

Town Hall Theatre's  
*JUST SO STORIES*  
Teacher Resource Guide  
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**ABOUT THE PLAY** ( As listed on <http://www.cs.williams.edu/~lindsey/myths/myths.html>)

*Just So Stories* has four great examples of creation myths. A creation myth is a story that explains why something was created, or why something is the way we know it today. It is in the nature of humans to wonder about the unknown and search for answers. At the foundation of nearly every culture is a creation myth that explains how the wonders of the earth came to be. These myths have an immense influence on people's frame of reference. They influence the way people think about the world and their place in relation to their surroundings. Despite being separated by numerous geographical barriers many cultures have developed creation myths with similar elements.

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

*Rudyard Kipling* (1865 –1936)

Mr. Kipling was a British author and poet, born in India. He is best known for the children's story *The Jungle Book* (1894), the Indian spy novel *Kim* (1901), the poems "Gunga Din" (1892) and his many short stories.

His father was John Lockwood Kipling, a teacher at the local Jeejeebhoy School of Art, and his mother was Alice Macdonald. As a six-year-old, he and his three-year-old sister were sent to England and cared for by a woman named Mrs. Holloway. The poor treatment and neglect he experienced until he was rescued at the age of 12 may have influenced his writing, in particular his sympathy with children.

After a spell at a boarding school, the United Services College, which provided the setting for his schoolboy stories of *Stalky & Co.*, Kipling returned to India, to Lahore (in modern-day Pakistan) where his parents were then working, in 1881. He began working as a newspaper editor for a local edition and continued tentative steps into the world of poetry; his first professional sales were in 1883.



# JUST SO STORIES

## Teacher Resource Guide

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### **PRE PERFORMANCE**

#### **PERFORMANCE SPECIFIC VOCABULARY:**

(As listed in Merriam-Webster Dictionary, <http://www.m-w>)

**Befell-** to happen especially as if by fate, to happen to.

**Tame-** reduced from a state of native wildness especially so as to be tractable and useful to humans

**Civilized-** to cause to develop out of a primitive state; *especially* : to bring to a technically advanced and rationally ordered stage of cultural development

**Raw-** not cooked

**Foolish-** lacking in sense, judgment, or discretion

**Grain-** the seeds or fruits of various food plants including the cereal grasses and in commercial and statutory usage other plants (as the soybean)

**Praise-** to express a favorable judgment of

**Djinn-** one of a class of spirits that according to Muslim mythology inhabit the earth, assumes various forms, and exercises supernatural powers

**Tamarisks-** desert shrubs and trees having tiny narrow leaves and masses of minute flowers

**Milkweed-** perennial herbs with milky juice and umbellate flowers

**Prickles-** a sharp pointed emergence arising from the epidermis or bark of a plant

**Palaver-** a long parley usually between persons of different cultures or levels of sophistication

**Idle-** not occupied or employed

**Mariner-** a person who navigates or assists in navigating a ship

**Cetacean-** any of an order of aquatic mostly marine mammals that includes the whales, dolphins, porpoises

**Sagacity-** keen in sense perception

**Neolithic-** of or relating to the latest period of the Stone Age characterized by polished stone implements

**Primitive-** belonging to or characteristic of an early stage of development

**Noble-** possessing, characterized by, or arising from superiority of mind or character or of ideals or morals

### **THEATRE VOCABULARY LIST**

(As listed in the Stage One educational tools website, [www.stageone.com](http://www.stageone.com))

**Acting:** pretending to be a character.

**Beginning, Middle, End:** Three parts of a story.

**Characters:** A person portrayed in a drama, novel or artistic piece.

**Conflict:** The struggle between the opposing forces, ideas or interests in a play.

**Courage:** The spirit that enable one to face danger and fear with confidence and resolution, bravery.

**Dialogue:** A conversation that takes place between two or more characters that expresses thoughts, feelings and actions.

