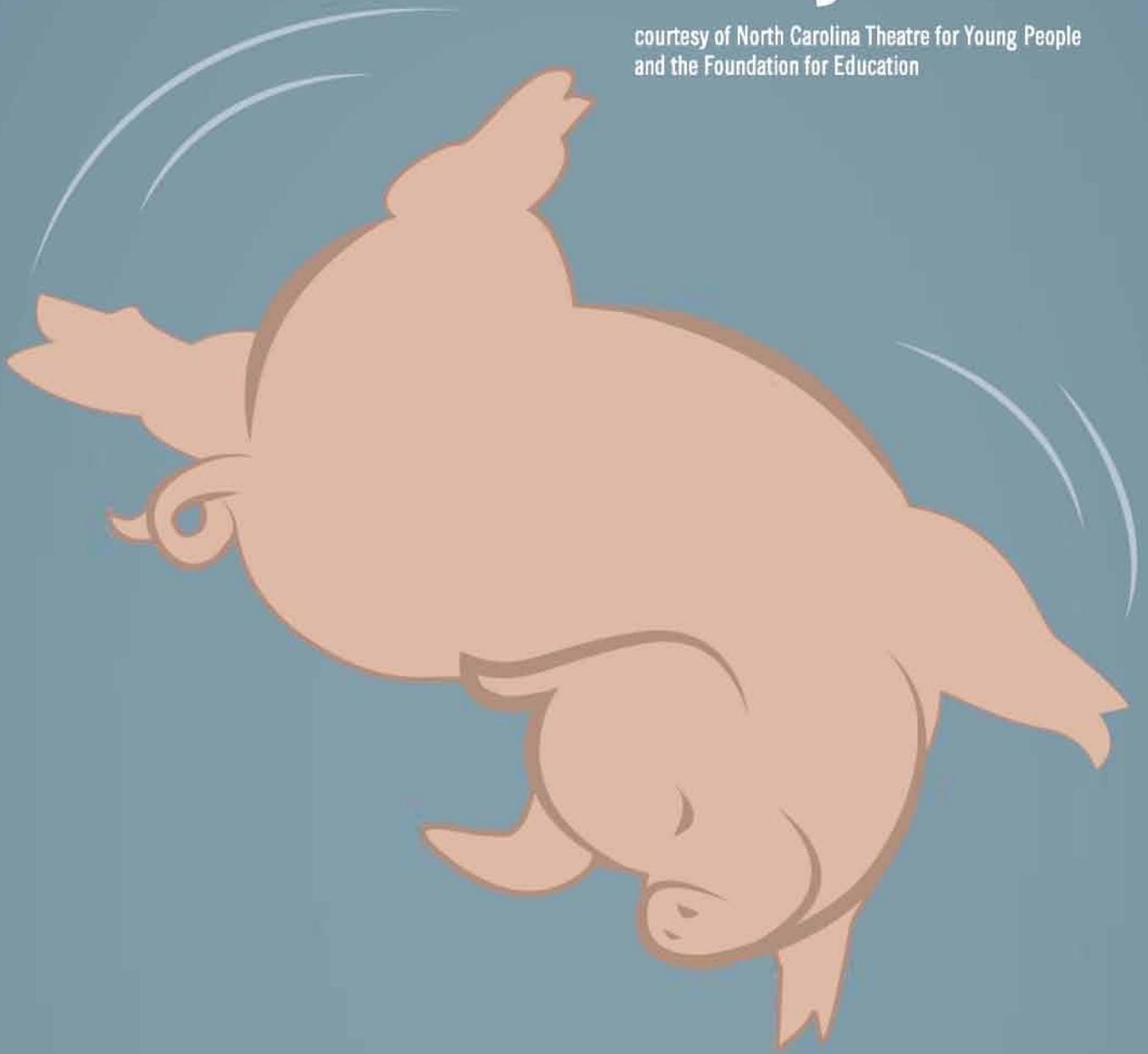


Study Guide

courtesy of North Carolina Theatre for Young People
and the Foundation for Education



Charlotte's Web

ABOUT...

McGregor
& friends

CHARLOTTE'S WEB

CREATIVE TEAM

Director

Duncan McGregor

Music Director

Arlene Darnbrough

Set Designer

Dave Siebert

Costume Designer

Sherri Milburn

Lighting Designer

Ross Barnett

PRODUCTION

Stage Manager

Jane Smith

Administration

Dana Phillips

CAST

Narrator One/Old

Lady/Reporter

Lexi Bender

Narrator Two/ Sheep/Old Man/ Announcer

Nicholas Beardsley

Narrator Three/ Goose/ Photographer

Emma Enders

Fern

Izzy Siebert

Arable

Dave Siebert

Mrs. Zuckerrman

Marianne Hogan

Lurvy

Steve Cook

Wilbur

Ben Hearn

Templeton

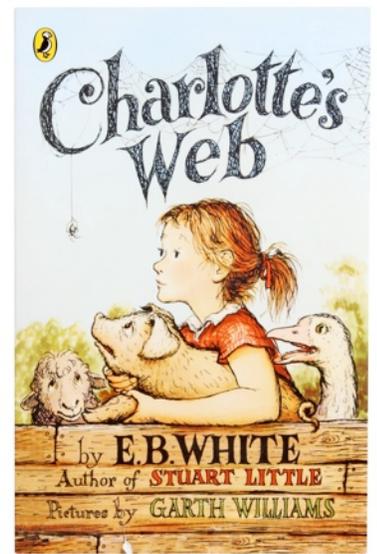
Wes MacVicar

Charlotte

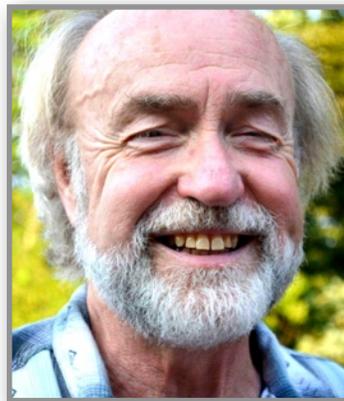
Suzanne MacVicar

Story:

In his classic and beloved tale, E. B. White tells the memorable story of Wilbur, a little pig who becomes famous with the help of his clever spider friend Charlotte and their chatty animal neighbors. As the runt of the litter, Wilbur struggles to survive from the very beginning. Fern begs her father, Mr. Arable, to raise Wilbur and nurse him to health. Fern succeeds and Wilbur moves to Zuckerman Farm, where he learns the true meaning of friendship from the wise spider Charlotte. When it becomes apparent that Wilbur is being well fed for a reason, Charlotte and Wilbur are determined to foil Mr. Zuckerman's plans. With the help of Charlotte and her "terrific" webs, Templeton the rat, and other barnyard friends, Wilbur becomes the prize-winning pig of the County Fair and the most famous pig ever. Lessons of friendship, loyalty, and truth bind this story together and show readers that friends come in all shapes and sizes.



Source: HarperCollins



"Recently the novel of Charlotte's Web celebrated its 60th anniversary in print. We couldn't think of a better way to acknowledge that birthday than to bring it to life on stage.

This beloved and insightful children's story about a young pig (Wilbur) and his exciting and life-affirming adventure with a barn spider (Charlotte) focuses on young audiences in primary and junior grades. The production includes wonderful songs and music; action; puppets; evocative lighting, sets and costumes plus the talent of 10 extraordinary adult and student community performers.

