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STUDENT HANDOUT

GREEN LEVEL
MORE SUPPORT

The Art of Illusion

Grades 5–8 · Theater

ADMIT ONE

NAME

DATE

CLASS

PART 1

01

What is Suspension of Disbelief?

When you watch a play or movie, you KNOW it's not real. The actors aren't really the characters, and the set isn't a real place. But you choose to pretend it's real so you can enjoy the story!

Big Idea: Theater illusion is like a game — the audience agrees to “believe” even though they know it's fake. This is different from being tricked without your permission!

PART 2

02

Theatrical Tricks

Match each theatrical technique to what it creates:

Colored lights



Make actors appear and disappear

Trap doors



Create mood (scary, happy, romantic)

Sound effects



Make a simple set look real

Painted backdrops



Thunder, rain, footsteps

03

PART 3

What Do You “Believe”?

Think about the last play, movie, or show you watched. What did you “pretend” was real?

I pretended that...

04

PART 4

Theater vs. Tricks

What’s the difference between theater illusions and being tricked?

Theater: You KNOW it’s fake, and you CHOOSE to enjoy it.

Being Tricked: You DON’T know it’s fake, and someone is fooling you.

Circle the right answer:

A magician at a show makes a rabbit “appear.” This is:

THEATER

BEING TRICKED

Someone edits a photo to make you believe something false. This is:

THEATER

BEING TRICKED

An actor pretends to cry in a play. This is:

THEATER

BEING TRICKED

MINI MUSEUM CONNECTION

The Victorians used the SAME techniques for theater AND for fake “ghost photos.” The difference? Theater audiences knew it was fake. People who bought spirit photographs didn’t!

minimuseumproject.org/exhibitions/seeing-is-deceiving

SHARE WITH YOUR FAMILY

Watch a movie or show with your family. Talk about what theatrical tricks help you “believe” the story!