtsForAllINyc)
- Instagram: [@artsforallnyc](https://www.instagram.com/artsforallnyc)

# Arts for All

## Core Values

- Self-confidence
- Self-expression
- Teamwork
- Resilience
- Creativity

# Prime the Lens

## Potential Biases, -isms, and Blind Spots

- Differences in learning - adapt multiple intelligences
- Age-ism
- Narcissism
- Ableism - visible and invisible differentiated abilities
- Geographical biases - rural, urban, etc.
- Racism
- Sexism
- Language - vocabulary, vernacular
- Cultural background
- Homophobia, heteronormativity, dominant narrative vs lifting up queer narratives

## Solomon and the Ant

The Jewish people have a special love for tales of wisdom, cleverness, and tricks. You can find these tales as far back as the Bible. The snake “tricks” Eve into eating the apple, Abraham cleverly convinces God not to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah if he can find ten good people, and Isaac wisely asks an angel for a blessing after wrestling with the angel all through the night.

There are countless stories of wisdom, cleverness, and trickery told beyond the Biblical stories. There are *midrashim* created by the rabbis and folktales recounted by the common people about Biblical characters like Solomon, who lived three thousand years ago and was famous for his wisdom.

Many tales set out to prove that Solomon was the greatest and the wisest of all kings. It is natural for people to brag that their king is the very best.

People want to be proud of their leaders, but they don’t want their leaders to be too proud of themselves. That’s why some folktales set out to prove that no king, or any human being, is all powerful or all knowing.

The wonderful thing about King Solomon was that he was never too proud to learn. He was willing to learn from even the lowliest creature. In this tale, the great King Solomon is brought down to earth, but because he accepts the wisdom of a little ant, he becomes even greater than he was before.

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SOLOMON HAD A MAGIC CARPET THAT ONLY HE COULD COMMAND. One day he was flying high above the earth, and he was very pleased with himself. He said, “I am the greatest of all. I fly above the world. I understand all the languages of all the creatures. I can even hear them speak from this great height.”

At that moment he heard a creature say, “King Solomon is not so great.”

Solomon looked down and saw that the words had been spoken by an ant. He commanded the carpet to stop and to descend to the earth. Solomon found the tiny ant. He bent down and picked it up so he could look at it eye to eye. He said to it, “You little creature of the dust, I heard you say that I am not so great. Tell me, who is greater than I am?”

The ant replied, “I am greater than you.”

“How can you say that?” asked Solomon.

The ant answered, “I am greater than you.”

“What!” said Solomon. “How?”

The ant replied, “I am greater than you because the greatest king in the world stopped when he heard me speak, he lowered himself to the earth, and he bent down in front of me. He raised me up so we were the same height, and he asked me a question that I could answer and he could not.”

Solomon smiled. He said, “I am the king who stopped when you spoke and lowered himself, and bent down, raised you up, and asked you a question that he could not answer.”

“You are,” said the ant. “And I am the creature who told you something you did not know.”

King Solomon gently lowered the ant back to the earth. “O wise and mighty Ant, you are greater than I thought you were, and I am not as great as I thought I was. I still have much to learn from my fellow creatures.”

### NOTE

In another folktale, Solomon halts his horse to avoid trampling some ants. He tells his companion, the Queen of Sheba, that to God, ants are just as important as people. In fact, when God looks down from the great height of Heaven, ants and humans look almost the same size.

### COMMENTARY

The Talmud teaches us that humans can learn from everything, even from tiny ants. “Who teaches us by the beasts of the earth, and makes us wise by the fowls of heaven” (Job 35:11). Rabbi Yohanan said: “Had Torah not been given [to us], we could have learned modesty from the cat, avoiding seizure of others’ property from the ant, avoidance of infidelity from the dove, and good manners from the rooster. . . .” (Eruvin 100b). This story can be connected with what Solomon wrote in Proverbs 6:6, “Go to the ant, consider her ways, and be wise.”

### SOURCES AND VARIANTS

“Solomon and the Ant” is part of a longer story in which Solomon is taught a humbling lesson about the dangers of arrogance and the misuse of his great wisdom and power.

The earlier versions of the full story can be found in *Ma’asseh ha-Namalab, Ma’asseh Nissim*, as well as in Louis Ginzberg’s *The Legends of the Jews*, VI, with versions in Moses Gaster’s *The Exempla of the Rabbis* and Haim Schwarzbau’s *Studies in Jewish and World Folklore*.

The complete story, “The Ant and the Impenetrable Palace,” can be found in Micha Joseph Bin Gorion’s *Mimekor Yisrael*.

