

Bill Edwards

FOUNDATION FOR THE ARTS
Youth Educational Programs

TEACHER RESOURCE GUIDE

2025/26



La Maleta de Maebelle Maebelle's Suitcase

November 10th

Duke Energy Center for the
Arts - Mahaffey Theater



ClassActs

STANDARDS ALIGNMENT

Florida B.E.S.T. Standards Connected to *La Maleta de Maebelle / Maebelle's Suitcase*

This performance and the activities within this Teacher Resource Guide connect across multiple subject areas—supporting literacy, cultural understanding, environmental science, geography, and the arts. The following Florida B.E.S.T. Standards are reinforced before, during, and after the show.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS (ELA)

ELA.K12.EE.2.1 – Students use background knowledge and personal experiences to deepen comprehension of the story, cultural elements, and themes of migration and belonging.

ELA.K12.R.1.3 – Students describe how characters respond to challenges and changes, including Maebelle's migration journey and her emotional growth.

ELA.D.1.1.3 – Students compare the original picture book with its theatrical adaptation, identifying key similarities, differences, and creative choices.

SOCIAL STUDIES (GEOGRAPHY, CULTURE & FLORIDA CONNECTIONS)

SS.3.G.4.1 – Students examine how weather events and natural hazards—such as hurricanes—impact human movement and migration.

SS.1.G.1.1 – Students use maps to identify locations, trace animal and human migration routes, and understand connections between Florida and Colombia.

SS.2.A.2.1 – Students recognize the importance of cultural traditions and heritage in shaping communities, including Colombian hat-making and Florida's multicultural identity.

SCIENCE (WEATHER, ENVIRONMENT & MIGRATION)

SC.5.L.17.1 – Students describe how animals respond to environmental changes, including Binkle's bird migration and Florida species such as manatees and sea turtles.

SC.2.E.7.2 – Students identify ways weather affects people, animals, and habitats, connecting Maebelle's story to Florida's hurricane experiences.

VISUAL ARTS

VA.3.H.1.3 – Students explore cultural influences in art and craft traditions, including the Colombian Sombrero Vueltiao and Florida's own regional artistry.

MUSIC

MU.H.1.2 – Students identify music from different cultures, connecting Colombian rhythms and instruments to Florida's diverse musical landscape.

ABOUT THE TOURING COMPANY

Glass Half Full Theatre (Puppetry of Objects & Ideas) innovates performance structure and audience experience with original works featuring both humans and puppets to address complex problems through an optimistic lens. Our bilingual performances spotlight the Latinx community, crossing linguistic and cultural boundaries towards the heart of the imagination, where artists and audiences examine how oppressive power structures work and how they can be overcome.

Glass Half Full Theatre was lauded by the Austin-American Statesman for an “inventive blend of puppetry and physical storytelling that employs gestures and expressions in tandem with props and sets to convey the narrative along with a variety of puppetry techniques.” Based in Austin, Texas, the company creates original works for youth and adults, with a focus on environmental and social justice. They have received B. Iden Payne Awards for Direction, Design, Writing, Acting, Puppetry and Visionary Innovation, and Austin Critics Table Awards for Design, Acting and Best New Play. The company follows the rigorous training of Jacques Lecoq and employs sophisticated puppetry forms such as Tabletop, Shadow Puppetry, Body Puppetry, Hand and Rod, Czech marionette, and Object Puppetry. Their original works, including *Petra and the Wolf*, *Once There Were Six Seasons*, and *The Orchid Flotilla*, have toured nationally. Glass Half Full is known for their “precise, engaging, and humorous” approach to real world issues and imaginative solutions.



GLASS
HALF
FULL
THEATRE

SYNOPSIS

A bilingual adaptation of a beloved Reading Rainbow picture book.

Maebelle lives in her treehouse and is an incredible hat maker. She's been working hard ahead of the town's annual hat contest when she befriends Binkle, a bird with a migration dilemma. He's trying to carry too much on his flight south for the winter! As Maebelle generously offers her cherished suitcase from her own migration from Colombia, they delve into profound reflections on the significance of our possessions and memories. Through laughter and tears, Maebelle and Binkle help each other discover the beauty of remembrance and the liberating power of letting go.

Multi-generational audiences will love this enchanting tale celebrating friendship, cultural heritage, and the universal lessons found within the stories of our lives. Featuring a two-person cast, various styles of puppetry, environmental themes, & Colombian music.