**Facial Expression:** The manner in which an actor uses his or her face to portray an emotion.

**Improvisation:** Using a character to express thoughts and feeling or to act out a scenario without prior rehearsals.

**Movement:** How the actor uses his or her body to create a character.

**Plot/Storyline:** The action of the story, the development of the story, has a beginning, middle and end.

**Point of View/Perspective:** Feelings, opinions, and experiences that affect the reader's outlook.

**Setting:** Time and place where a story occurs.

**Teamwork:** Working together as a team.

**Three tools of an actor:** Voice, body and the imagination.

**Vocal Expression:** The way the actor uses his or her voice to express an emotion.

### **THEMES TO LOOK FOR**

Creation	Courage	Respect	Culture
Myth	Science	Friendship	
Cultural Differences	Teamwork	Family	

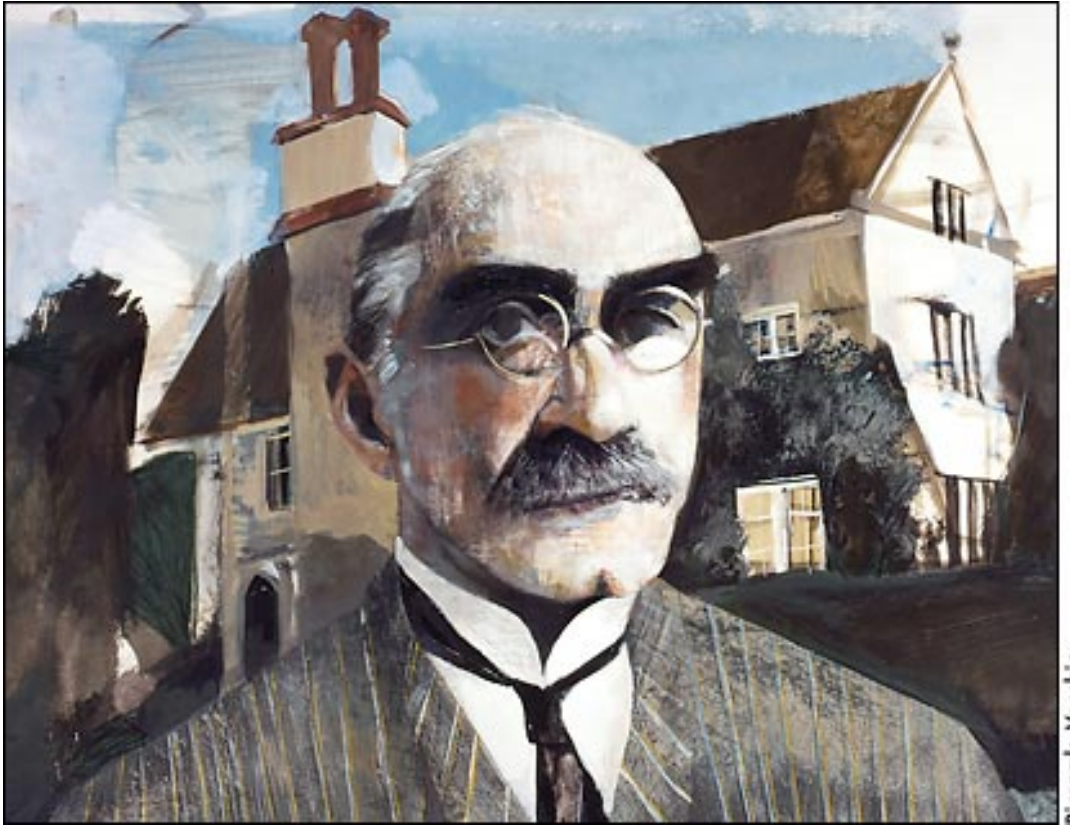
### ***POST PERFORMANCE***

#### **DISCUSSION**

1. The theme of creation is very strong throughout the play; do you have stories that originate in your cultural heritage that explain an earthly phenomenon?
2. This production uses an emphasis on storytelling as a medium to act out four of Kipling's tales. What makes a good story? Who in your family or classroom is a great storyteller, what makes them so effective? What qualities make a good storyteller?
3. How do you think that ancient people really behaved? Were they like us? Would Taffy be a good example of a real little girl that grew up in ancient times?

#### **WRITING PROMPTS**

1. Try to write your own version of a creation myth. It can be set in the past, present or future.
2. If you could domesticate a wild animal, which one would you choose and why? Would they have a job to do like a Seeing Eye dog?
3. Write about a time that you realized that your family and your family's culture was different than another family. Maybe you noticed that they handled mealtime very differently or had different privileges.
4. Describe a tradition that is unique to your family.
5. How do we learn about our own cultures? How do our families show us different things or habits that make us special?



Vecchio's take on Mr. Kipling.