

CHRONICLES OF THE KALEIDOSCOPE VISITORS

BY OMER ABBAS SALEM

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WELCOME!

Welcome to the *Chronicles of the Kaleidoscope Visitors* study guide! Compiled here are a variety of articles and activities designed to expand your theatre-going experience. We hope that these articles and activities help spark further discussion and learning in and outside of the classroom. We, the authors, believe in the transformative power of theatre. So, as you venture into this study guide we ask that you open your hearts and minds to the possibility of change. Be open to changing your ideas, perceptions, and feelings about yourself, your community, and the world around you. Theatre is practice for life. Start taking full advantage of that practice with this study guide.

Chicago Playworks was founded as the Goodman Children's Theatre in 1925, and is recognized as a pioneer of theatre for families. Chicago Playworks welcomes more than 25,000 students and families to our highly celebrated productions each season. Today we are dedicated to reflecting our audience's experience in an urban, contemporary, and multi-racial environment.



STUDY GUIDE CREATOR BIOS!

Eva Strazek is a dramaturg, writer, and actress from Cleveland, Ohio. She is a third-year student at DePaul University studying Dramaturgy and Criticism, with a minor in Journalism. She is passionate about culture and sociology, and how it manifests in the plays we write and see onstage. *Chronicles of the Kaleidoscope Visitors* is her fourth show as a dramaturg at Depaul. Her love for theater illuminates everything else in her life.

Liv Queen Majestic is a dramaturg, writer, musician, and film enthusiast from Orange County, California! She is a third year undergraduate student at DePaul University pursuing a double major of Dramaturgy & Criticism and Creative Writing. They are interested in immersive, site-specific theatre that invites audiences to directly become a part of the worlds created through theatre, as well as bringing theatre to communities that do not have much access to and funding for it. She will be a dramaturg for *Little Women* at the Merle Reskin in autumn, and for *Ride the Cyclone* in the winter.

Steph Heinz is a theater artist, educator, director, and wig technician from Crystal Lake, Illinois. She is a third year Theatre Arts major with a concentration in Theatre for Young Audiences. She is passionate about theatre as a healing force for trauma, and how it can build crucial life skills far beyond the stage. Steph is looking forward to being the Assistant Director on *Little Women* this Fall.

Katherine Shuert is a third year undergraduate student at DePaul University studying Dramaturgy and Criticism and minoring in dance. She is a dancer and choreographer who is interested in the dramaturgy of physically based performances. She is a born and raised Illinois native who believes that theatre, as a live and embodied artform, is a powerful tool capable of relaying deep truths.

LIST OF CHARACTERS:

Sister Fibonacci- A dreamer and a loner. One of those smart kids who has trouble relating but being the only kid in the family doesn't help. Even when at their most sarcastic, they are incredibly heart forward.

Father Copernicus- A strong parental figure. A person who will choose their child and wife over anyone else. A leader who prefers to stand in the second or third row.

Mother Henrietta- A parental figure who worries and loves and worries and loves. A person whose worry pushes them to easy conclusions but who always reconsiders when they're wrong.

Uncle Albert- The leader who was chosen and not necessarily deserved. Conclusions come easily and are thought about only once.

Brother Gregor- A fool who falls easily to influence. An oldest son who gets things rather than learns things. A very annoying person.

Cousin Marie- Smart, conniving, and ruthless. A villain in sheep's clothing.

Aunt Jane- If Brother Gregor were an aunt, that would be Aunt Jane. Her and Uncle Albert are divorced and their daughter Marie lives between them.

Friend Isaac- A fickle friend.

Friend Sally- A better friend.

Gorgoo- A creature filled with curiosity, like a moth to a light. Athletic. A true sister.

Gagaa- A creature filled with caution, perhaps because of her sister. Another true sister.

Learner Galileo/Learner Pythagoras- Learned and poised. The move with grace and swift confidence.

Narrator- A voice of reason. A voice that makes you feel better. A comedian.

ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT:

Omer Abbas Salem is a Chicago actor and playwright. He has worked with several notable Chicago theaters as an actor, such as The Goodman, The New Coordinates, Jackalope Theatre, Steep Theatre, Silk Road Rising, Griffin Theatre, The House, Bailiwick Chicago, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Roundabout Theater, and The Atlantic Theater. Several of his plays, such as Mosque4Mosque, Modern Women, and Love in The Time of Jonestown, have had regional, national, and some world premieres. He won the 3Arts award in Theater for 2023 and was named Who's Got Next by Chicago Magazine for theater in 2023. He is an ensemble member of the Steep Theatre, First Floor Theater, Jackalope Theatre, and The New Coordinates



SYNOPSIS:

In the year 1600, the Kalidescope family lives in a remote and icy hamlet far away from any civilization. Their town has never seen sunflowers-- but lots and lots of bread.

When two faeries drop from the sky without warning, the family is hesitant to communicate with the strange beings. But brave, teenaged Sister Fibbonaci learns to communicate with the creatures-- throwing the entire family into a whirlwind of events. and putting them at each other's throats.

Where did th

REFLECTING ON THE FARM: A PERSONAL ACCOUNT

By Katherine Shuert

I didn't grow up on the farm, but my mom did. My family has been farming the same acres of land in southern Illinois for over 100 years. So, despite growing up in the suburbs, I feel the farm in my blood. It's a very special thing to be connected to one piece of land for so long, to have a family lineage centered around the care, keeping, and preservation of it. Most people don't know much about farming or about farmers. The first thing I want them to know is that the relationship between farmers and the earth is sacred to them. They respect it and care for it like no one else. They cherish the land even when it seems like the land is working against them – when the yield is bad, or the ground is hard, or it rains too much or too little, they rise with the sun and set to work.

When I go back to the farm around harvest each year, I walk through the newly empty fields and feel over a century of labor and love that my family has put into the ground beneath my feet and think of the abundance that has come from it. Some people may think there isn't much to look at in the flat plains of rural Illinois, but in those moments, I could swear it is the most beautiful place on Earth.