BUY THE BOOK ON AMAZON

**WATCH THE
TRAILER**

MIGRATION MAPS

FOLLOWING THE JOURNEY

OBJECTIVE

Students will understand the difference between animal and human migration and explore the environmental and emotional reasons why both might migrate – especially in response to climate change.

MATERIALS

- World map or globe
- Construction paper (in blue, green, and brown tones)
- Markers, crayons, glue sticks, scissors
- Yarn or string
- Index cards or small paper birds and suitcases (templates optional)
- Stickers or colored pins (optional)



INTRODUCTION

- Review the concept of migration using the text you provided:
- "When birds migrate, they are flying between their summer and winter homes..."
- Discuss why animals and people move – food, weather, jobs, safety, opportunity.
- Revisit *La Maleta de Maebelle*: Maebelle's family moved after a hurricane – a real example of climate migration.
- Ask students to imagine what it might feel like to leave home suddenly.

CREATE TWO MIGRATION ROUTES

Each student (or pair) will create two journeys on their map:

- Binkle's Migration Route
 - Draw or tape a small paper bird on a map starting in the U.S. (or Florida).
 - Use yarn to trace Binkle's journey south to Colombia.
 - Label his "summer home" and "winter home."
 - Add weather symbols (snowflakes for winter, sun for Colombia) to show climate differences.
- Maebelle's Migration Route
 - Draw or tape a small suitcase or person cut-out.
 - Show her family's move from Colombia to the U.S. after the hurricane.
 - Add weather symbols for the hurricane and notes about what changed.

REFLECTION PROMPTS

On index cards, students respond to these discussion questions (written or shared aloud):

- "What would you have a hard time leaving behind if you had to move suddenly?"
- "If you flew away for the winter, where would you go? Why?"
- "How might Maebelle and Binkle feel about leaving? What helps them be brave?"

Encourage empathy: migration is both a scientific process and an emotional journey.

SCIENCE EXTENSION

- Research one bird species that migrates through your area.
 - Where does it go? Why? How far does it travel?
- Compare that with a human migration story (e.g., climate refugees, or a student's own family story if they wish to share).
- Discuss how climate change can affect both.

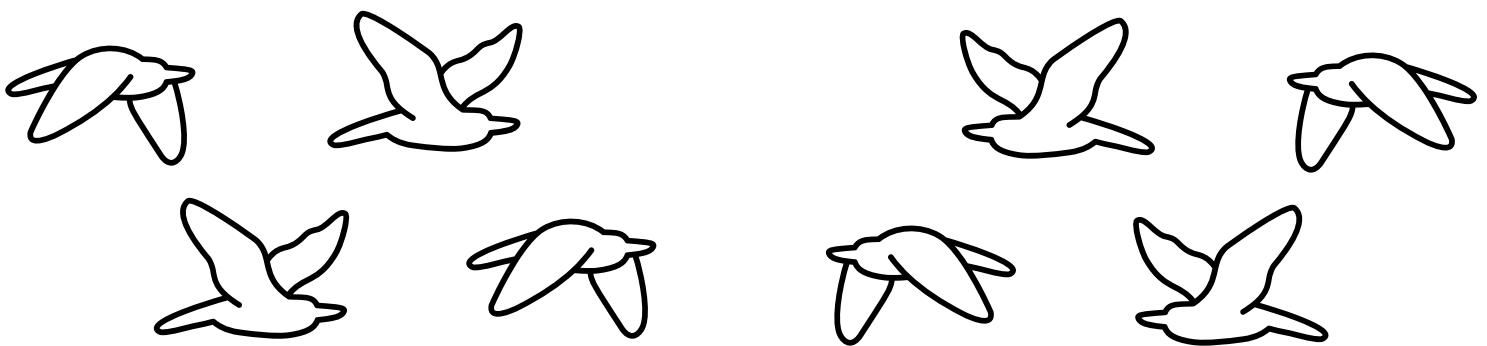
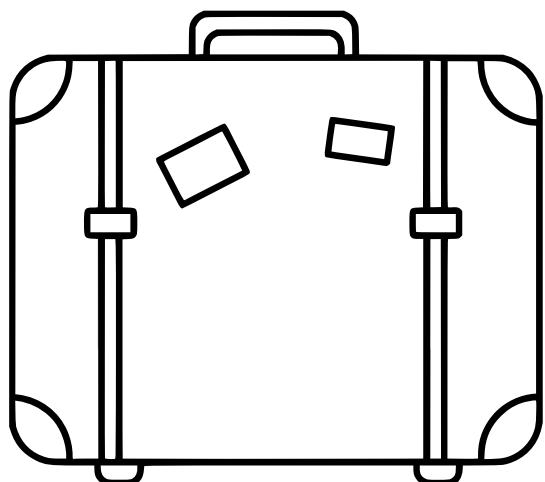
SHARING & DISPLAY

