



GENERATION
INEXT
EDUCATION INITIATIVE

Ballet San Antonio® **DRACULA (6-8)** **EDUCATOR GUIDE**



Charline & Red McCombs
ARTS EDUCATION FUND
The Tobin Center

Educator Guide

Created by: Dr. Kimberly Stephenson

Check required attribution text by performer/organization

© 2026 Tobin Center for the Performing Arts

Table of Contents

3	Ballet San Antonio & Performance Information
4	Welcome to the Show!
5	A Short History of Dracula
6	Did You Know...?
7	Ballet San Antonio's Production of Dracula
9	Dracula From Novel to Film to Ballet
11	The Music of Dracula
13	How Do You Tell a Horror Story Without Words
15	Vocabulary
16	Designing Dracula: Costumes, Light, Scenery, & Atmosphere
19	Dracula Timeline
21	Dracula Becomes a Pop Culture Icon
22	Color Exploration
23	Main Characters
24	We Have Liftoff! The Anatomy (and Physics) of a Lift
26	How to Talk About Ballet: The B.E.S.T Method
28	Pre- and Post-Show Discussion Questions
29	Writing Connections
30	After the Bite: Reporting on BSA's Dracula (Lesson)
31	Book Suggestions
33	Theatre Etiquette
35	Tobin Center for the Performing Arts and Generation NEXT

Ballet San Antonio®

The mission of Ballet San Antonio, a professional ballet company, is to share the splendor of dance through diverse artistic performances and outreach programs that reflect, promote, and enrich the cultural heritage of the South Texas community.

BSA holds an uncompromising commitment to continually attract and nurture exceptional professional dancers, create distinctive performances, and make dance accessible to the widest possible audiences through partnerships with local organizations.

Ballet San Antonio is one of the Resident Companies
of the Tobin Center for the Performing Arts.

Balletsanantonio.org

Dracula

Youth Performance (traditional lighting and sound, house lights lowered)

October 23, 2026

Performance: 1 hour long (a reduction from two acts to one hour)

Recommended Audience: 2nd - 6th; MS / HS: Dance, Theatre, and ELA

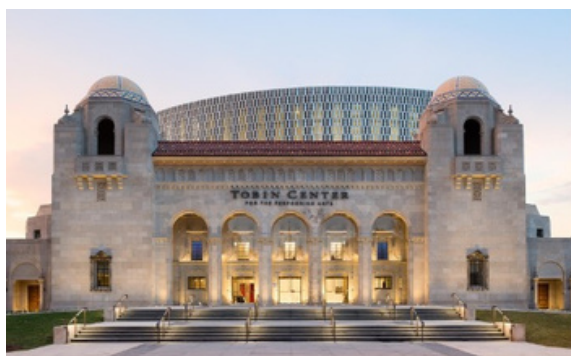
Location:

Tobin Center for the Performing Arts

100 Auditorium Circle

San Antonio, TX 78205

www.tobincenter.org



GENERATION
NEXT
EDUCATION INITIATIVE

Welcome to the Show!



Welcome to the Tobin Center for the Performing Arts!

Dear Educators, Students, and Brave Adventurers:

The lights are dimming. The curtain is rising. And somewhere in the shadows... Dracula is waiting. Welcome to the Ballet San Antonio Dracula Education Guide, your invitation to sink your teeth into the mysterious, dramatic, and wonderfully spooky world behind this haunting ballet.

At The Tobin Center, we believe the best performances begin long before the curtain rises. Inside this guide, you'll uncover ways to explore the story, characters, music, movement, and artistry of Dracula while making connections to classroom learning. Think of it as your map through the castle... Just be careful which doors you open!

Ballet has an incredible ability to tell stories without saying a single word. A gesture can reveal a secret. A movement can show fear, courage, love, or danger. Music can make us feel that something (or someone) might be lurking just around the corner. As you prepare for the performance, I encourage you to watch closely, listen carefully, ask questions, and let your imagination wander into the shadows.

Whether this is your first ballet or you already know your pliés from your pirouettes, there is something here for you to discover. So gather your courage, sharpen your curiosity, and prepare for an unforgettable journey into the night.

And remember...

When the curtain rises, keep your eyes on the stage. You never know what might be watching back.

Welcome to Dracula. We're so glad you've joined us.

Spookily yours:

Dr. Kimberly Stephenson

Director of Education

Tobin Center for the Performing Arts



A Short History of Dracula



The legend of Dracula has been frightening (and fascinating) audiences for more than a century. While stories about vampires existed long before Dracula, the character we know today was introduced in Bram Stoker's 1897 novel, *Dracula*.

Stoker's Count Dracula was partly inspired by European folklore and the history of Vlad III of Wallachia, a 15th-century ruler sometimes called Vlad the Impaler. Although Vlad was not a vampire, his reputation and the name "Dracula" became connected with Stoker's fictional count.