REFLECTING ON THE FARM: A PERSONAL ACCOUNT

By Katherine Shuert

Like most farmers in Illinois, we grow corn and soy. Mostly field corn, but most important to me is the sweet corn. My grandmother's house is sandwiched in between two fields which rotate between corn and soy depending on the year, but there is always a patch of sweetcorn not far from the house for our personal stock. Sweet corn becomes ripe in late summer and during that time you could rip an ear off the stock and eat it raw. We often sit on the porch steps, shucking corn we'd picked ourselves over trash bags, inevitably getting silk hairs all over us. A fresh ear of sweet corn at dinner is a kind of ritual, something I really miss when I'm not there. I remember just how happy my mom would be when my grandma would bring a bushel of fresh sweet corn to the suburbs because it just didn't taste the same from the store. I guess I'm a snob, but I can't help but be picky about my sweet corn.

It isn't all delicious though. Farming is hard. You can do everything right and have everything go wrong anyway because of a bad bout of weather. I've seen those years, and the worry in my family's eyes during them. Every year seems like an estimated gamble on how much seed to buy, what kind of seed to buy, and how many extra hands can be afforded. At a certain point it's out of their hands, and all the planning and education can't stop the earth from doing what she will do. Even during the good years it stays hard.

I remember my mom telling me about detasseling. A fairly common job for young teens, you'd walk through the corn fields early in the morning and rip the tassel off the top of each plant to stop unwanted pollination between varieties of corn. It sounds simple, but it is grueling. In the height of summer, it didn't matter how early you were up, the fields were hot, and the tassels and corn stocks cut up your hands. She fainted on her first day and was asked not to come back.

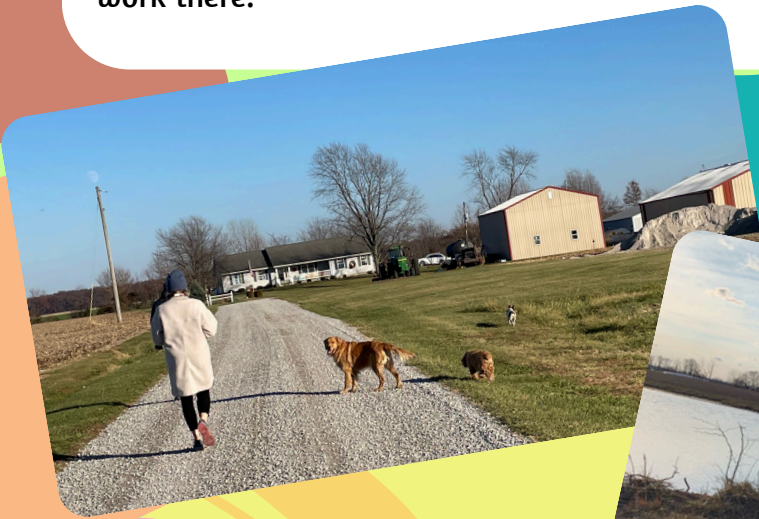


REFLECTING ON THE FARM: A PERSONAL ACCOUNT

By Katherine Shuert

My grandparents didn't want my mom or her siblings to carry on with the farm unless they really wanted to. My uncle, my mom's youngest brother, is in charge of it all now. He knew he wanted it for nearly his whole life, but my grandfather made him go to college and go work some other places for a few years so he could be sure. He lives next door to my grandma now, and by that I mean there's only one corn field in between them. He is a good farmer.

I finish writing this as sweet corn season approaches. I sit in a small bedroom, in a small apartment in the city, and I dream about the vast openness of the farm. I yearn for the taste of fresh sweet corn, for the ritual of shucking it on my grandma's porch, and sharing it with my family around the dinner table. More than anything these days - days filled with the train rushing through my backyard, of strangers' voices outside my window, of so many cars, and so much concrete - I have been wishing I could go lay in the yard there, and rest in the peace made by generations of work there.



A QUICK GUIDE ON HOW TO READ MAPS!

In this study guide, some of the articles utilize maps! Whether you're a map newbie or an expert or need a refresher, here are some tips on reading maps!

When you're reading a map, always look at the title first! This will show you what type of data you are looking at and analyzing!

Make sure you are familiar with the regions that the map covers. Is this a map of the US, a map of the world, etc?

Make sure you look at the **key** of the map. What color represents what? What symbols represent what?

Finally-- look closely at the map and draw your conclusions!

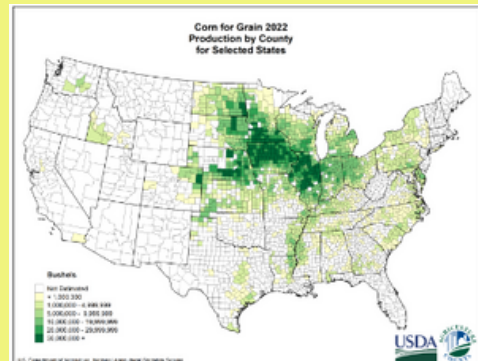
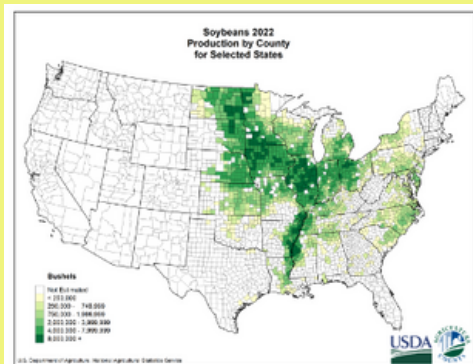


WORLDWIDE HARVEST:

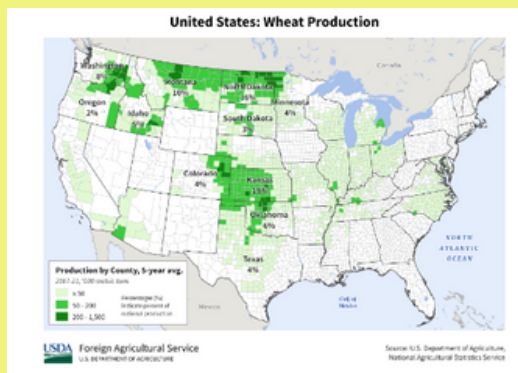


Whether it's breakfast, lunch, or dinner— many foods you eat daily are produced halfway across the earth! Not every food can grow everywhere. Food is farmed, treated, and transported around the world. The number one crop in the world is sugarcane, followed by corn.