- Mount all maps on a bulletin board titled "Journeys of the Heart and Sky."
- Connect yarn between Maebelle's and Binkle's routes to show how human and animal migrations intertwine.

Migration Maps

FOLLOWING THE JOURNEY TEMPLATE

NAME :



TURNED HATS, TURNED STORIES



OBJECTIVE

Students will learn about the cultural significance and craftsmanship of the Sombrero Vueltiao, then design and build their own eco-friendly “turned hats” using recycled materials — connecting the idea of art, identity, and sustainability.

MATERIALS

- Construction paper (or recycled paper, old magazines, cardboard, grocery bags)
- Scissors
- Clear tape or glue
- Ruler or measuring tape
- Pencils or markers
- Optional: paint, crayons, string, or stickers for decoration

(Encourage students to use recycled or found materials to echo the Zenu people's use of natural resources.)

BACKGROUND CONNECTION

Before beginning, share these points with students:

- The Zenu people from Tuchín, Colombia are known for their sombreros vueltiaos, woven from a local plant called caña flecha.
- The word “vueltiao” comes from “vuelta,” meaning “turned,” because the hat is turned in circles as it's woven.
- Making a real sombrero can take weeks — it's both an art and a cultural tradition that connects generations.
- In the play, Maebelle's mother passed down this art — showing how creativity and culture can travel across generations and borders.

CLASS DISCUSSION

Why do you think Maebelle's family kept the tradition of hat-making alive?

What traditions or crafts are important in your own family or culture?



TURNED HATS, TURNED STORIES

STEP-BY-STEP PROJECT



MAKE THE CROWN (THE TOP BAND)

1. Cut long strips of paper in two different colors (about 1 inch wide).
2. Tape or glue the ends together to make a long band.
3. Wrap it around your head to measure your circumference, then tape it closed so it fits comfortably.
4. Add a second and third layer above the first one to make the crown taller and sturdier.
5. (You're "turning" your hat — just like the Zenu artisans do!)

MAKE THE BRIM

1. Tape two sheets of paper side-by-side to create a large rectangle.
2. Draw the biggest circle you can on the paper — this will be the brim.
3. Cut out the circle.
4. Place your crown in the middle and trace its outline.
5. Cut out the smaller inner circle and attach the crown to the brim with tape or glue.

DECORATE YOUR HAT

- Use your leftover strips to create patterns of lines and turns, just like the black-and-white designs on real sombreros vueltiaos.
- Try weaving thin paper strips together before gluing them down.
- Optional: Write one word or symbol on your hat that represents something important to you — your "story" woven into your creation.

EXTENSION / REFLECTION

Discussion Questions:

- Why do you think the Zenu people use materials from nature to make their hats?
- How does making a hat from recycled materials connect to caring for the environment?
- What stories or symbols did you include in your design?
- Why is it important to preserve cultural traditions like the sombrero vueltiao?

Writing Prompt (optional):

"If my hat could tell a story, it would say..."

Students write a few sentences describing what their hat's colors, designs, or patterns represent.

WHAT'S IN MY SUITCASE?

OBJECTIVE

Students will explore the emotional side of migration and change by identifying something meaningful they would have a hard time leaving behind — and expressing that connection through art and reflection.

STEP-BY-STEP INSTRUCTIONS

CLASS DISCUSSION

Start with a short class conversation:

- In La Maleta de Maebelle, both Maebelle and her bird friend Binkle had to leave special things behind to continue their journey.
- Ask:
 - What did Maebelle leave behind when she moved from Colombia?
 - Why couldn't Binkle carry all of his favorite things?
 - How might it feel to let go of something you love?

Then introduce the prompt:

"If you had to move far away, what would you have a hard time leaving behind?"

