

# FRED GARBO INFLATABLE THEATER CO.



# Dear Teacher,

The State Theatre in New Brunswick, New Jersey welcomes you to the schoolday matinee of Fred Garbo Inflatable Theater Co., where gigantic inflatable props shimmer, balloon, deflate, and bounce in a rainbow of colors and a myriad of shapes. Along with the magical visual imagery, there's juggling, dance, a little mischief, and nonstop fun.

These *Keynotes* will give you an idea what to expect at the performance, as well as suggested activities to use with your students both before and after the show. There are also worksheets you can copy and use directly with students.

We look forward to seeing you at the State Theatre!



photo: Skip Churchill

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*The State Theatre, a premier nonprofit venue for the performing arts and entertainment.*

# About The Show

## VOCABULARY

**Costume** - anything that is worn on the body, including clothes, masks, jewelry, etc.

**Prop** - short for "property," an item that can be used or carried onstage, such as a chair, a sword, a handkerchief, etc.

**Set** - also called scenery, the backdrops, buildings, staircases, etc. that create the setting for the play

## QUESTIONS FOR BEFORE THE SHOW

Have you ever seen a balloon? What is inside a balloon? Can you show how a balloon moves?

Look around the classroom. Can you name some of the shapes you see? Can you name the colors you see?

Name some things that are heavy. Name some things that are light.

## QUESTIONS FOR AFTER THE SHOW

Did you like the show? Why or why not?

What was your favorite part of the show? What happened during this part?

What shapes did you see in the show? What colors were the different shapes?

Envision giant balloons, a juggling circus act, a geometry class, a ballet recital, and a brilliant rainbow of color—all wrapped up in one show. With Fred Garbo Physical Theater, everything is inflatable: the **costumes**, the **props**, and even the **set**! There's everything from an inflatable dress to an inflatable dog. The objects spring to life—rolling, gliding, tumbling, juggling, miming, bouncing, quaking, and dancing to the music.

The action begins with a 10-foot-long cylinder, and soon, the audience is playing along with Fred Garbo and Daelma Santos and their inflatable props. The pieces are simple shapes like cubes, tubes, and blobs, and come in bright, solid colors. During the show, these giant shapes roll and bounce around the stage, sometimes changing shape. Can they keep moving without falling off the edge of the stage?

Before long, a beautiful ballerina appears. There's something very surprising about her skirt. It grows and grows until it completely engulfs her! There's also Fred Zeplin—a human beach ball. His body inflates to an enormous size and bounces all over the stage.

Along with these amazing inflatable inventions, the show uses physical comedy, dance, juggling, and audience participation in a performance that sparks the imagination and communicates the magic of live theater.

Learn more about the company at [www.fredgarbo.com](http://www.fredgarbo.com).



photo: Skip Churchill

## Garbo Talks:

*Wherever we go, people always ask the same question: "Where did you ever come up with this idea?" One day in 1988, I went skydiving. While packing my parachute, I was struck by the bright colors and strong material, and the fact that it could be inflated into a huge prop and then deflated down to nearly nothing. I took my idea to my friend George York, a hot-air balloon artist. Between us, we devised a stage set that turns into a couch and a self-inflating body suit, sealed at the neck, wrists, and ankles. And thus Fred Zeplin, the inflatable man, was born! From there, we invented tons of shapes, costumes, animals, furniture, and others things that blew up. Many of these first inflatable inventions didn't work, but that did not stop us!*

*I met ballerina Daelma Santos on a flight to Brazil. When she saw my show, she insisted on trying on the inflatable suit and, since then, she has been an integral part of the company. Since Daelma and I began working together, people always ask me: "Are you two a couple?" And I sometimes answer back with: "A couple of what?" The truth is we are partners—but just onstage!*

# Meet the Artists

## VOCABULARY

**Inflate** - to make bigger by filling up the inside with air. Something that can be inflated is called 'inflatable.'

**Choreographer** - a person who creates dances and arranges movements (such as for fight scenes) for performances

**Fred "Garbo" Garver** has been performing since 1974. He has been [Barkley the Dog](#) on *Sesame Street*. Fred was also the chief juggler in the musical *Barnum*, based on the life of PT Barnum. He toured Europe, Hong Kong, and Australia with a show called *Foolsfire*, appeared at Lincoln Center with the New York City Opera, and worked in Brazil with dance company MOMIX. Over the past 18 years, he has been busy inventing inflatables with fellow artist/builder George York. Fred and his partner, Daielma Santos, get to perform with these amazing creations all over the world.