We hope your school will be able to include our all new 'Charlotte's Web' in your fall activities. We look forward to welcoming you at the theatre."

Duncan

About Director Duncan McGregor

Duncan McGregor's professional directing career spans nearly 35 years. For a decade he was Artistic Director for Carousel Players - an award-winning professional theatre for young audiences (St. Catharines, ON). There he led the creation and production of many new works and had a deep and personal understanding of participatory work which he brought to the creation and performance of those plays.

For nearly 20 years now, McGregor and friends have presented theatre for young audiences at Blyth Festival (Blyth, ON). Such productions have included 'Peter And The Wolf'; 'Let's Do Munsch!'; 'New Friends, Old Friends'; 'A Bunch of Munsch' and 'Charlotte's Web' (1998). Those performances were attended by over 30,000 school children and their teachers.

ABOUT...

AUTHOR E.B. WHITE

"As for *Charlotte's Web*, I like animals and my barn is a very pleasant place to be, at all hours. One day when I was on my way to feed the pig, I began feeling sorry for the pig because, like most pigs, he was doomed to die. This made me sad. So I started thinking of ways to save a pig's life. I had been watching a big grey spider at her work and was impressed by how clever she was at weaving. Gradually I worked the spider into the story that you know, a story of friendship and salvation on a farm. Three years after I started writing it, it was published. (I am not a fast worker, as you can see.)"

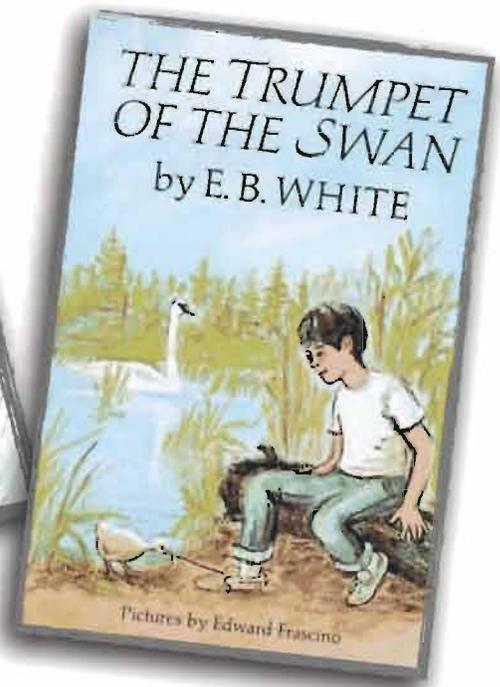
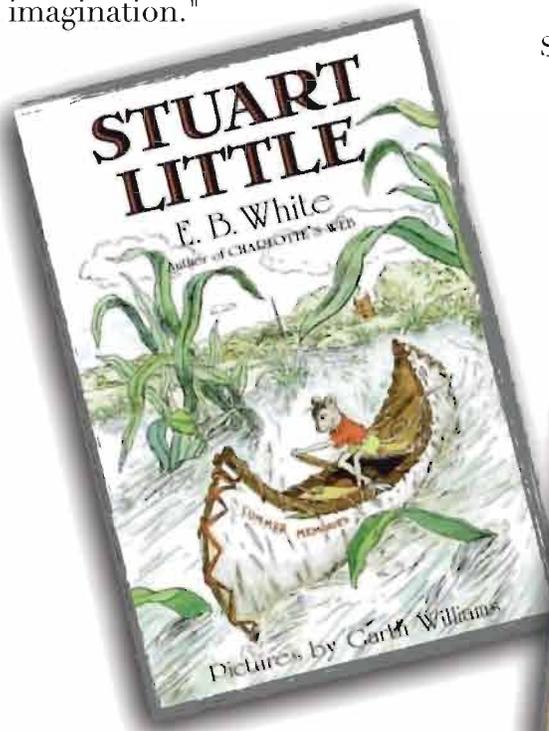
-E.B. WHITE

E. B. White, the author of such beloved classics as *Charlotte's Web*, *Stuart Little*, and *The Trumpet of the Swan*, was born in Mount Vernon, New York. He graduated from Cornell University in 1921 and, five or six years later, joined the staff of *The New Yorker* magazine, then in its infancy. He died on October 1, 1985, and was survived by his son and three grandchildren.

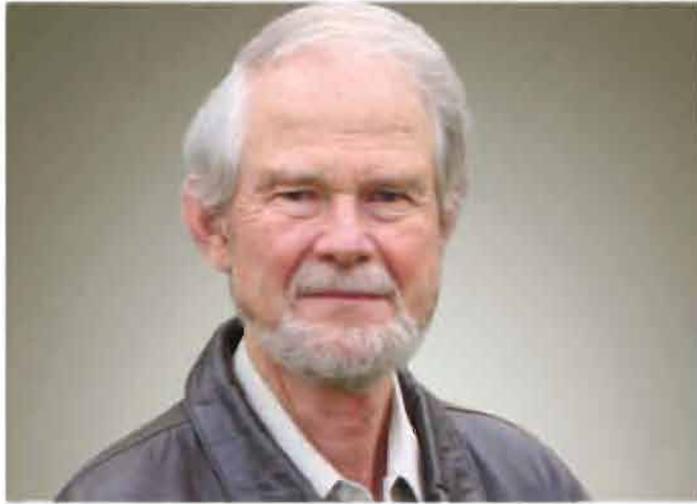
He won countless awards, including the 1971 National Medal for Literature and the Laura Ingalls Wilder Award, which commended him for making a "substantial and lasting contribution to literature for children."

During his lifetime, many young readers asked Mr. White if his stories were true. In a letter written to be sent to his fans, he answered, "No, they are imaginary tales . . . But real life is only one kind of life—there is also the life of the imagination."

Source: HarperCollinsChildrens.com



Hear E.B. White read an excerpt from *Charlotte's Web* at
<http://www.npr.org/2008/08/04/93263496/charlotte-a-cavatica-bloodthirsty-wise-and-true>



Joseph Robinette is the author or co-author of 55 published plays and musicals. His works have been produced in all 50 states and in 17 foreign countries. Twelve of his works have been translated into foreign languages and another five have been anthologized. His plays have been

produced by Lincoln Center, Pittsburgh Playhouse, Goodman Theatre, Kansas City Repertory Theatre, Seattle's Fifth Avenue Theatre and the BBC, among others. Robinette collaborated with E.B. White on the authorized stage version of *Charlotte's Web*, and he wrote the musical version with Charles Strouse (*Annie*, and *Bye, Bye, Birdie*). Other commissioned dramatizations include *The Lion*, *the Witch and the Wardrobe*, *The Chocolate War* and *The Paper Chase*. He is also the librettist for the musical version of the motion picture *A Christmas Story*. Robinette is the recipient of numerous playwriting awards including the AATE's Charlotte Chorpenning Cup and Best Dramatization of the Year for *Sarah, Plain and Tall*. In 2006, he received the Children's Theatre Foundation of America Medallion for his "body of dramatic works for family audiences."

Born in Rockwood ,Tenn., and raised in Jasper, Ga., Robinette had an unusual introduction to theater. His father, Paul, who operated a dry goods store, was concerned about 10-year-old Joe's introverted nature and recommended he audition for a play in Atlanta, Ga. that starred Boris Karloff.