DRAW OR COLLAGE YOUR TREASURE

- On their paper (or inside a "suitcase" outline), students draw or collage the object(s) or treasure(s) they'd miss most.
 - It could be a toy, a pet, a family member, a favorite tree, or even something abstract like home or music.
- Encourage students to include details, colors, and symbols that show why their object is special.
- **Have Your Students Complete the Worksheets Below**

CONNECT TO MAEBELLE'S STORY

Wrap up by connecting back to the play:

- "Maebelle carried her memories and love for Colombia inside her heart and her suitcase — just like we can carry our special memories wherever we go."
- Create a class display called "Our Suitcases of Memories."

CLASS DISCUSSION

Where's your favorite place you have every traveled?

If you could go anywhere where would you go?

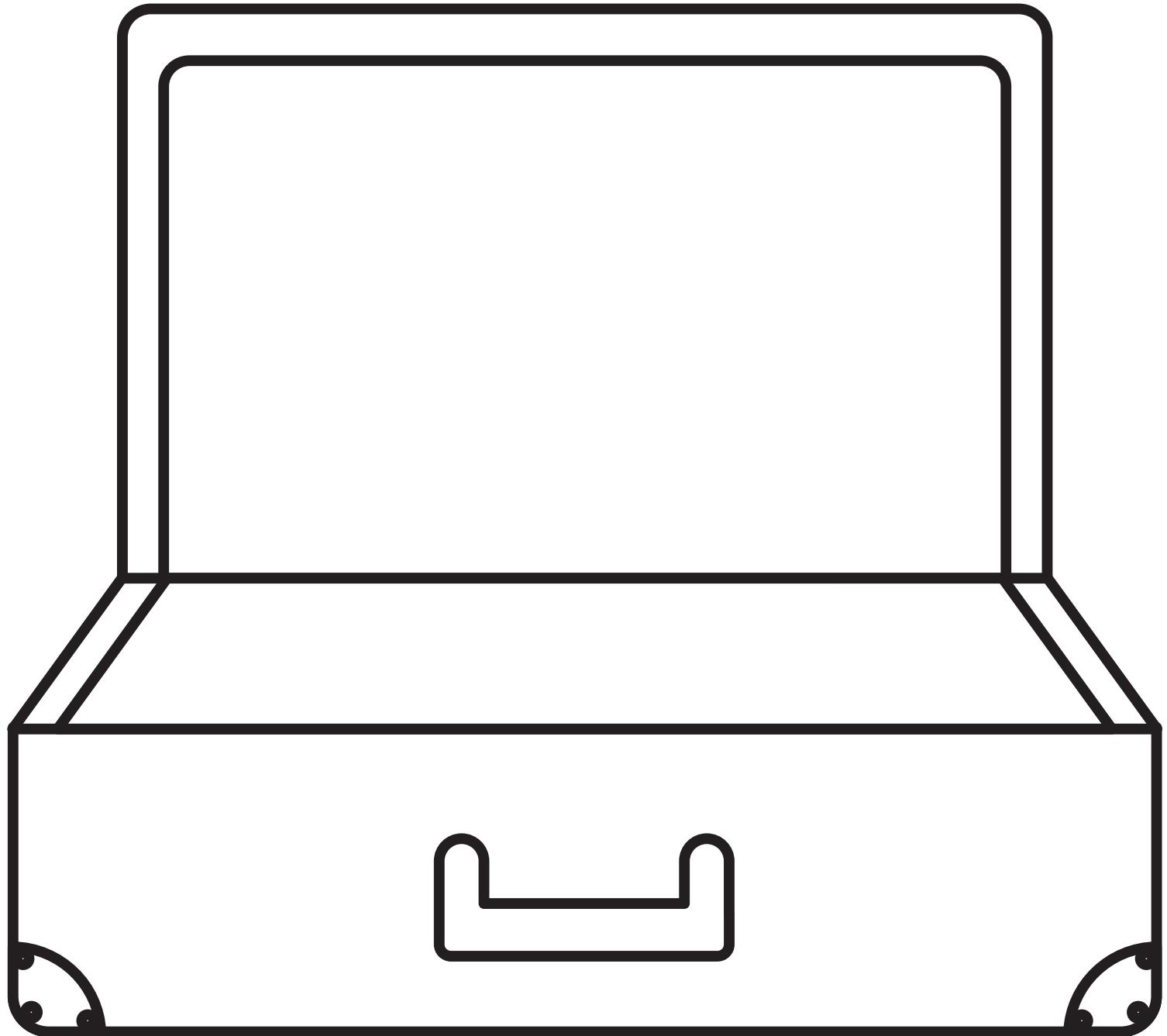
Who would you go with?