In the novel, Dracula leaves his castle in Transylvania and travels to England, where a group of characters must work together to stop him. The story combines mystery, suspense, adventure, and the supernatural.

Dracula soon escaped the pages of the novel and entered popular culture. The story has been adapted into plays, movies, television shows, comics, and dance productions, with each generation creating its own version of the famous vampire.

Today, Dracula remains one of the most recognizable characters in the world: a cape-wearing symbol of mystery, danger, and things that go bump in the night!



Did You Know? — The BSA Dracula Edition

- Dracula has visited Ballet San Antonio before! BSA first brought the legendary vampire to the stage in 2011 with a production choreographed by Gabriel Zertuche. The company continued performing that version through 2014.
- BSA first brought the legendary vampire to the stage in 2011 with a production choreographed by Gabriel Zertuche. The company continued performing that version through 2014.
- 2026 brings a different Dracula to San Antonio. This season, BSA is presenting Roberto Forleo's *Dracula*, which originally premiered with The Florida Ballet in Jacksonville in 2023.
- This *Dracula* has an international creator. Italian-born choreographer Roberto Forleo has danced and worked with companies around the world. His choreography blends classical ballet technique with contemporary movement and theatrical storytelling.
- There isn't just one "*Dracula* soundtrack." Forleo and conductor Kevin Fitzgerald created the musical landscape for the original production using works by several classical composers, including Franz Schubert, Johann Strauss, Richard Strauss, and Johannes Brahms.
- Dracula isn't simply the villain. Forleo's interpretation explores love, loss, obsession, temptation, and redemption, giving audiences an opportunity to see the famous vampire as a more complicated character.
- The story has traveled from page to screen to stage. Bram Stoker published *Dracula* in 1897, and the character has since appeared in countless plays, films, television programs, and other works. Forleo's ballet draws from this long tradition of artists reimagining Dracula for new audiences.
- Gothic horror is about more than monsters! The genre often combines mystery, suspense, supernatural events, powerful emotions, and dark or isolated settings. Gothic stories frequently explore what frightens us about the unknown and sometimes ask whether the real monster is the one we expected.
- You don't need words to tell a spooky story! Ballet San Antonio's dancers use movement, facial expression, partnering, music, costumes, lighting, and scenic elements to communicate character and create suspense, proving that a story can give you goosebumps without anyone saying a word.

Ballet San Antonio®

About Ballet San Antonio's Dracula

Dracula vs Dracula

Not all Draculas are the same! Ballet San Antonio's 2026 production introduces San Antonio audiences to Roberto Forleo's "Dracula," a newer interpretation that premiered with The Florida Ballet in Jacksonville in 2023. This production is different from Ballet San Antonio's earlier "Dracula," performed between 2011 and 2014 and choreographed by Gabriel Zertuche.

Meet the Choreographer

Italian-born Roberto Forleo is a dancer, teacher, director, choreographer, and Artistic Director of The Florida Ballet. His international performing career has included work with companies such as Grupo Corpo, Béjart Ballet Lausanne, Rambert Dance Company, and Malandain Ballet Biarritz.



Roberto Forleo, choreographer
Photo courtesy of Bates College.

Forleo combines classical ballet with contemporary movement and theatrical storytelling. Ballet San Antonio describes his Dracula as a story of "eternal love, loss, and redemption." Rather than presenting Dracula only as a frightening villain, the ballet invites audiences to consider a more complicated character shaped by love, grief, obsession, temptation, and loss.

The Music

Forleo's original 2023 production was developed in collaboration with conductor Kevin Fitzgerald and performed with the Jacksonville Symphony. Instead of relying on one specially composed Dracula score, Forleo and Fitzgerald brought together existing classical works by composers including Franz Schubert, Johann Strauss, Richard Strauss, and Johannes Brahms. The ballet's final tableau features music from Brahms's Third and Fourth Symphonies.

As you watch and listen, consider how familiar elements of classical music can take on an entirely new meaning when paired with movement, character, and dramatic action.

A New Take on an Old Story

Forleo's original *Dracula* is a two-act ballet told through three tableaux, with the relationships among Dracula, Mina, and Jonathan Harker at the heart of the drama. The 2026 San Antonio production draws inspiration from the romantic interpretation of the Dracula legend popularized by Francis Ford Coppola's 1992 film, in which Dracula's story is intertwined with the loss of his beloved Elisabeta and his centuries-long search to reclaim that love.

The result is more than a spooky vampire story. Through dance, music, character, and theatrical design, *Dracula* explores how powerful emotions can transform a person—and asks audiences to look beyond the monster to consider the story behind him.

Arias, S. (2011, October 13). Ballet S.A. takes on Dracula tale. MySA.