**Daielma Santos**, a native of São Paulo, Brazil, graduated from the Royal Academy of Dance of London and has extensive training in dance/choreography, mime, and theater. She has performed with ballet companies in South America and the U.S. Daielma is also an acclaimed **choreographer** and teacher. For many years she worked as a teacher/resident choreographer and principal dancer with the Portland Ballet Company in Maine. She and her husband Tom Decker reside in Charlotte, NC with their daughter Marianna.



photo: Skip Churchill

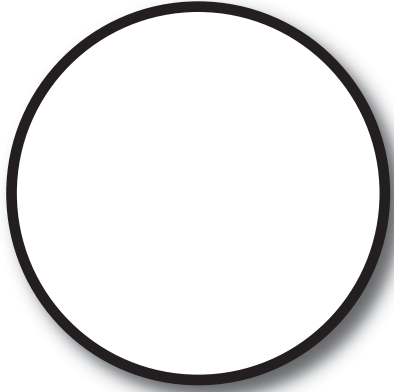


photo: Skip Churchill

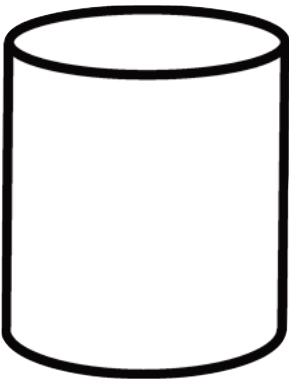


# Shapes and Colors

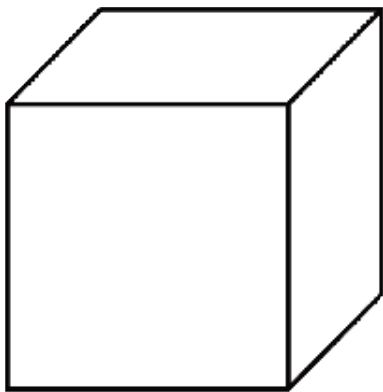
You will see a lot of different shapes and colors in the show.  
Draw a line connecting the shape to its name.