WHAT'S IN MY SUITCASE?

YOUNGER STUDENTS (K-2)

NAME :



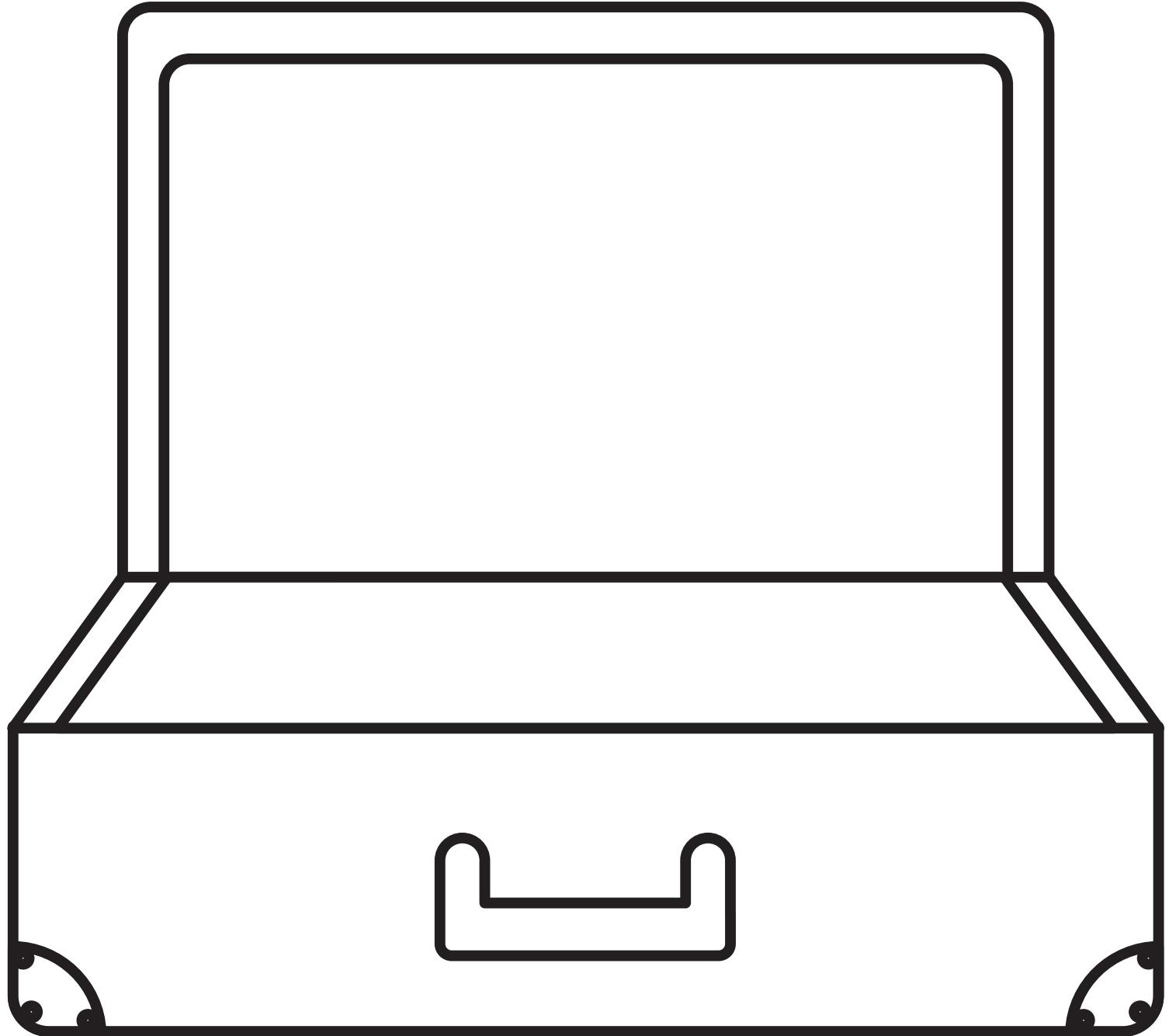
"I would have a hard time leaving behind my

because _____."