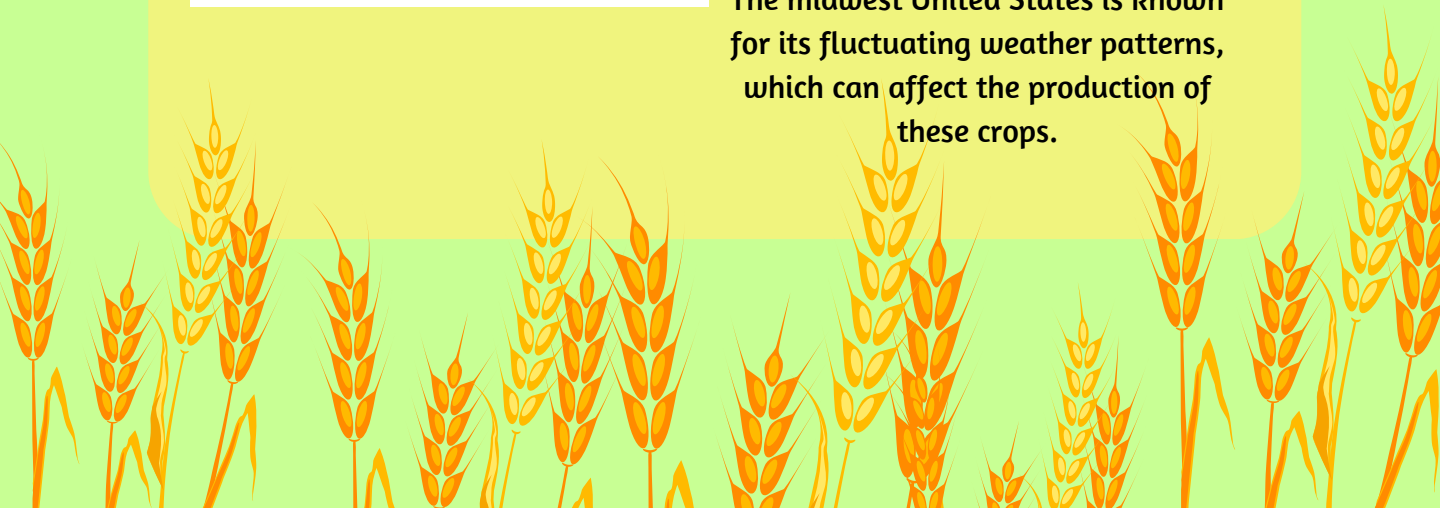
In *Chronicles of the Kaleidoscope Visitors*, the family grows corn, wheat, and soy in a remote, icy hamlet.



As we can see here, the crops produced in *Chronicles* are grown all over the US, mainly in the Midwest, where we reside!



The Midwest is a region of the country that contains the states of Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. This region is known for farming and the production of crops and livestock. The midwest United States is known for its fluctuating weather patterns, which can affect the production of these crops.




A main issue in *Chronicles* is that growing crops in a harsh climate tends to be harder. All around the world right now, farmers and manufacturers have been battling climate change and global warming. The climate is becoming unstable on every continent, and millions of crops are lost.

Ask the class, what kind of food has wheat, and soy grain in it. Why are these crops so important? Open up to a bigger conversation: why is keeping the earth safe so important?



This is a map of where food originates from across the world. It may surprise you!






The largest exported crop in the world is sugarcane, and the largest exporter of the crop is Brazil. However, scientists worry that sugarcane production is responsible for tons of greenhouse gas emissions. These emissions are messing with our climate, creating holes in the earth's atmosphere, and making it harder for crops like sugarcane to grow.

Why do certain crops grow in certain areas?

There are a lot of factors that contribute to growing certain crops— one of these is climate. For example, for sugarcane to grow, you need warm temperatures, lots of sunlight, and mineral-rich soil.

Corn, wheat, and soy can withstand colder temperatures, which is why they can grow in windier and chillier climates.



Climate change has been affecting farming for decades. Large farms in the US take poor care of the land they farm on, which contributes to the changing climate. Corn and soybean crops have been affected by floods and extreme weather events brought on by the changing climate.

Rice is another crop that is being affected by climate change, but the mass harvesting of rice is releasing toxic chemicals into the atmosphere, causing climate change and its harmful effects. It is a cycle that keeps repeating itself.

Crops and Exploitation:

In *Chronicles*, certain family members want to exploit Gorgoo and Gaga to grow and harvest crops faster. This reflects a real period in American history— and something still happening around the world today.

For centuries, colonizers have been exploiting the labor of Native people and the land they live on. In places such as Haiti, Jamaica, and Hawaii, the economy survives because of underpaid labor from native people.

Slavery in the Southern US was largely created because of crop exploitation. The amount of sugar, tobacco, and cotton the US wanted to export exceeded the number of laborers needed. So, the colonists decided to commit the horrible act of kidnapping and enslaving African people.





In *Chronicles of the Kaleidoscope Visitors*, we see and hear about crops harvesting and what products are made from them!



One of the main exports from *Kaleidoscope* is bread— something all of us have eaten at some point!

Making bread can be quite easy and fun, here is a **bread recipe!**

INGREDIENTS NEEDED:

4 1/2 to 5 cups (540g to 600g) Bread Flour

1 tablespoon (11g) granulated sugar

2 1/4 teaspoons instant yeast

2 1/2 teaspoons (15g) table salt

2 tbsb Vegetable Oil

1 2/3 cups (379g) water, lukewarm (90°F to 110°F)



STEP 1: ASSEMBLE BREAD INGREDIENTS

You'll need warm water, granulated sugar, instant OR active dry yeast, salt, vegetable or canola oil and flour. That's it!