tube



cube



ball

Color the cube **red**



Color the ball **blue**

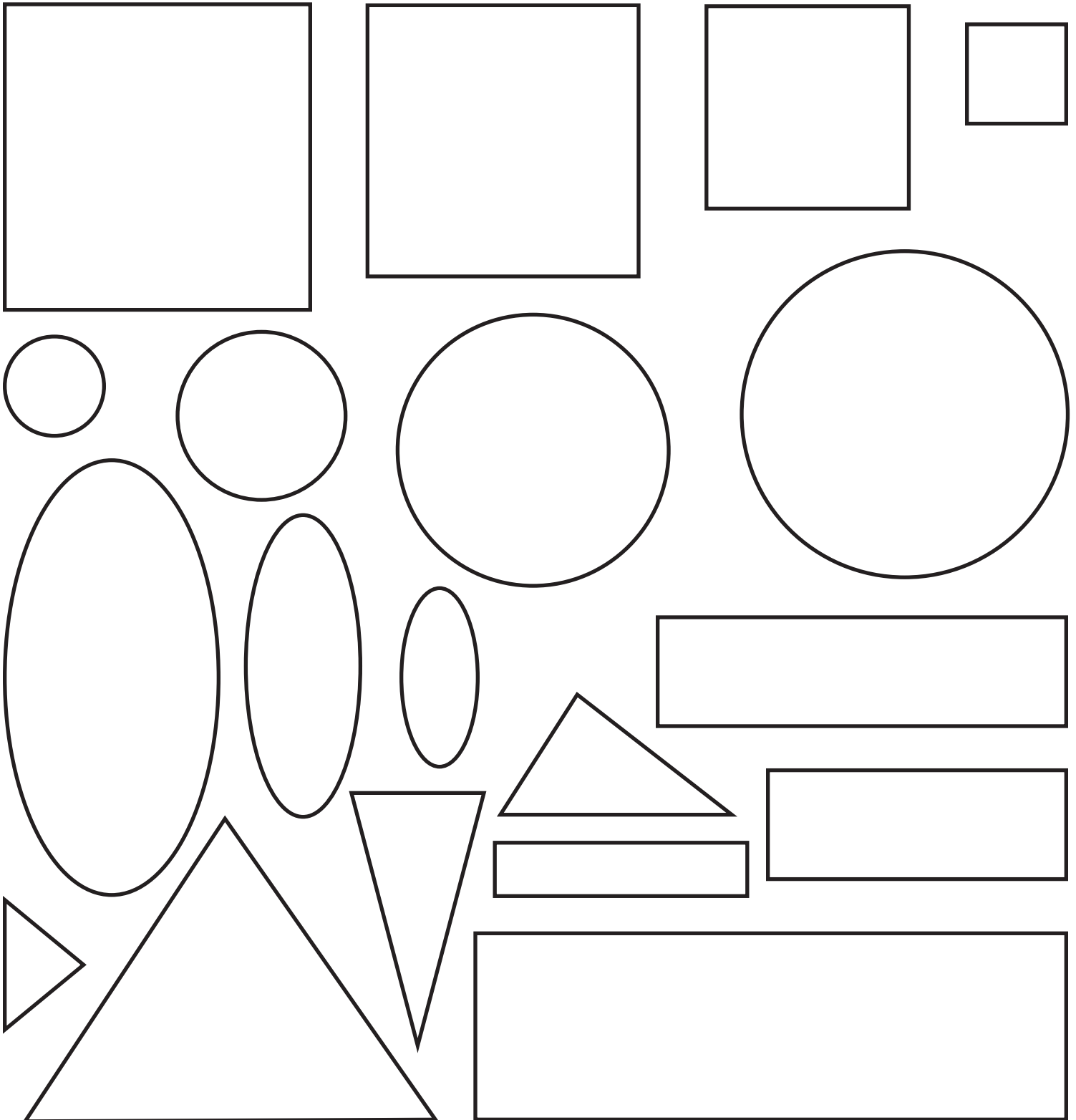


Color the tube **green**



# Playing with Shapes

The props in Fred Garbo Inflatable Theater come in many different shapes. Copy this page for each student. Have them color the shapes and then cut them out. (If necessary, do the cutting for them.) Using glue or tape, have students put the shapes together to create colorful animals and other images.



# How to Blow Up a Balloon

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

Every living thing needs air, but sometimes we use air in other ways. Ask students to name some other things that use or make air. Then discuss how these things help us every day.

Tell your students that wind is moving air. We cannot see them, but we can feel them and see what they do.

- Have you ever felt the wind on your face?
- Have you ever seen leaves blown by the wind? Did you see the wind make the leaves float and dance?

## CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Discuss with students how we can make air move by blowing. Did they ever use their breath to blow out a candle?

Give them bubble wands and a bottle of bubbles and let students take turns blowing bubbles. Have them watch how the bubbles get bigger when they blow more air into them. Have a contest to see who can make the biggest bubble.

Have them observe that the smaller bubbles stay in the air longer than the bigger bubbles. Why do they think this happens?



Don't puff out your cheeks as you blow. You could hurt yourself.



1. Hold the balloon just below the opening with your index (pointer) finger and thumb.
2. Put your mouth around the opening of the balloon and seal it with your lips. Make sure not to bite down on the balloon with your teeth.
3. Take a deep breath through your nose and then blow air out through your mouth into the balloon. As you blow, ease your fingers apart slightly to allow air to flow but without letting go of the balloon. It may be a little hard to get started, but it will get easier as you continue to blow into the balloon. Be careful not to blow too hard.
4. When you need to take another breath, pinch your fingers together to close the opening of the balloon to keep the air inside. Take another breath through your nose and then keep blowing into the balloon.
5. When it starts to get more difficult to blow air into your balloon, it's time to stop blowing. You'll need to tie the end to keep the air from escaping. You will need an adult to help you for this part.

If you start to get dizzy, stop blowing for a few moments.

Students can make their own inflatable props. They can decorate an inflated balloon or beach ball with paint and/or markers. They can also use glue to attach glitter, pompons, construction paper, ribbon, foam cutouts, etc.

# Nature's Inflatables

## VOCABULARY

**Deflate** - the opposite of inflate; make smaller by letting all the air out.

## CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Have students explore the concepts of bigger/smaller and inflate/deflate through movement. Have them move through the room, and as they move, call out prompts such as these:

- Make your body as big as you can.
- Make your body as small as you can.
- Pretend your body is a balloon that is slowly filling with air. Then let all the air out of the balloon.
- Show us an elephant telling a lion, "You better not mess with me!"
- Show us a mouse squeezing through a tiny hole in the wall to get herself a snack from the kitchen.
- Show us a frog puffing himself up to make his voice loud enough for all the girl frogs to hear.
- Show us a puffer fish saying to a bigger fish, "Go away! I'm too big for you to eat!"

Nature has many animals that can inflate and deflate their bodies. Some make their bodies bigger by puffing themselves up with air. Some grow bigger by sticking out their feathers or their ears.