WHAT'S IN MY SUITCASE?

OLDER STUDENTS (3-5)

NAME :



Write a short paragraph explaining:

What you chose, why it's important and how you could keep the memory of it even if you had to leave it behind

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

ACT IT OUT:

“WHAT’S IN THE SUITCASE?”



Objective:

Encourage students to express emotions and storytelling through improvisation.

Instructions:

- Divide students into small groups.
- Give each group a “suitcase” (real bag or box) with random classroom items inside (e.g., a pencil, toy, scarf, photo, feather).
- Challenge them to create a short skit explaining who owns the suitcase, where they’re going, and why each item is important.
- After performing, discuss:
 - How did the objects help tell the story?
 - How can an object hold memories or emotions?

Extension:

Have students write a short script inspired by their performance.



WEATHER WATCHERS: HURRICANES AND HABITATS



Objective:

Understand how natural disasters like hurricanes can lead to migration.

Instructions:

- Show a world map and locate Colombia and your local area.
- Discuss: What is a hurricane? How does it form?
- In small groups, research how hurricanes affect people and animals (destroyed homes, changing food sources, etc.).
- Create a “Cause and Effect” chart showing how one storm can cause migration.

Extension:

Students can make posters titled “Helping After a Hurricane” with ways communities support families and animals that must relocate.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

POSTCARDS FROM THE JOURNEY

Objective:

Encourage empathy and perspective-taking.



Instructions:

- Students choose a character: Maebelle, Binkle, or even Maebelle's mother.
- On a blank "postcard," draw a picture of where they are now and write a short message to someone they left behind.
- Prompts:
 - "Dear Mama, today I saw my first snow..."
 - "Dear Maebelle, I miss the sound of the forest..."

Extension:

Create a classroom display called "Messages Across Miles."



MUSIC OF MIGRATION

Objective:

Connect rhythm and storytelling with Colombian traditions.



Instructions:

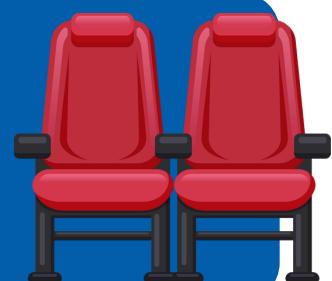
- Play samples of traditional Colombian music (Cumbia, Vallenato, or Gaita flute).
- Discuss how instruments and rhythms reflect nature and community.
- Have students make simple shakers or drums from recyclables.
- In small groups, compose short "migration rhythms" representing a bird's or Maebelle's journey.

CLASS DISCUSSION

Are you excited for the field trip?

Have you ever been to a theater before?

Have you ever been to the Mahaffey before?



🌴 FLORIDA & MIGRATION: A SHARED STORY

Florida has always been shaped by movement – of people, animals, storms, and stories. Just like Maebelle and Binkle, many families in Florida come from places such as Colombia, Cuba, Puerto Rico, and Venezuela, bringing traditions that enrich our state's vibrant culture. Florida's story is one of resilience, multicultural heritage, and new beginnings.

Classroom Prompt: "How does Florida's story of migration connect to Maebelle's?"

🐦 STATE BIRD SPOTLIGHT: THE NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD

Known for imitating sounds – music, chirps, even frogs – the mockingbird reminds us of how stories, rhythms, and memories travel across cultures.

Tie-In to the Play: Just as Binkle carries memories through flight, Floridians carry their histories through song, tradition, and community.

Activity: Listen to mockingbird calls and compare them with Colombian gaita flute music featured in the show.

颶 STORMS & STRENGTH: FLORIDA'S HURRICANE HERITAGE

Florida students are familiar with hurricane preparation and rebuilding – experiences similar to Maebelle's family's move after a storm.

Discussion: "How do Florida communities help each other after hurricanes? How does Maebelle find support after her move?"

🌸 FLORIDA'S STATE SYMBOLS IN MAEBELLE'S STORY



Orange Blossom
New Beginning
Maebelle's fresh
start in a new home



Sabal Palm
Strength in storms
Like Maebelle &
Binkle facing change

Zebra Longwing
Graceful migration
Ties into themes of
movement and discovery



Mockingbird
Voice & Storytelling
Cultural memory
through music



🐬 WILDLIFE MIGRATION IN FLORIDA

Florida hosts many migrating species – just like Binkle!