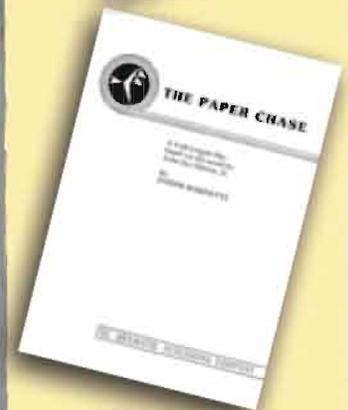
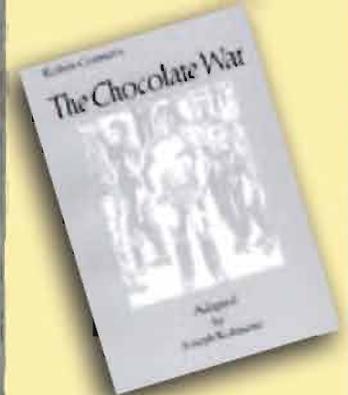
"At the audition, my interest in theater was piqued," Robinette says. "I learned to talk loud enough that the audience can hear you, and clear enough they can understand you."

He also unexpectedly landed a role, had 20 lines, and when the modest paycheck arrived thought he'd "struck it rich." And his dad and mom, Willie and Merle, were pleased with their son, the actor, beyond their wildest expectations.

Sources: Dramatics Publishing
Gloucester County Times

ABOUT...

PLAYWRIGHT JOSEPH ROBINETTE





FACTS ABOUT BARN SPIDERS



Common Name and Latin Name

Common Name (s): Barn Spider

Latin Name: Araneus cavaticus

Barn Spider identification - what does it look like?

Barn spiders are a hairy brown, black and yellow spider with stripy legs. Underneath their abdomen is a black patch with two white dots. Their colour patterns all vary and can be quite beautiful.

What does the Barn Spider eat? What is its prey?

Barn spiders will spin an orb web and catch many different flying insects.

Is the Barn Spider poisonous?

All types (except Uloboridae) are poisonous. Barn spiders are harmless to humans but can bite.

How big is the Barn Spider?

Male Barn spiders grow as big as 6mm where females can grow between 10mm and 20mm

Where does the Barn Spider live and what is its habitat?

Barn spiders are found in:

- North America
- Northern US
- Canada

What is the average life span of the Barn Spider?

This type of spider lives on average for a year.

Does the Barn Spider have good eyesight?

Generally speaking the Barn Spider has poor eyesight and relies mainly on its sense of vibration through its web where its prey gets stuck.

Facts and Information about the Barn Spider:

Did you know the following facts about the arachnid commonly known as the Barn Spider?

- Fact One - Barn spiders don't like one another and are aggressive towards each other.
- Fact Two - Barn spiders are nocturnal meaning they hunt at night.
- Fact Three - They rebuild their webs every night.
- Fact Four - The Barn spider hides during the day.
- Fact Five - When hunting they sit at the centre of their web.
- Fact Six - If the Barn spider feels threatened, it may bounce while in the middle of the web, possibly to give the appearance that it is much bigger.

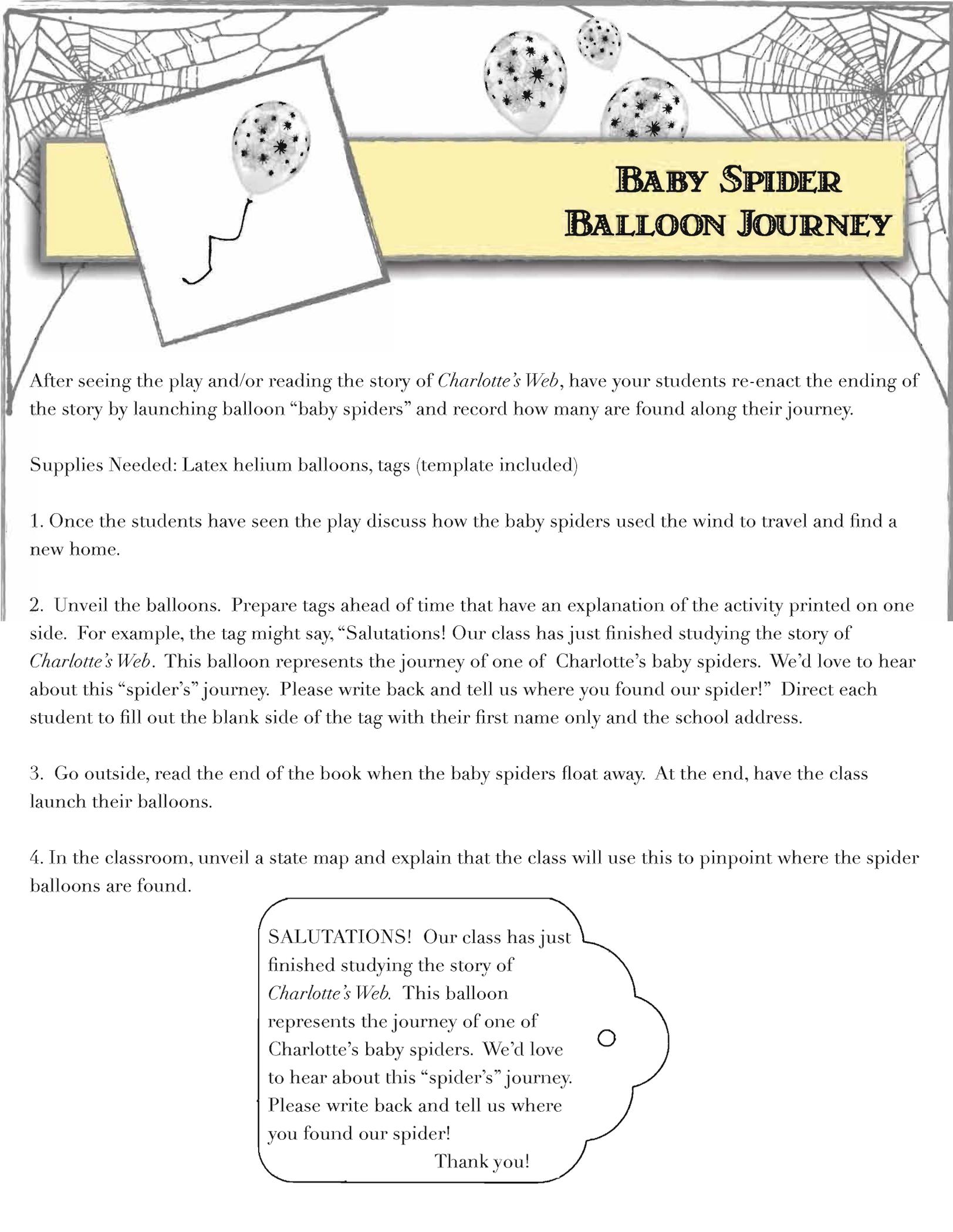
See a Barn Spider Create Her Web:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WJD5wYIcEIY>