STEP 2: DISSOLVE THE YEAST AND ACTIVATE IT BY PROOFING

This is a simple process that takes about 5 minutes. You can see a picture below what yeast looks like when it's proofed. It's possible to kill yeast if you use too hot of water, so aim for slightly warmer than luke-warm, or about 105°F. Combine warm water, yeast and 1 TBSP of the granulated sugar in your mixing bowl. Give it a quick stir and then let it sit for 5 minutes. You'll begin to see the yeast puff up until it covers the entire surface of the water.

STEP 3: ADD REMAINING INGREDIENTS AND MIX

Add the rest of the sugar, the oil, salt and flour (You can use all-purpose flour OR bread flour!), then mix using an electric mixer until it's well combined, about 2 minutes. You can mix by hand but it will take longer.



STEP 4: KNEAD THE BREAD

You might be thinking, “Wait! It’s already mixed!” Ha! Not so fast! Going through the process of kneading bread dough is crucial for bread with great texture. Kneading dough allows gluten to form which enables dough to rise better, be lighter and fluffier. You can knead by hand or with a mixer. I use the dough hook on my mixer and knead for 7 minutes. If you knead by hand, you’ll want to knead for 10-11 minutes, depending on how consistent you are.

STEP 5: FIRST RISE

Place your lovely smooth, elastic bread dough in an oiled bowl and cover it with plastic wrap or a clean towel. I think plastic wrap works better because it traps hot air inside and thus, my dough requires a shorter first rise. Be sure to spray the side of the plastic wrap that will touch the dough with oil! If your house is cool, your bread will take longer to rise. In the wintertime when my house is cooler than normal, I like to turn the oven on for 2-3 minutes, then turn it off and let the bowl of dough rise in there. The oven traps the heat for a longtime and it’s the perfect atmosphere for rising dough.

STEP 6: PUNCH DOUGH AND SHAPE IT

Punching the dough down quickly releases any air pockets that have developed and helps your bread have a more consistent rise and texture. Shape your dough by rolling it gently into a ball and rolling it 2 or 3 times on the countertop so that the ball is more oblong. I usually punch down and shape the dough quickly, then place in a greased bread pan.

STEP 7: SECOND RISE

I like to do my second rise in a warm oven that’s not turned on. I turn the oven on just before I punch my dough down, then turn it off once I place the dough in the oven for the 2nd rise. It’s really only on for a minute or two, which is fine! The second rise will help shape your loaf of bread and takes about 30 minutes.

STEP 8: BAKE THE BREAD

You’re nearly there! Bread bakes for about 30-40 minutes. You know what I do to make sure my bread is perfectly cooked? I use a digital cooking thermometer! Fully cooked bread will be 190-200 degrees F. Bread recipes that include milk will need to cook until 200 degrees, but since this one doesn’t, I take it out once it reaches 190 degrees. The top will be golden brown.

AN OVERVIEW OF ILLINOIS AGRICULTURE

To begin, it is important to understand just how important agriculture is to Illinois' economy. Agricultural products (crops, livestock, dairy products, fruits, and vegetables) produced in Illinois end up generating over \$50 billion every year and Illinois ranks in the top five states to export agricultural goods to other countries. The majority of Illinois is covered in farms, with about 75% of Illinois' land area dedicated to farming. Agriculture related industries (farm machinery manufacturing, agricultural real estate, and the sale of food) also generate billions of dollars that flow through the state of Illinois. But farming doesn't just help the economy of rural Illinois, even though most of rural Illinois benefits from agricultural production, Illinois' urban economies are strengthened by agricultural processing and manufacturing.

But what does a farm look like in Illinois? What is grown there? Who works there?

Illinois has around 72,000 farms which produce many different types of products, but a typical farm in Illinois grows mainly corn. Nearly 11 million acres are used to farm corn in Illinois, and most of that land is used to grow field corn. Field corn is the kind of corn that gets ground up and made into other food products. While most of Illinois' farming is dedicated to the production of field corn, Illinois is famous for its sweet corn, which is the kind you would eat fresh off the cob. Field corn grows nearly twice as tall as sweet corn and takes longer to grow and mature before it is harvested. Field corn is also harvested when the kernels are hard and the insides are full of starch, while sweet corn is harvested when still soft and juicy on the inside. Most farmers begin planting their corn in April and harvest it during September and October. Not all their work is done in those seven months though, farming requires year-long caretaking and preparation of land and equipment.

GLOSSARY

Economy: the process or system by which goods and services are produced, sold, and bought in a country or region

Export: goods and services that are produced in one country and sold to buyers in another; to carry or send (as a commodity) to some other place (as another country)

Rural: an open area of land that has few homes or other buildings, and not very many people

Urban: belonging to, or relating to, a city or town

Processing: the act of treating or preparing something by a special method

Manufacturing: the process of transforming raw materials into finished goods through the use of tools, machines, and labor

Acres: a unit for measuring area, especially larger areas like farms; an acre is equal to 4,840 square yards or 43,560 square feet

Harvest: to pick and collect crops, or to collect plants as food

AN OVERVIEW OF ILLINOIS AGRICULTURE

While some Illinois farms belong to big corporations, the majority of farms in Illinois (96% of them) are still family owned and operated. There are around 75,000 farm operators in Illinois, the majority of which are over 50 years old. While the food industry in Illinois employs around 1 million people, 49% of farm workers need to have other jobs as they cannot support themselves by farming work alone as it employs many seasonally rather than year-round.

Let's get back to field corn and where it goes after being harvested. After it has been harvested from farms across the state it gets sent to different manufacturing centers to be turned into a variety of products. Illinois is home to 2,640 food manufacturing companies, most of which are in the Chicago metropolitan area. During manufacturing, field corn is ground up or milled and turned into corn syrup, corn starch, cornflower, corn chips, and many more goods that we eat. Field corn is also milled into feed for livestock and made into ethanol. In fact, Illinois produces more ethanol than any other state, dedicating 274 million bushels of corn to ethanol production alone.