- **Manatees** move to warm springs in winter.
- **Sea turtles** return to Florida beaches to nest.
- **Swallow-tailed kites** migrate between Florida and South America, including Colombia.

Activity: Compare Binkle's migration route to a Florida species.

Which is longer? Which is more dangerous?

ethyst CULTURAL CONNECTION: FLORIDA & COLOMBIA

Both Florida and Colombia celebrate heritage through:

- **Music** (Cumbia, Vallenato, Florida percussion traditions)
- **Craft** (Sombrero Vueltiao & Seminole patchwork)
- **Nature** (tropical birds, forests, coastal ecosystems)
- **Family-centered traditions**

Thought Question: "What tradition from your family connects you to your past, the way hat-making connects Maebelle to hers?"

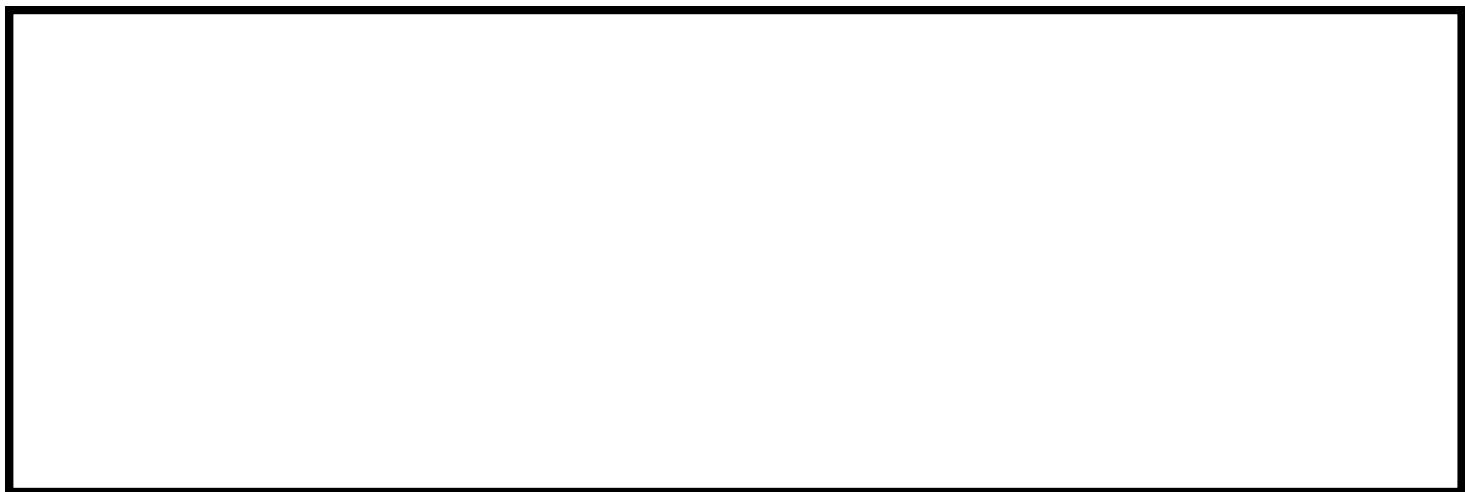
FL B.E.S.T. STANDARDS

- ✓ **SS.3.G.4.1** – Weather & Migration
- ✓ **SC.5.L.17.1** – Animal Migration & Environmental Influence
- ✓ **ELA.K12.EE.2.1** – Connecting prior knowledge (Florida history & symbols) to new text

Name: _____

DRAW FLORIDA'S STATE BIRD

Draw a Northern Mockingbird here. Add musical notes to show how it mimics sounds.



MIGRATION MATCH-UP

Draw a line connecting the migrant to its Florida destination:

Manatee

Warm Springs

Sea Turtle

South Florida Forests

Swallow-Tailed Kite

Colombia

Binkle

Sandy Beaches

WHAT WOULD YOU PACK?

If you had to move because of a storm (like many Florida families), what special object would you pack in your suitcase? Draw it & write a sentence.



"I would bring _____
because _____."



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FOUNDATION FOR THE ARTS *Youth Educational Programs*

BE A STAR AUDIENCE!

Going to the theater is different from watching a movie or a YouTube video – it's LIVE! That means the actors, dancers, and musicians can see and hear you.

Here's how to help make the show magical:

★ SIT SMART

Stay in your seat with both feet on the floor. Lean in and watch – the best view is when everyone is still.