FACTS ABOUT PIGS



1. Pigs snuggle close to one another and prefer to sleep nose to nose. They dream, much as humans do. In their natural surroundings, pigs spend hours playing, sunbathing, and exploring. People who run animal sanctuaries for farmed animals often report that pigs, like humans, enjoy listening to music, playing with soccer balls, and getting massages.
2. Pigs communicate constantly with one another; more than 20 vocalizations have been identified that pigs use in different situations, from wooing mates to saying, "I'm hungry!"
3. Newborn piglets learn to run to their mothers' voices and to recognize their own names. Mother pigs sing to their young while nursing.
4. According to Professor Donald Broom of the Cambridge University Veterinary School, "[Pigs] have the cognitive ability to be quite sophisticated. Even more so than dogs and certainly [more so than human] 3-year-olds."
5. Pigs appear to have a good sense of direction and have found their way home over great distances. Adult pigs can run at speeds of up to 11 miles an hour.
6. Professor Stanley Curtis of Penn State University has found that pigs can play joystick-controlled video games and are "capable of abstract representation." Dr. Curtis believes that "there is much more going on in terms of thinking and observing by these pigs than we would ever have guessed."
7. Pigs do not "eat like pigs" or "pig out." They prefer to eat slowly and savor their food.
8. Suzanne Held, who studies the cognitive abilities of farmed animals at the University of Bristol's Centre of Behavioural Biology, says that pigs are "really good at remembering where food is located, because in their natural environment food is patchily distributed and it pays to revisit profitable food patches."
9. Pigs are clean animals. If given sufficient space, they will be careful not to soil the area where they sleep or eat. Pigs don't "sweat like pigs"; they are actually unable to sweat. They like to bathe in water or mud to keep cool, and they actually prefer water to mud. One woman developed a shower for her pigs, and they learned to turn it on and off by themselves.
10. In his book *The Whole Hog*, biologist and Johannesburg Zoo director Lyall Watson writes, "I know of no other animals [who] are more consistently curious, more willing to explore new experiences, more ready to meet the world with open mouthed enthusiasm. Pigs, I have discovered, are incurable optimists and get a big kick out of just being."



BABY SPIDER BALLOON JOURNEY

After seeing the play and/or reading the story of *Charlotte's Web*, have your students re-enact the ending of the story by launching balloon "baby spiders" and record how many are found along their journey.

Supplies Needed: Latex helium balloons, tags (template included)

1. Once the students have seen the play discuss how the baby spiders used the wind to travel and find a new home.
2. Unveil the balloons. Prepare tags ahead of time that have an explanation of the activity printed on one side. For example, the tag might say, "Salutations! Our class has just finished studying the story of *Charlotte's Web*. This balloon represents the journey of one of Charlotte's baby spiders. We'd love to hear about this "spider's" journey. Please write back and tell us where you found our spider!" Direct each student to fill out the blank side of the tag with their first name only and the school address.
3. Go outside, read the end of the book when the baby spiders float away. At the end, have the class launch their balloons.
4. In the classroom, unveil a state map and explain that the class will use this to pinpoint where the spider balloons are found.

SALUTATIONS! Our class has just finished studying the story of *Charlotte's Web*. This balloon represents the journey of one of Charlotte's baby spiders. We'd love to hear about this "spider's" journey. Please write back and tell us where you found our spider!

Thank you!

Balloons and the Environment

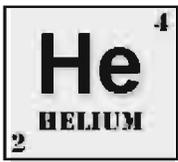


BALLOONS AND THEIR BIO-DEGRADABLE NATURE

There are two types of balloons in wide general use - latex and mylar. This distinction is important because each type requires different handling. Latex balloons are easily identified by their elastic character and are composed of natural rubber sap and small amounts of non-toxic coagulants and pigments. They are 100% bio-degradable. When exposed to outdoor elements they are completely consumed by soil or water micro-organisms at a rate quicker than that experienced by an oak leaf under identical conditions. In much the same way maple syrup is harvested from the maple tree, the production of latex balloons contributes positively to the preservation of tropical rain forests.

Mylar balloons are made with mylar nylon, a material developed for use with the US space program. Balloons made from mylar are often coated with a metallic finish and are available in a variety of shapes and imprinted designs. Mylar balloons are not classified bio-degradable and should not be released.

HELIUM - PART OF THE EARTH'S ATMOSPHERE



Helium is a lighter-than-air gas used to inflate balloons. It exists in small quantities within the earth's atmosphere and is mined from underground pools where it accumulates as a by-product of the earth's production of natural gas. Helium is non-toxic, non-flammable, and has no harmful effects on the earth's environment.

ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY BALLOON RELEASES

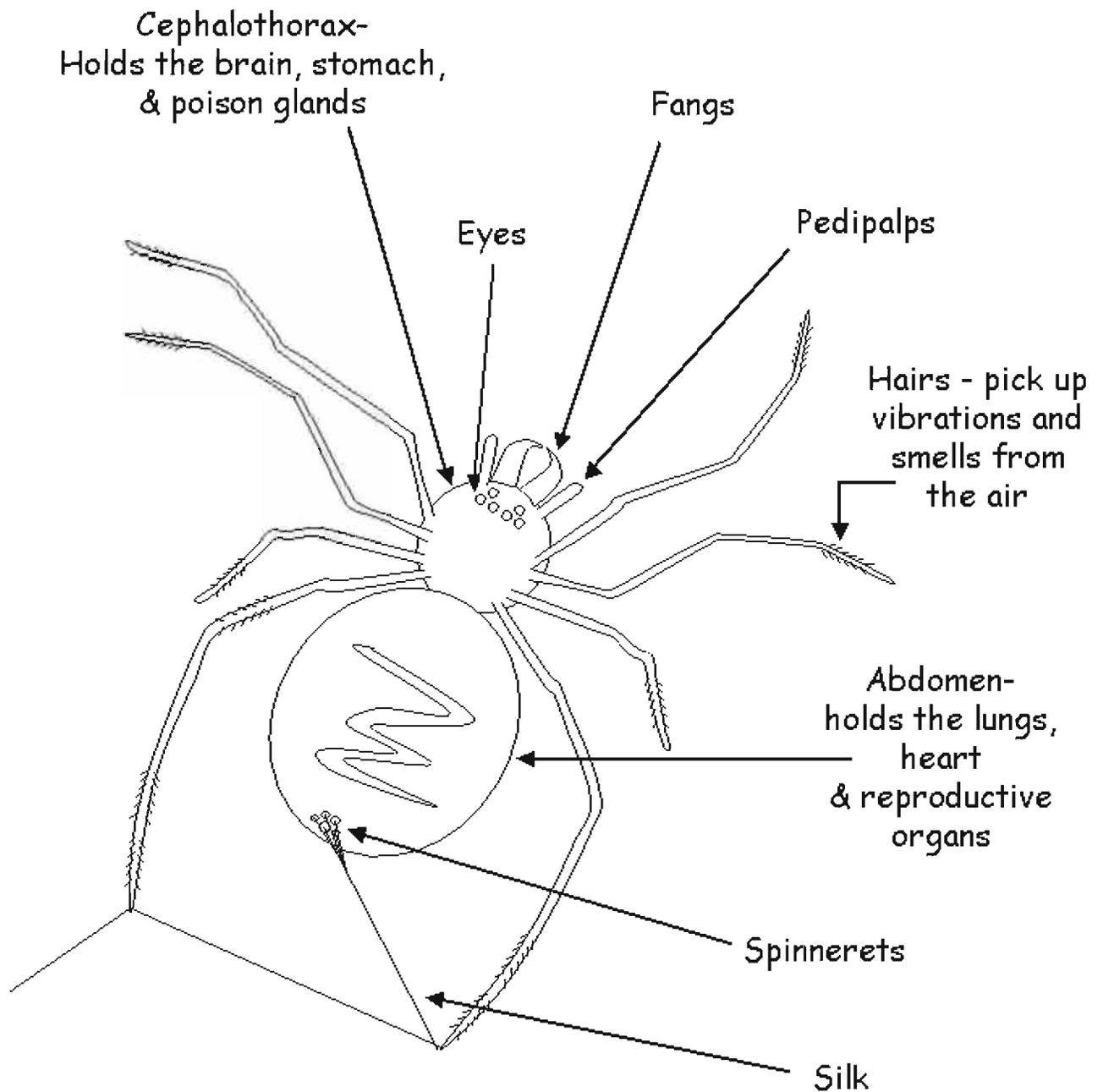
When a latex balloon is released, it rises to a height of approximately 28,000 feet, with the helium gas expanding as it rises. With temperatures dropping to minus 40 degrees at this altitude, the balloon freezes. As the helium continues to expand in the frozen balloon, the balloon undergoes "brittle fracturing" and ruptures into small slivers which scatter and fall to earth. A small percentage of balloons which are released will experience leaks from defects and will not rise high enough to freeze and burst. The distance they travel and their distribution will be determined by current prevailing winds.