“Story of the Ant” is in Nathan Ausubel’s *A Treasury of Jewish Folklore*.

Motif: B 481.1—Helpful ant.



# Summarize

## Theme or Moral

What is important message or big takeaway from the story?

# Summarize

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What is important message or big takeaway from the story?

Maybe:

“True greatness comes from humility.”

“All beings have equal value.”

“Arrogance is its own downfall.”

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# Story Analysis

## “Simple story”

What is the simplest way to describe the plot? This is a short phrase or sentence that explains what happens in very basic terms. You could also get creative and do this as a news headline, bumper sticker, or tweet.

Learned from Rachel Chavkin, theater director and founder of The TEAM.

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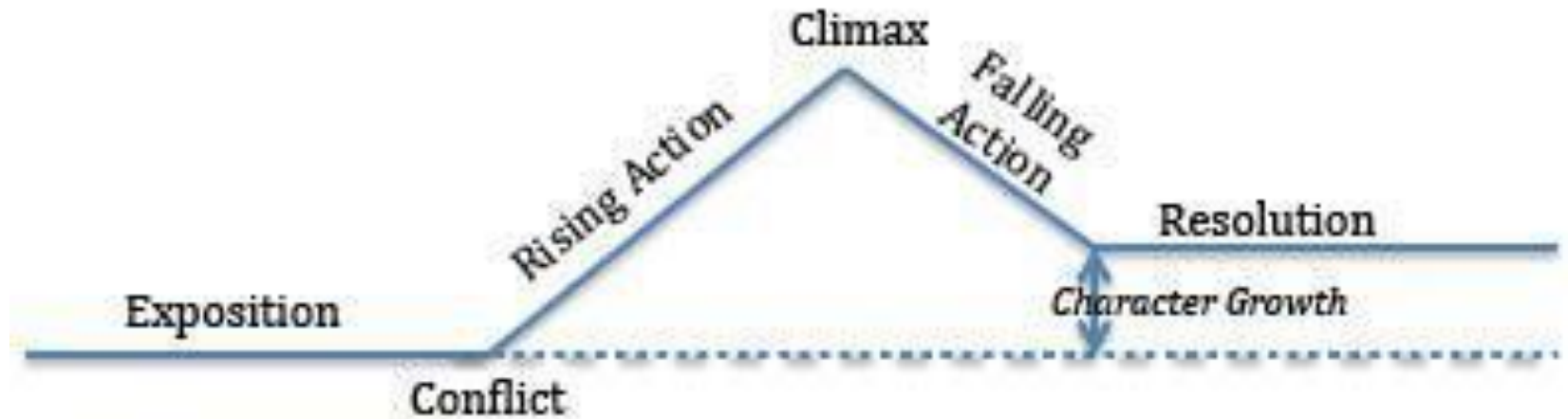
Maybe:

“A proud King is humbled by an ant.”

“An ant schools a King.”

“High-status being is bested by a perceived low-status being.”

# Story Analysis: Mark the Arc



## Solomon and the Ant

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1. Exposition

2. Conflict

3. Climax

4. Resolution

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# Story Analysis: Mark the Arc

Overall: A king is bested by an ant.

Exposition: There once was a proud and powerful King.

Conflict: The King was called out and challenged by an ant.

Climax: The ant won the challenge.

Resolution: The King was humbled.

Setting: In nature, warm weather.

Other Characters: King's assistants, the carpet, other ants



# Story Analysis: Mark the Arc

Overall: High-status being is bested by a perceived low-status being.

Exposition: There was a being whose circumstances made them feel high status.

Conflict: High-status being is challenged by a being they perceive as having low status.

Climax: Low status being wins the challenge.

Resolution: High status being is humbled.

Setting: Where could this story happen?

Characters: Who will play the main characters? Who might help round out the world of this story?

## Original Cinderella

Once upon a time, there was a beautiful girl who lived with her mean stepmother and two mean, ugly stepsisters. They made her do all the housework, and called her Cinderella.

# Cinderella with Fill-Ins

Once upon a time, there was a

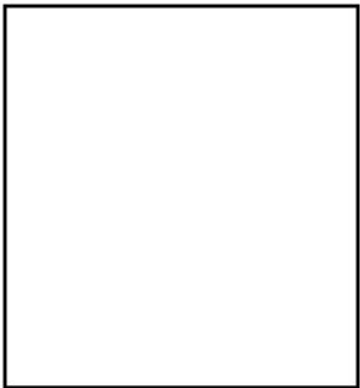
\_\_\_\_\_ who lived with \_\_\_\_\_

and \_\_\_\_\_ mean, ugly \_\_\_\_\_.