While many of the products made with Illinois field corn make their way to grocery store shelves within Illinois, nearly 44% of grain (which includes field corn) produced in Illinois is sold for export, meaning sold to other countries.

GLOSSARY

Mill: to grind into flour, meal, or powder

Ethanol: a clear, colorless liquid with a characteristic pleasant odor and burning taste; Ethyl alcohol is used to make fuels, drugs, and toiletries, such as toothpaste and soap

Bushel: a unit of volume that is used for measuring agricultural produce such as corn or beans; a bushel is equivalent in volume to eight gallons

[Click here to see a timelapse of corn growth](#)
or scan the QR code



LANGUAGE, COMMUNICATION, CULTURE:

In *Chronicles of the Kaleidoscope Visitors*, we see a **language barrier** in action, and Fibonacci and the faeries' journey to overcome that language barrier. But what is a language barrier, and how do they form?

Language and Communication:

Language is a communication system used by a specific country or community. Language can be both verbal and non-verbal— sign language and body language are two examples of non-verbal language.

Using **non-verbal language** can be a good first step in overcoming a language barrier. Even if two people do not speak the same verbal language, they can communicate using gestures and body language. Fibonacci and the faeries start off with non-verbal communication, which helps them grow closer together, and understand each other when words fail.

Language is something that ties communities together. Though dominated by English, the US is the country in the world with the most languages spoken, between 350 and 430. In Chicago, one-third of people speak a language besides English at home. People can form communities that speak languages other than English at home— in Chicago, Spanish, Polish, and Arabic-speaking communities have a large presence.

Many people come to America unable to speak English, and therefore, have a much harder time communicating with the people around them, much like faeries on the island of Kaleidoscope. When someone arrives in a new place, not knowing what is said around them, it can be scary and isolating. With more time spent in a place where English dominates, non-English languages can be lost and destroyed.

Destruction of Language:

As *Chronicle of the Kaleidoscope Visitors* shows— the more time the faeries spend on the island of the Kaleidoscope, the better they learn how to speak English— however, no characters in the show make an effort to communicate with them in their language, even if they do make an effort to communicate through the barrier. Similar things have happened in the real world, especially in America— this is called **assimilation**. There are two main versions of language assimilation— **forced, and non-forced**.

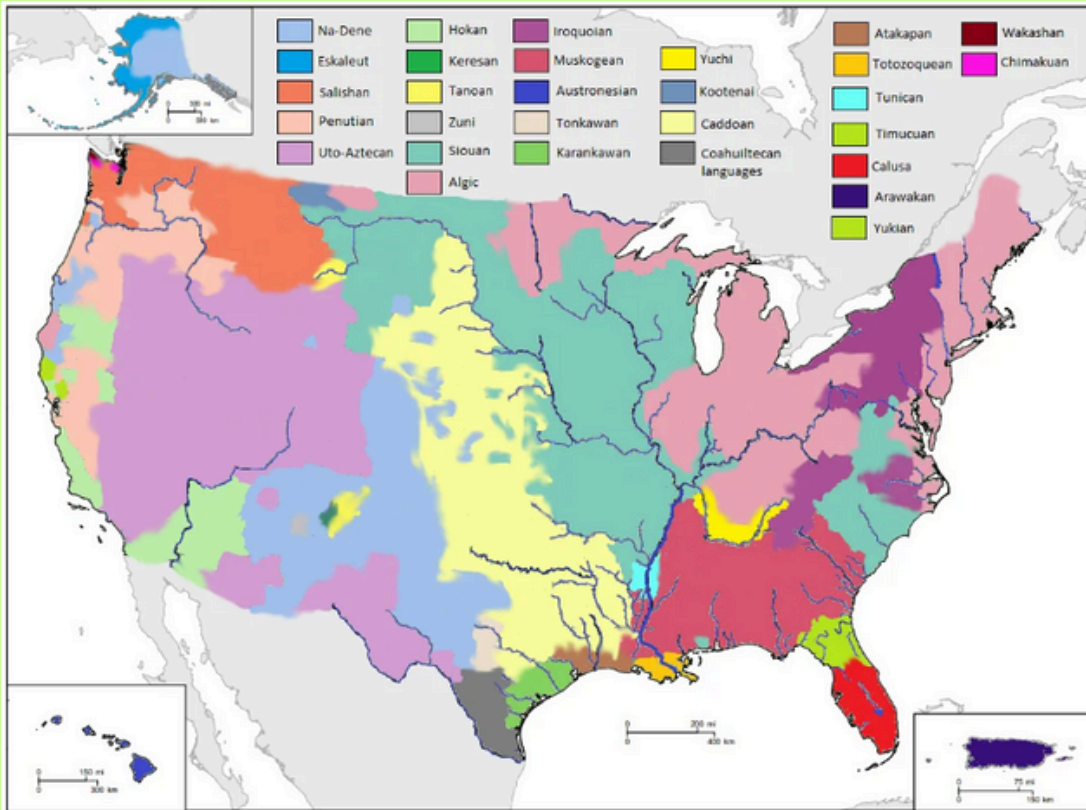
Certain European languages, such as German and Italian, have lost popularity in Chicago in the last century. This is a result of both forced and unforced language assimilation. Immigrants who came at the time of the **Industrial Revolution** were able to learn English in schools and in their jobs. The longer immigrants stayed here, the more they spoke English, and the less they spoke their native languages. This is part of forced assimilation, as English took priority over anything else to get an American education and make American money.

However, Ethnically European white immigrants made conscious decisions to stop passing down their native languages, to privilege English in their lives, and to assimilate into American whiteness— to be viewed as **white** instead of **European-American**.