Research indicates that if 10% of the balloons from a 500 balloon release were to fall into this category, the average distribution would be one balloon per 15 square mile area.

Student's Name:

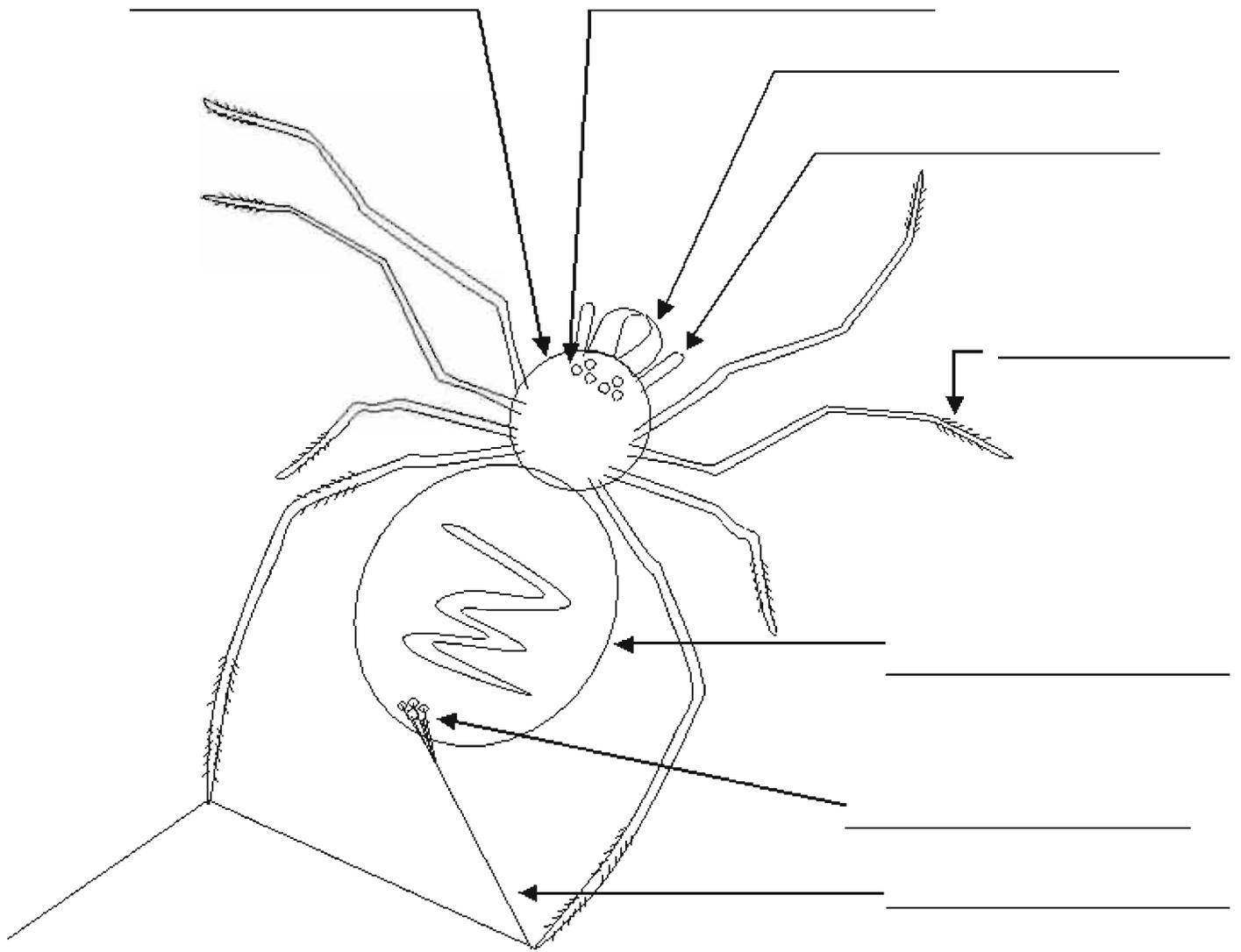
School Address:

ANATOMY OF A SPIDER



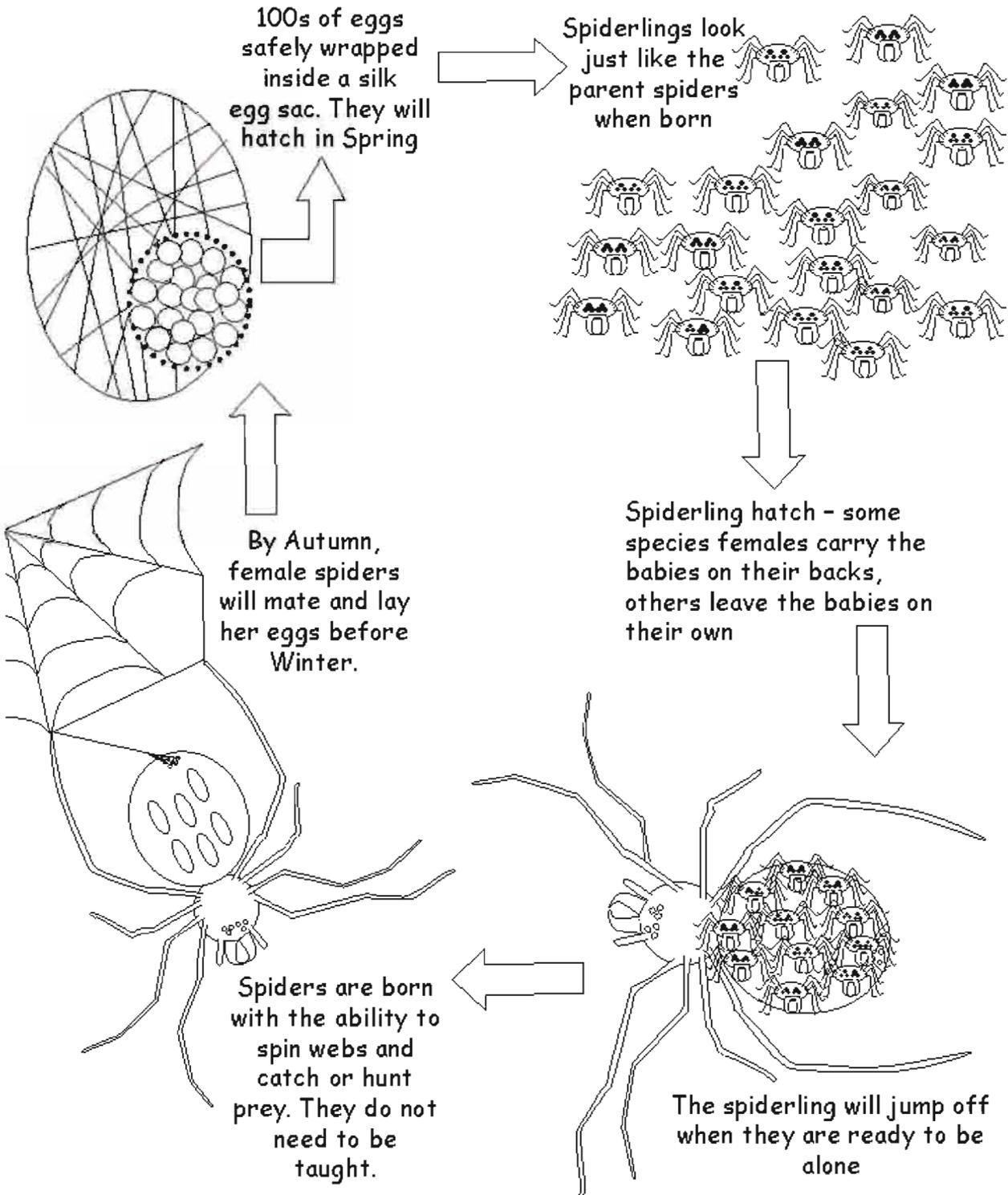
ANATOMY OF A SPIDER

Label the different parts of the spider.



LIFE CYCLE OF A SPIDER

Name: _____



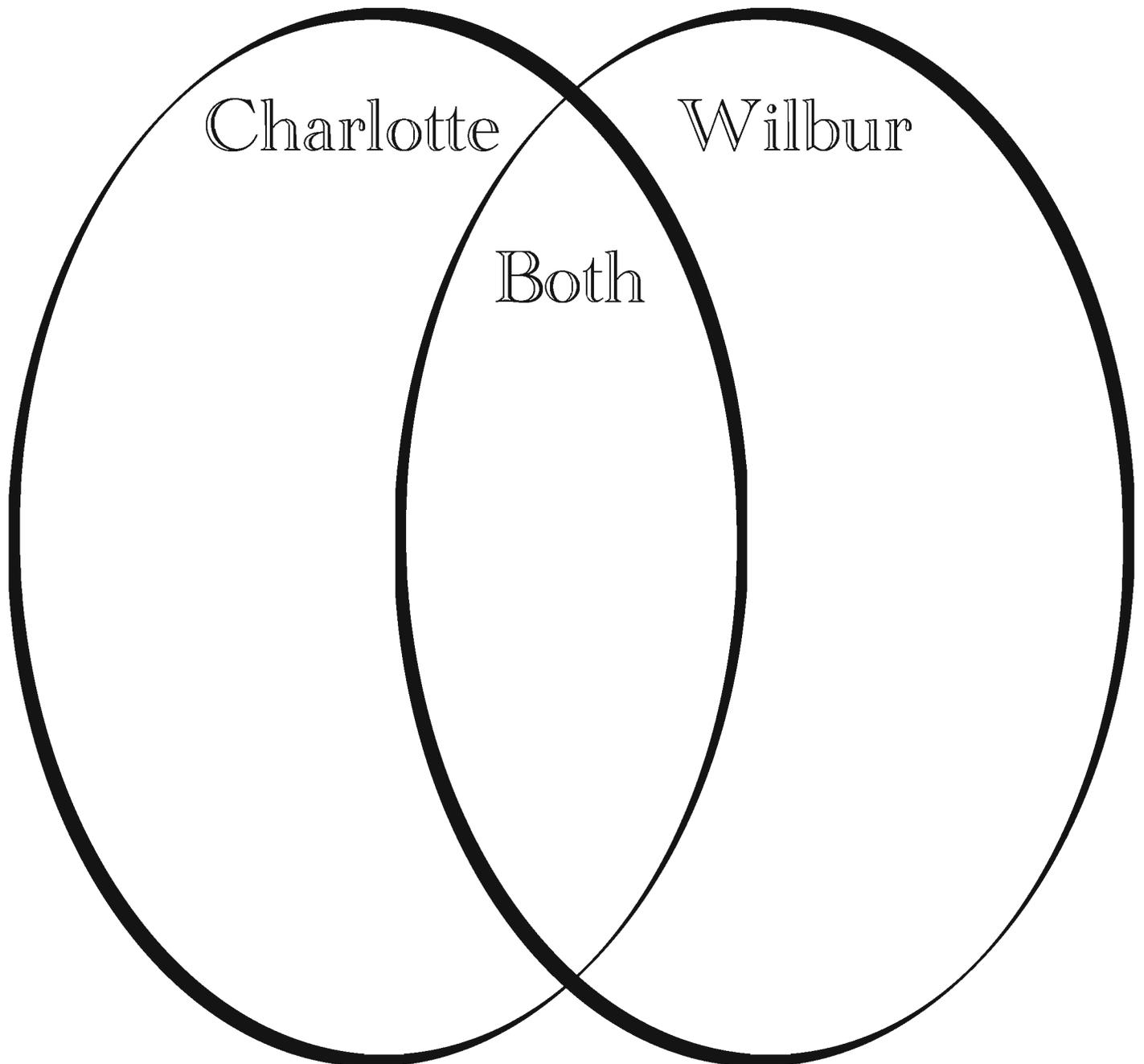


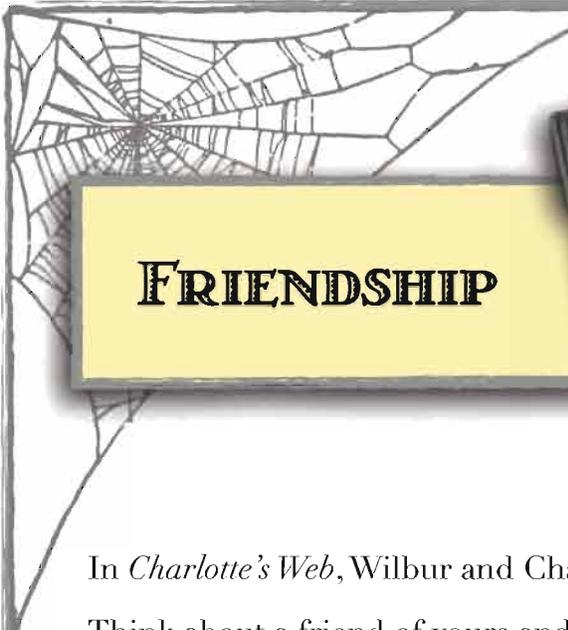
UNLIKELY FRIENDS CHARLOTTE AND WILBUR



Charlotte and Wilbur are unlikely friends. In what ways are they similar? In what ways are they different? Fill in the diagram below by writing their differences on each side, and their similarities in the middle. Then answer the following question:

What are the benefits of having friends who are different from you?





FRIENDSHIP



“Friendship is one of the most satisfying things in the world.”

In *Charlotte's Web*, Wilbur and Charlotte have a very special and unusual friendship.

Think about a friend of yours and answer these questions.