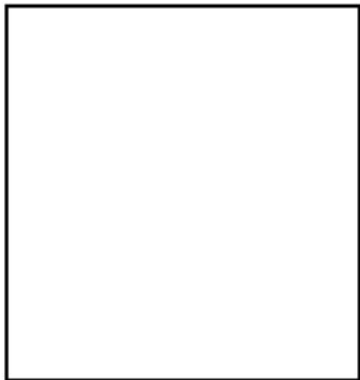
They made \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_, and called \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_



\_\_\_\_\_



\_\_\_\_\_

## Fairytale Characters



\_\_\_\_\_



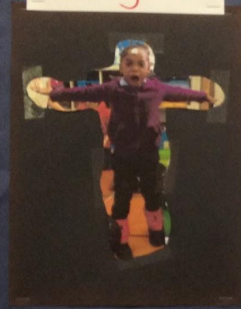
\_\_\_\_\_



\_\_\_\_\_

2<sup>nd</sup> graders are studying fairytale characters. They made poses for each one!

Antagonist



for each one!



Sweetheart



Protagonist



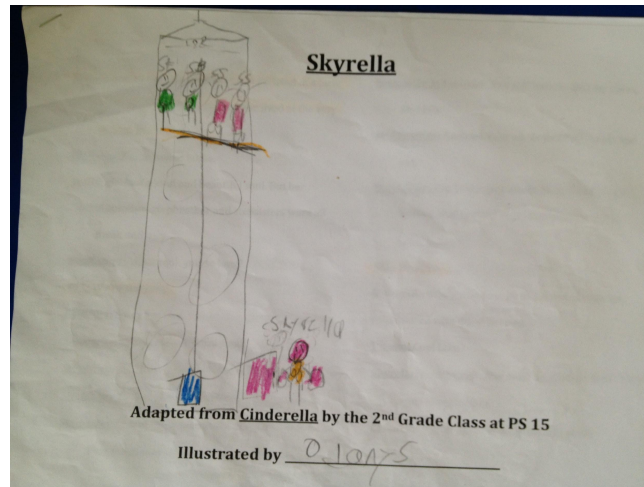
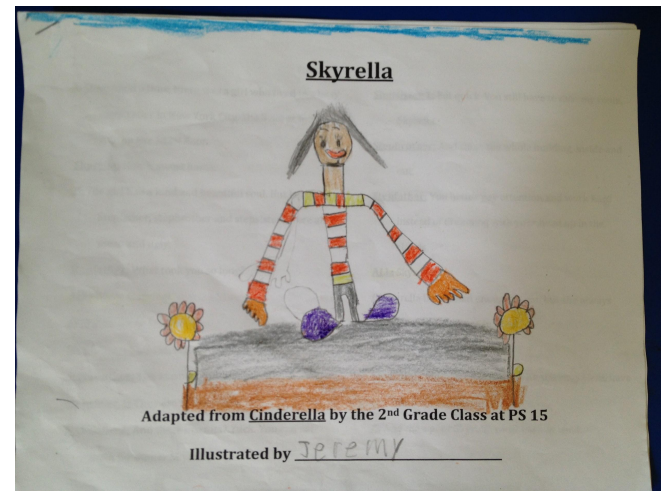
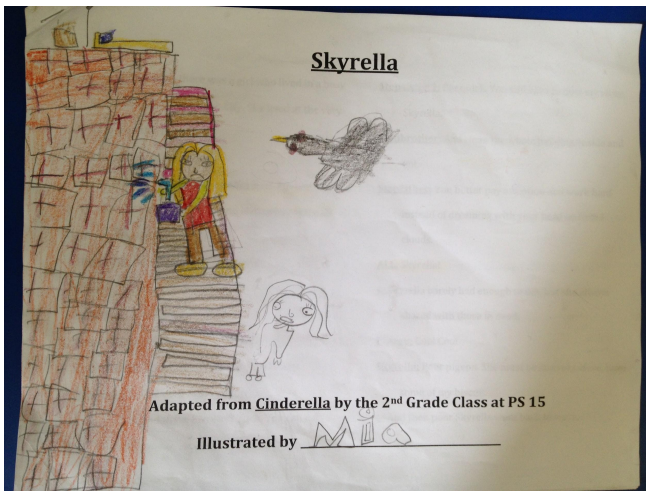
Minion



Special Helper

## NEW - Skyrella!

Once upon a time, there was a girl who lived in a skyscraper in New York City with her Stepfather and three mean, ugly step-siblings. They made her clean the whole building, inside and out, and called her Skyrella.



# Questions?



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**Shawn Shafner:** [shawnshafner@gmail.com](mailto:shawnshafner@gmail.com)