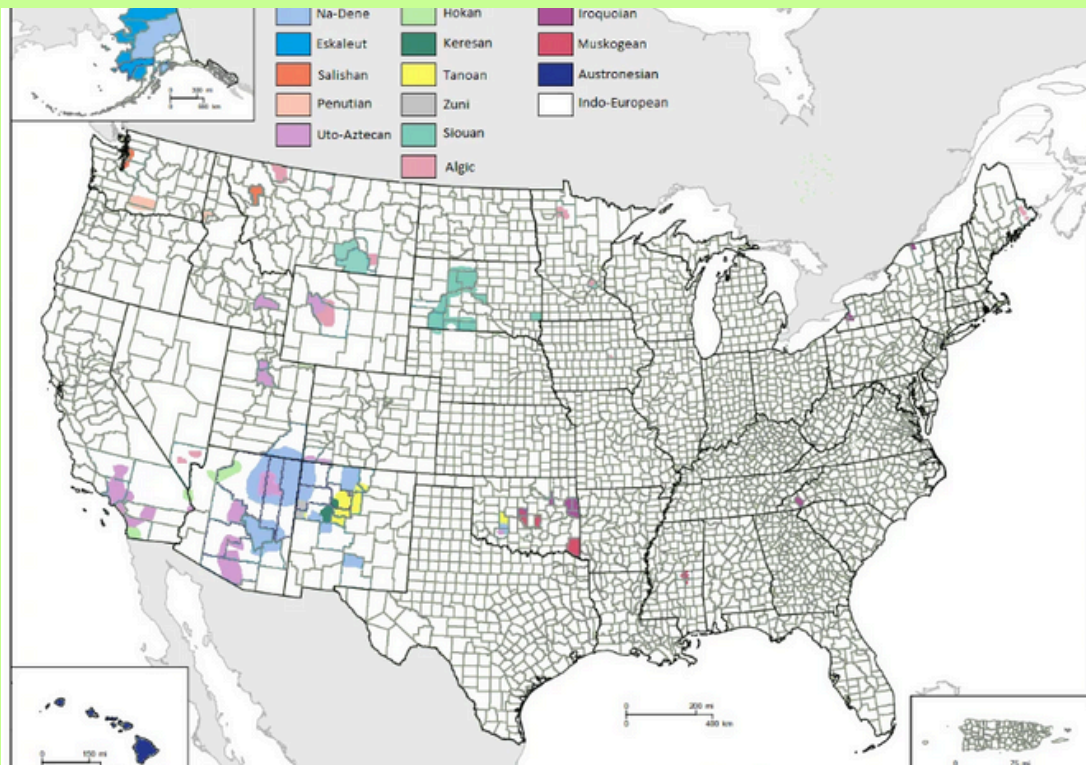
The loss of Native American Tribal languages, however, is an example of **total forced assimilation**.

At the time of Christopher Columbus's arrival to America, there were over 15 million speakers of over 500 different native languages. Today, there are only 175 tribal languages spoken in America. Linguists estimate by 2050, there will be only 20 tribal languages remaining in the US.

THIS IS A MAP OF THE TRIBAL LANGUAGES SPOKEN IN AMERICA BEFORE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE 13 COLONIES:



THIS IS A MAP OF ALL THE TRIBAL LANGUAGES STILL SPOKEN TODAY:



Colonization in America was the destroyer of most native languages in the US. Today, native tribes still attempt to maintain and pass down their language, but it is becoming increasingly more difficult. This is the result of total forced assimilation. In the US and Canada, native children were sent to **residential schools** to “Americanize them.” These schools, known for their horrendous and upsetting methods, targeted language first, before anything else. Colonists cut off any kind of communication between children and older members of their tribes and made it impossible for languages to be passed down. This is why the two maps look very different!

The destruction of language leads to the destruction of culture. In occupied Palestine, the percentage of Arabic speakers decreases each year. The Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank speak a unique dialect of Arabic and are not taught Hebrew in schools. Hebrew is becoming the country's main language and now dominates popular culture and media. When everything in Occupied Palestine is written in Hebrew, the minority of Arabic speakers have a significantly harder time living life. It becomes harder for them to get medical coverage, shop for food, get a job, apply for a home, and so much more. This is why language is often the first thing targeted when colonizers attempt to ethnically and culturally cleanse a society.

Many other languages are endangered— here is a list of examples from around the world.

Other examples:

African Languages of enslaved people in the US

Slovak in Slovakia

Gaelic in Ireland

Welsh in Wales

Berber Languages in Morocco

Romani dialects throughout Europe

Tribal Languages in Africa

Language is a gift:

Now, we know a little bit more about language and communication, and how language barriers are created and worked through.

How many languages do we speak? Go around the class and share if you speak a different language at home than at school. Are there certain words that are similar in both languages?

Why do you think knowing more than one language is helpful in America? Discuss this. What languages do you hear spoken in your school, or other common places?

GLOSSARY:

Language barrier: The invisible wall that comes up when two people do not speak the same language.

Assimilation: Changing part of a culture to fit into the dominant one.

Forced Assimilation: Being forced to change your culture to fit into the dominant one.

Non-Forced Assimilation: Changing your culture to fit into the dominant one.

The Industrial Revolution: A period in US history, roughly around 1890-1920, where immigrants came from all over Europe to get factory jobs in the US.

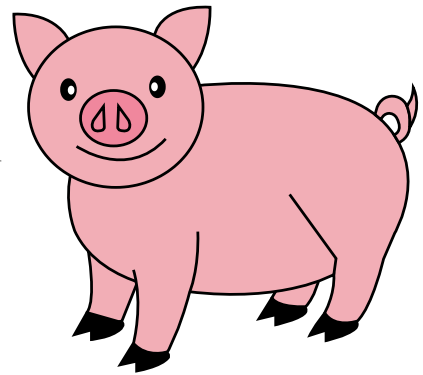
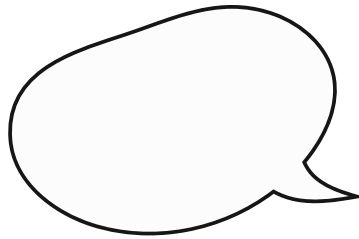
Colonization: Establishing control over a native population and their land.

White (American Context): A racial identity in America– the quality of being white-skinned and perceived as white, and benefiting from white privilege.