Friend's Name _____

When did you meet? _____

How long have you been friends? _____

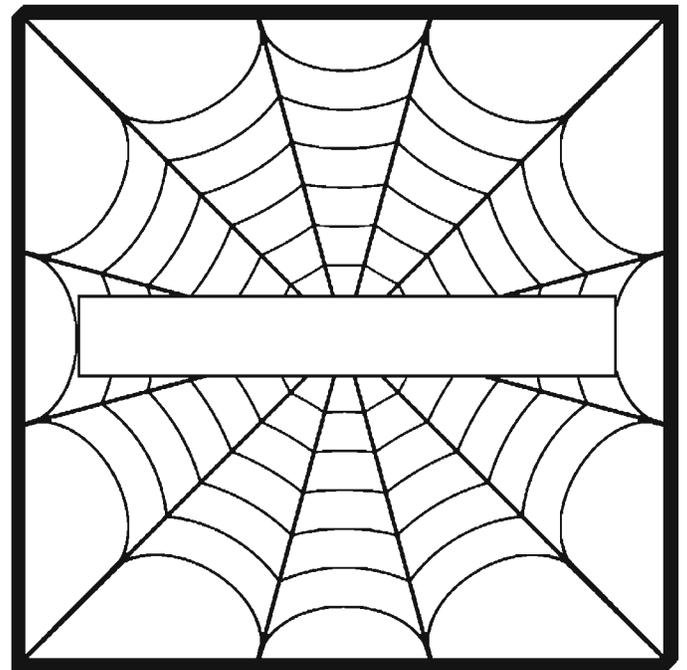
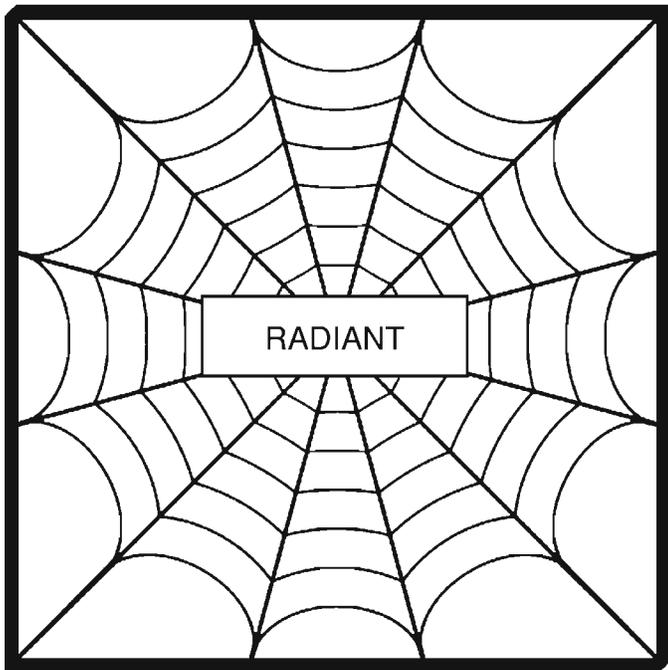
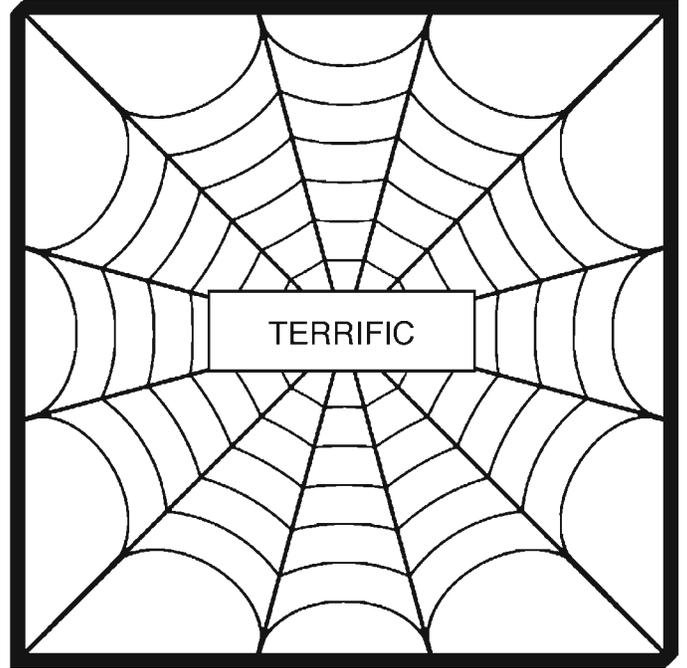
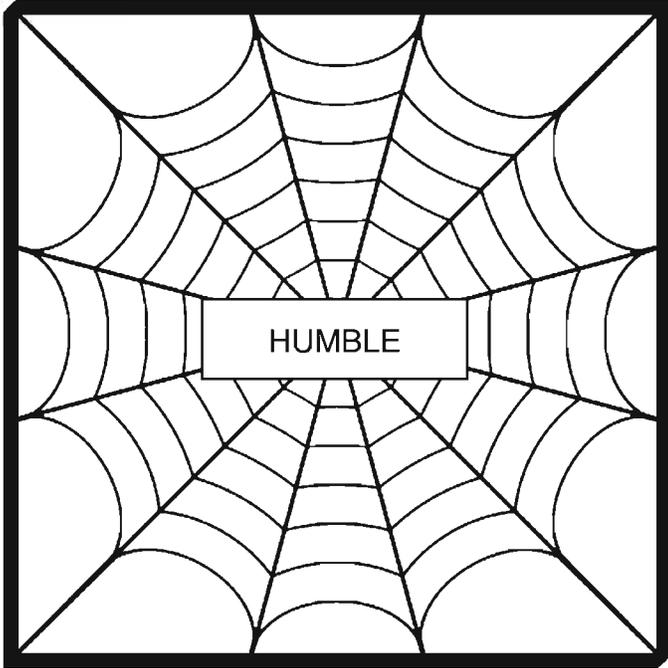
What things do you and your friend have in common?