★ TALK LESS, LISTEN MORE

Save your thoughts for after the show. Even whispers can distract the performers and your classmates.

★ APPLAUD LIKE A PRO

Clap when the show begins, after songs or dances, and at the end. Performers love your energy!

★ NO SCREENS, NO SNACKS

Phones, tablets, candy wrappers – all of these take away from the live magic. Keep them put away.

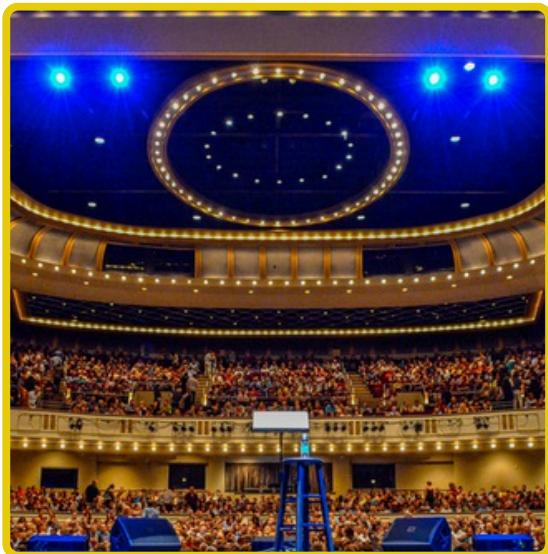
★ RESPECT THE SPACE

The Mahaffey Theater is a special place. Treat the seats, aisles, and stage with care.

★ ENJOY THE EXPERIENCE

Laugh, clap, gasp – just do it at the right times. Being part of the audience is half the fun!



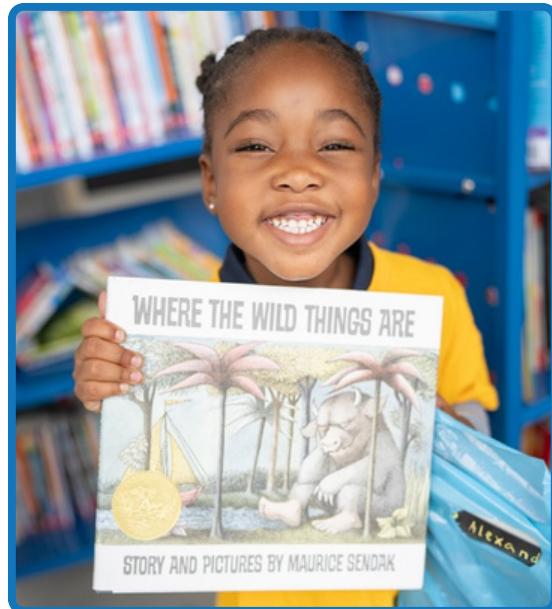


LIVE PERFORMANCES

Imagine sitting in a giant theater as the lights dim and the curtain rises. Suddenly, the stage bursts into life with actors, dancers, and musicians performing right in front of you. That's what makes live theater so special — it's happening right now, and every performance is a little different. Through Class Acts, you'll see stories connected to your school subjects come alive on stage, from history and science to literature and music. You'll laugh, clap, and maybe even learn something new along the way!

BAM! FESTIVALS

BAM! is more than a field trip — it's a hands-on adventure in the arts. Instead of just watching, you'll get to do. Students rotate through stations like drumming circles, theater games, dance workshops, and art projects. One moment you might be painting, the next you're learning choreography or acting out a scene with friends. Each festival has a different theme, but every BAM! day is packed with creativity, fun, and discovery.



SUMMER CAMP

Not every student can easily get to the theater, so we make sure the arts reach everyone. Every summer, the Mahaffey Theater transforms into a Broadway-style training ground for kids and teens. Over three weeks, campers learn singing, dancing, acting, and even behind-the-scenes skills like stagecraft and costume design. The experience ends with a full-scale production on the Mahaffey stage — lights, microphones, costumes, and all! It's more than camp; it's a chance to build confidence, make friends, and shine in the spotlight.



Questions?

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Teacher Resource Guide created and developed by:

Polly Croucher and Katrina Young

The logo for 'Class Acts'. It consists of the word 'Class' in a blue, serif font and 'Acts' in a blue, sans-serif font, both enclosed within a white, rounded rectangular border. The entire logo is set against a blue, torn-paper textured background.