European American: An ethnic identity in America, commonly used by new immigrants from Europe, and especially used during the industrial revolution years. Now, it is used by Americans to combat the white label and reject assimilation.

Residential Schools: Boarding schools were created to wipe Indigenous Americans of their culture and assimilate them into American whiteness.

ACTIVITY-- CREATING A LANGUAGE!



This QR code links to a video on how to create and translate pig Latin! For this activity, students will learn a “new” language they can use together in conversation!

You will watch the video as a class. Then, have students practice writing sentences in Pig Latin, so they can learn the structure. The video should explain the structure well.

Once the students have a good grasp on Pig Latin, gather them in groups of 4. Each group member will write one sentence in pig latin, and create a conversation that flows!

Each group will perform their conversation for the class. Remind students that while they are using Pig Latin, they should also practice their non-verbal cues as well-- (such as body language, facial expressions, etc.) so people who do not understand Pig Latin would be able to understand their conversation! After each group goes, the other students in the class will guess what the conversation was about!

ACTIVITY: THE PRACTICE OF GRATITUDE

Gratitude (noun): the practice of being thankful; readiness to show appreciation for and to return kindness.

In *The Chronicles of the Kaleidoscope Visitors*, we often see characters being encouraged to practice gratitude for their safety, food, etc. However at times, gratitude can be more forced upon us as an expectation, therefore making it feel unnatural to express, and even uncomfortable. Gratitude should be voluntary and come from the heart. If you are finding yourself wanting to take a moment to express some gratitude to someone/something in your life, please pick one of the options to do so! As you are going through one or some (or all!) of these activities, think about why it is important to practice gratitude.



OPTION 1: THE LIST POEM



Step One: Pick a phrase to begin every line of your poem with.

Examples: I am grateful for, in the morning/night, I love/like, I appreciate, I can't live without, when I woke up today I saw, thank you for, etc.

Step Two: Generate a list, without it being a poem or structured in another way, of things you are grateful for and why.

Step Three: Plug in what you are grateful for, and the reasons if you would like to, into your repeating phrase and write your poem!

Example of a list poem:

I am grateful for the music that underscores my life

I am grateful that my family supports my dreams

I am grateful when the sun shines and doesn't hide behind the
clouds

I am grateful to be loved

I am grateful for the warm food on my plate each day

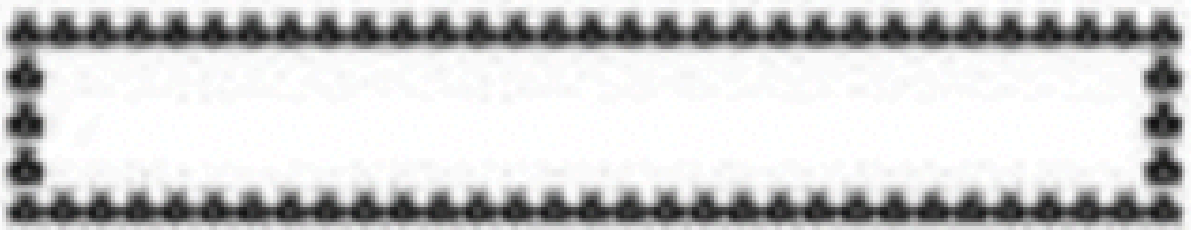
I am grateful for my teachers who believe in me

I am grateful to have friends that care about me

I am grateful for the air that I breathe

I am grateful for the beauty of our planet

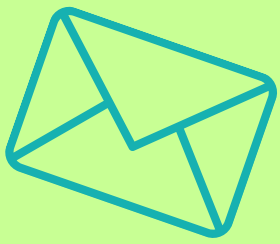
**Your turn! (feel free to write by hand or type on the next page,
or a piece of paper you have!)**



A series of horizontal lines for writing, consisting of 18 evenly spaced lines.



A series of horizontal lines for writing, consisting of 8 evenly spaced lines, located to the right of the spaceship illustration.



OPTION 2: GRATITUDE LETTER

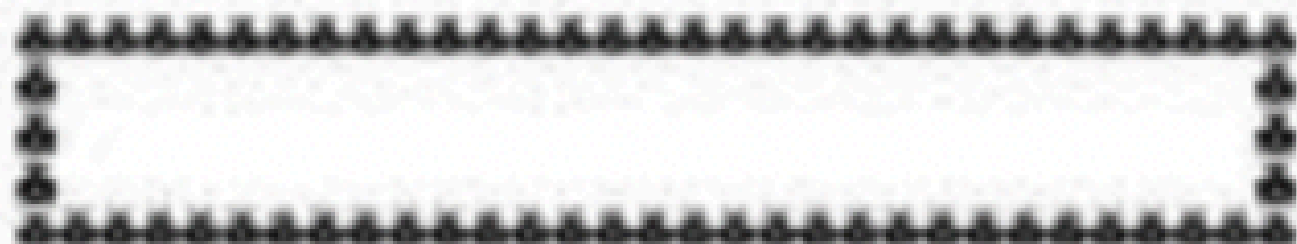


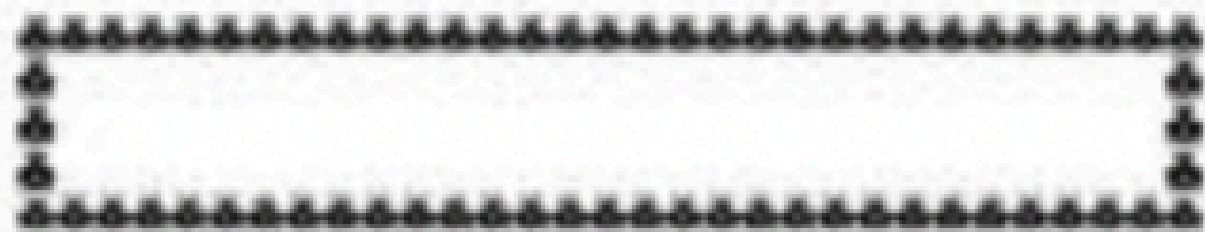
Circle or highlight what you're grateful for:

Mom, dad, sister, brother, music, sunshine, books, movies, the sun, the stars, the sky, sunsets, my pet(s), my friends, food, my house, school, weekends, my body, water, clothes, sleep, the holidays, grandparents, vacations, forgiveness, my bed, my brain, safety, the ocean, snow, rain, writing, drawing, painting, singing, dancing, acting, cooking, swimming, sports

Write in anything else that was not on this list that you are grateful for (be as specific as you'd like! A particular movie, a particular place, particular person, etc):

Now keeping in mind a few of the things that you are most grateful for (or all of them, if you wish!), write a short letter to someone expressing your gratitude for/toward these things. You can write it to anyone you'd like either here or on another piece of paper.