There are different reasons why animals make themselves look bigger than they really are:

- To keep warm. On cold days, birds puff up their feathers to trap air, which acts as an extra layer of insulation.
- To scare off other animals. They make themselves bigger to say, "Danger. Keep away!"
- To keep other animals from eating them. They make themselves bigger to say, "I'm too large for you to swallow!"
- To impress a potential mate. Males especially like to show off in front of the females. They make themselves bigger to say, "Look at how big, strong, and attractive I am!"

Male frogs have a big vocal sac that they can puff out like a balloon. The sac amplifies their mating calls to attract the female frogs.

Some animals can make their bodies really small. Deer mice, for example, can squeeze through a hole as small as the diameter of a pencil!



peacock



puffer fish



frilled-neck lizard



tree frog



cobra



humans, too!

# Aesop's Inflatable Fable

## VOCABULARY

**Ox** - a male cow used for farm work

## CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Read the story of "The Frog and the Ox" to your students. Then discuss these questions.

- Who are the characters in the story?
- What did the little frogs say to the big frog?
- Why did the big frog want to make himself as big as the ox?
- What happened to the big frog?
- What do you think the little frogs learned from what happened to the big frog?

The story of "The Frog and the Ox" lends itself to audience participation. Children can repeat the lines, "He puffed himself up, and puffed himself up, and puffed himself up" and also "Oh, much bigger than that."

You can tell the story using a green balloon, blowing it up bigger and bigger along with the frog. (The bursting part is up to you!) Or you could make a paper-bag frog puppet to help illustrate the story. (Instructions can be found at

[www.enchantedlearning.com/crafts/puppets/paperbag](http://www.enchantedlearning.com/crafts/puppets/paperbag).

Gather the bottom of the puppet together with string or a rubber band (not too tight) and use it as you would a balloon.

## "The Frog and the Ox"

"Oh Father," said the little frogs to the big one sitting by the side of a pool, "We have seen such a terrible monster! It was as big as a mountain, with horns on its head, and a long tail, and it had hoofs divided in two."

"Hush, children, hush," said the old frog, "that was only Farmer White's ox. It isn't so big; it may be a little

bit taller than I am, but I could easily make myself quite as wide; just you wait and see." So he took a deep breath and he puffed himself up, and puffed himself up, and puffed himself up.

"Was he as big as that?" he asked the little frogs.

"Oh, much bigger than that," they replied.

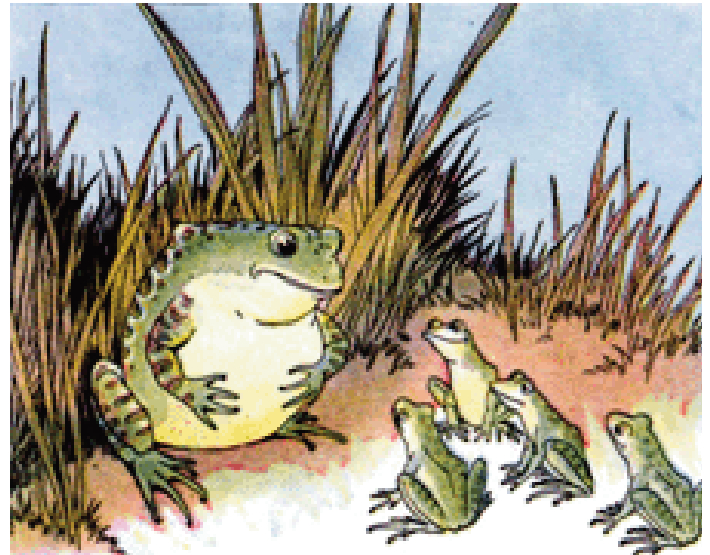
Again the old frog took a deep breath and puffed himself up even bigger. He puffed himself up, and puffed himself up, and puffed himself up. Then he asked the young ones, "Is the ox as big as this?"

"Oh, much bigger than that," they replied.

So the frog took one more deep breath, and puffed himself up, and puffed himself up, and puffed himself up.

Then he said, "I'm sure the ox is not as big as this."

But at that moment...he burst!



# At the Show

Going to see a play at a theater is not the same as watching TV. When you are sitting in the audience at the State Theatre, the actors will be in the same room as you. They will be able to hear and see everything that goes on in the audience. Use the key to find out what your job is at the performance.



watch



listen




performance




audience



applaud

When I go to a  , I am part of the  . This is a very

important job. I have to  and  carefully.

If I talk or move around, the actors and the  will have a

hard time paying attention to the  . When the

 is over, I can  to show that I liked it.