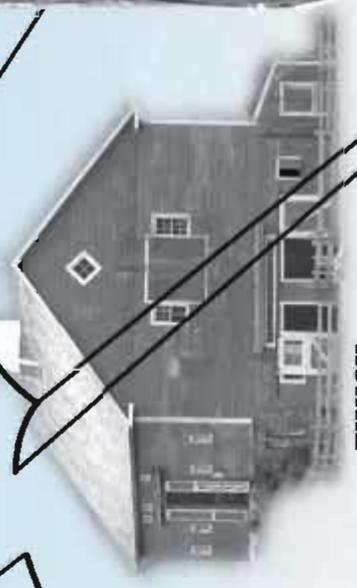
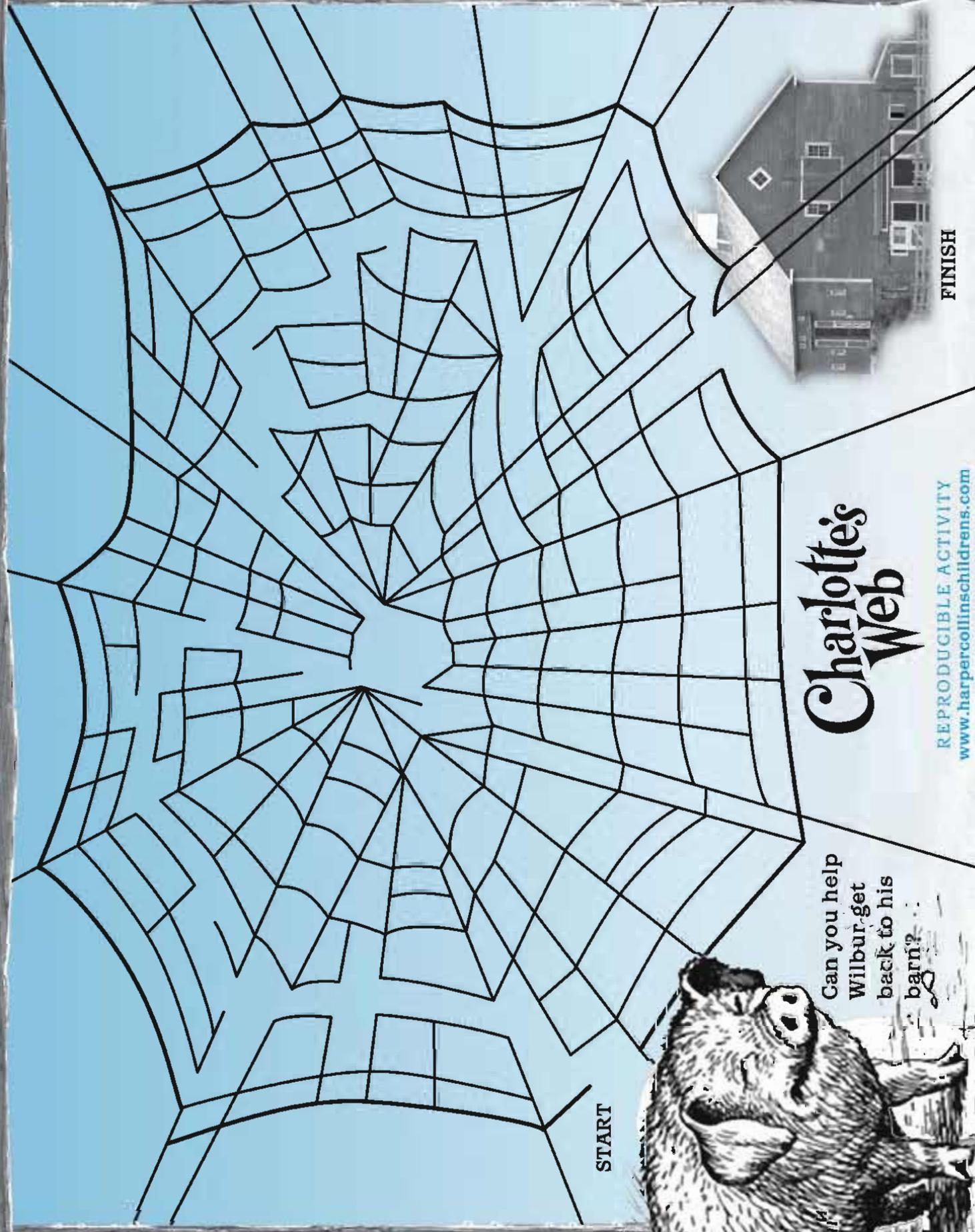
What interests do you have that are different?

What does your friendship with this person mean to you?

POWER OF WORDS

Charlotte uses adjectives to save Wilbur's life. In the webs below write as many synonyms as you can think of to create a web thesaurus! In the last web, what word would you write about Wilbur if you were Charlotte? See how many synonyms you can think of for your word.





FINISH

Charlotte's Web

REPRODUCIBLE ACTIVITY
www.harpercollinschildrens.com

START

Can you help
Wilbur get
back to his
barn?



QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

Charlotte's Web follows a friendship from its beginning to its end, including all the steps in between. Instruct students to choose either Wilbur and Fern's friendship or Wilbur and Charlotte's friendship, and trace the way it grows and changes over the course of the story. How did the friendship begin? Do the characters grow closer together or drift apart? Why? What major events prompt these changes? How does the friendship end? Do the characters forget each other afterwards, or do they keep some kind of connection?

Before Charlotte dies, she and Wilbur have one last important conversation. They discuss their friendship and why Charlotte spent so much time and effort helping Wilbur. At one point, Charlotte tells her friend. "By helping you, perhaps I was trying to lift up my life a little. Heaven knows anyone's life can stand a little of that". What does Charlotte mean by this statement? How can helping a friend "lift up" the helper's life.

Templeton the rat is a character who would not understand Charlotte's sentiment in helping Wilbur. E. B. White describes Templeton as having "no morals, no conscience, no scruples, no consideration, no decency, no milk of rodent kindness, no compunctions, no higher feeling, no friendliness, no anything". After seeing the play, do you agree with this description of Templeton? Does Templeton change during the story or does he stay the same? Is Templeton a hero or a villain? Why?

After Charlotte died, Wilbur loved her children and grandchildren, but none ever took her place in his heart. Fern grew up, discovered other human friends, and did not spend time in the barn any longer, but Wilbur remembered her fondly, too. Does remembering old friends get in the way of making new friends? Should we forget old friends who we grow apart from or move away? Why or why not?

ZUCKERMAN'S BARNYARD COLLAGE

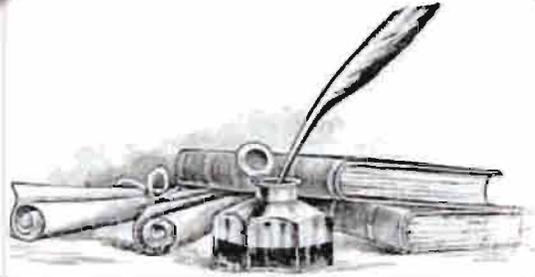
The setting of a play is where the story takes place. In *Charlotte's Web*, most of the story is set on the Zuckerman Farm. In this activity students will have the opportunity to create the Zuckerman Barnyard using an array of textures and materials.



- Provide the children with glue, scissors and a wide variety of collage materials.
- Examples:
 - pieces of wool, string, ribbon and raffia
 - cotton balls (great clouds!)
 - fabric scraps
 - tinfoil scraps
 - old magazines
 - old wrapping paper, construction paper or wallpaper scraps
 - tissue paper in various colors
 - felt or fun foam in various colors (you can get precut fun foam shapes with farm animals if you like)
 - beans, popcorn, grains, uncooked noodles and rice
 - try scrunching up some of your materials or ripping it instead of cutting it.
- Have the children "color" their designs by gluing on the collage materials
- You can pre-make an example to provide inspiration for younger children.



WRITE A REVIEW OR SEND A LETTER



Write a Review- Create an idea web on the board by discussing everything they remember from the performance. The first part of this activity should be objective; remind students that they will be able to express their opinions when they write the review. Prompt students with questions like: What costumes did the actors wear? How did the different characters move? How did the different characters sound? What did the set look like? What, if any, kinds of songs did they sing? What else can you remember?

Instruct students to write a review with the following components:

- 1) One paragraph that objectively describes what you saw and heard at the performance.
- 2) A rating, out of five stars.
- 3) For each star in your rating, explain one thing you liked about the performance (e.g. a four star rating equals four things you liked about the production). Be specific!
- 4) For each star under five, explain one thing you didn't like about the performance (e.g. a three star rating equal two things you didn't like about the show). Be specific!
- 5) Use the stages of the writing process to produce your review:
prewriting, draft, review, revise, edit.
- 6) Publish your work by sending it to ***Foundation for Education Perth Huron.***
We would love to hear from you!

Write a Letter- As a way to reflect on the play, ask your students to write the ***Foundation for Education*** a letter. Our staff and creative team would love to hear what your students liked, disliked, or have questions about the productions they experience. Send letter to:

Foundation for Education Perth Huron
62 Chalk St. North
Seaforth, ON N0K 1W0

Send a Video!!- We always love to see and hear what your students have to say.