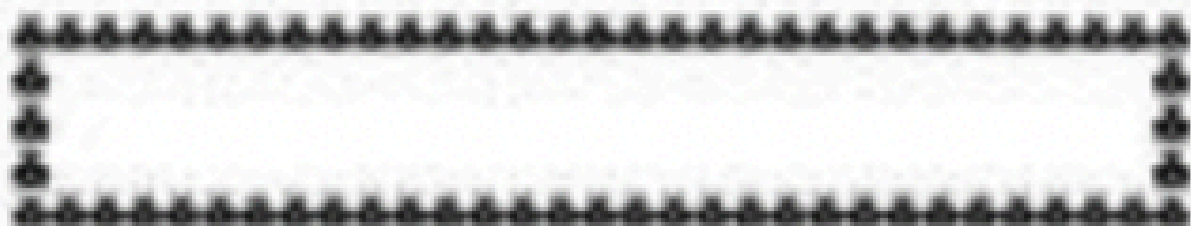
OPTION 3: GRATITUDE LIST



Make a list of the things you are grateful for!

It can be as detailed as you want, or it can even be bullet points. The key is to do whatever you feel most comfortable with, and what feels most natural to you.

It does not have to be addressed to anyone if you don't wish for it to be. You can take inspiration from the above options for starting points if you feel it would be helpful! Use this or another piece of paper you have for your list.





WHAT THEATRE TEACHES US

Collaboration

Theater thrives on collaboration, drawing together a diverse range of talents—from actors and directors to designers and technicians—to create a shared artistic vision. Through rehearsals, those of us who are actors learn to listen and adapt, while us designers, technicians and crew members all work together to help bring the show to life. This collective effort teaches us teamwork and trust, both on and off stage. By bringing people together through storytelling, theater teaches the invaluable lesson of working together towards a common goal.

Problem-Solving

Theater is a massive puzzle where everyone has to work together to find solutions. Actors, directors, and crew members face all sorts of problems, like remembering lines, fixing technical issues, or figuring out how to bring a scene to life. We have to get creative, think fast, and cooperate to make things work. By doing this, we learn how to solve problems as a team. These skills don't just stay in the theater—they're useful in many parts of life, helping us tackle all sorts of challenges.

Empathy

Participating in theater cultivates empathy by immersing us in the lives and perspectives of diverse characters. Through character exploration, emotional connection, and collaborating, we develop a deeper understanding of human experiences, which helps us empathize with others. Being a part of theater, whether onstage, backstage, or in the audience, makes us reflect and challenge our preconceptions and biases. By addressing social issues and providing a space for catharsis and reflection, theater serves as a powerful tool for promoting empathy.

Confidence

In theater, there are no right or wrong answers. Theater-makers understand that the key to making a good show is supporting each others' successes and mistakes. By building a supportive environment, we help each other feel confident in our abilities. In this collaborative space, we are encouraged to take risks and step outside our comfort zones, knowing that our fellow actors and crew members have our backs. Whether it's delivering a monologue or executing a complex scene, theater provides a way for us to discover and embrace our strengths, building our confidence far beyond the stage.

Resilience

Mishaps happen all the time in theater; forgetting lines, technical difficulties, or costume/props malfunctions. Even the most famous Broadway stars mess up sometimes. In theater, mistakes and problems are inevitable but they can often feel like a personal failure even when the issue is out of our control. We bounce back from this with the help of our team, using our collaboration and problem-solving skills to learn and grow. Eventually, we learn to take these issues in stride, a skill that can help us through difficult situations both on and offstage.

THEATER LIFE SKILLS ACTIVITY

In this activity, students will use the list of Theatre Life Skills (Prev. Page) to create short tableau scenes.

Materials Needed: Slips of Paper, Space to Rehearse & Perform Safely

1

Group Up & Read!

Divide students into 5 groups. In small groups, students will read the previous article together. When they are done reading, ask students to perform a silent gesture (hands on head, peace sign, etc.).

2

Let's Talk Tableaus

A tableau is a “frozen stage picture”. Every tableau has multiple actors and includes character, action, and emotion. Students should use their body and face to paint the picture.

3

Assign Topics & Rehearse! (SHHH!)

On slips of paper, write down each of the 5 Theatre Life Skills and have one student from each group choose one at random to make a tableau. When students receive their topic, they should be encouraged to keep it a secret. Direct groups to various parts of the room. They will have 5 minutes to rehearse their tableau, and should do so in silence. Communicating nonverbally is HIGHLY encouraged!

4

Present!

Gather the groups to one space in the room, still keeping silent. Emphasize the fun of presenting! Encourage applause when groups are finished. After each performance, ask the audience: “What skill do you think was represented? Why?” Audience and performers should want to get this right! Then, ask performers to reveal their assigned skill and explain their tableau.

5

Discuss!

What was challenging about this activity?

- Did you use any of the 5 Skills in your process? Which ones?
- How did you use your face and body in this process?
- How could this activity help us understand *Chronicles of the Kaleidoscope Visitor*?

THANK YOU!

WE HOPE YOU ENJOYED (OR WILL ENJOY) YOUR SHOWING OF *THE CHRONICLES OF THE KALEIDOSCOPE VISITORS* AND THE TIME YOU SPENT WITHIN ITS WORLD!