Ballet San Antonio. (n.d.). Dracula. Retrieved August 20, 2026, from Ballet San Antonio — Dracula

Bates College. (n.d.). Roberto Forleo [Photograph]. Department of Theater and Dance. Bates College – Roberto Forleo

CultureMap San Antonio. (n.d.). Ballet San Antonio presents Dracula. Retrieved August 20, 2026, from CultureMap — Ballet San Antonio presents Dracula

Fitzgerald, K. (2024, July 17). 2023–2024 season highlights. Kevin Fitzgerald. Kevin Fitzgerald — 2023–2024 Season Highlights

Golden, A. (2023, November 15). Dracula. Folio Weekly. Folio Weekly — Dracula

Dracula: From Novel to Film to Ballet

For more than a century, Count Dracula has been reinvented by each generation of storytellers. He began as the terrifying figure at the center of Bram Stoker's novel, became an icon of the movie screen, and eventually found another way to tell his story—through dance.

From the Page

Irish author Bram Stoker published “Dracula” in 1897. Told through letters, journals, newspaper articles, and other documents, the novel follows Count Dracula's journey from Transylvania to England and the group of people who unite to stop him. Stoker's Dracula is mysterious, intelligent, dangerous, and unmistakably supernatural. The novel helped establish many of the vampire traditions audiences recognize today and introduced a character who would become one of literature's most famous monsters.

To the Screen

Filmmakers quickly discovered that Dracula was perfect for the movies. Early adaptations helped establish the familiar image of the elegant, cape-wearing Count, while later filmmakers continued to reinterpret his personality and story. One especially influential version was Francis Ford Coppola's 1992 film, “Bram Stoker's Dracula.” Although inspired by Stoker's novel, the film adds a significant romantic element: Dracula is connected to the tragic loss of his beloved Elisabeta, transforming his pursuit of Mina into a centuries-spanning story of lost love.

With every adaptation, Dracula changes a little. Sometimes he is a terrifying monster. Sometimes he is a tragic romantic figure. Sometimes he is both.

And onto the Ballet Stage

Choreographer Roberto Forleo brings this tradition of reinvention into the world of ballet. His “Dracula,” first presented by The Florida Ballet in 2023 and coming to Ballet San Antonio in 2026, uses movement instead of dialogue to explore Dracula's relationships, desires, conflicts, and transformation. Forleo's interpretation emphasizes themes of “eternal love, loss, and redemption,” allowing audiences to encounter a Dracula who is more complicated than a traditional villain.

Instead of telling us what Dracula is thinking, ballet asks us to discover it. A gesture can reveal longing. A pas de deux can show love or temptation. Music can signal danger. Lighting can transform a stage into a mysterious world. And movement can turn a familiar monster into a character we see in an entirely new way.

Think About It

Every adaptation makes choices about what to keep, change, add, or leave behind.

As you watch Ballet San Antonio's Dracula, consider: What changes when a story moves from words on a page, to images on a screen, to bodies moving across a stage?



The Music of Dracula

What does Dracula sound like?

For choreographer Roberto Forleo, the answer isn't a single spooky soundtrack. When his "Dracula" premiered with The Florida Ballet in 2023, Forleo collaborated with conductor Kevin Fitzgerald to build the ballet's musical world from works by several great classical composers.

The score includes music by:

- Franz Schubert (1797-1828) – Known for music filled with melody, emotion, mystery, and dramatic contrasts.
- Johann Strauss II (1825-1899) – The celebrated "Waltz King," whose elegant dance music evokes the glittering ballrooms of 19th-century Europe.
- Richard Strauss (1864-1949) – A composer famous for powerful orchestral music capable of creating vivid characters, scenes, and emotions.
- Johannes Brahms (1833-1897) – Known for deeply expressive and dramatic music.

Forleo's original production uses music from Brahms's Third and Fourth Symphonies during its final tableau.

Music Becomes Movement

In ballet, music does much more than provide a beat for dancers to follow. It helps create mood, character, tension, and emotion. A sweeping melody might accompany a moment of love. A sudden change in the orchestra can warn that danger is approaching. A waltz can transform the stage into an elegant ballroom... even when something sinister is hiding beneath the surface. Forleo's "Dracula" offers an especially interesting example because these composers did not write their music for Dracula. The choreographer takes existing classical works and gives them a new theatrical purpose by pairing them with movement and story.

Listen Like a Choreographer

As you watch "Dracula," listen for:

TEMPO — Is the music fast or slow? How does the speed affect the movement?

- DYNAMICS — When does the orchestra become louder or softer? What happens onstage at those moments?
- RHYTHM — Can you hear patterns that are reflected in the dancers' movements?
- INSTRUMENTATION — Which instruments create feelings of romance, mystery, fear, or danger?
- MOOD — How does the music tell you what to feel—even before a character moves?

Did You Know?

Music can completely change the way we understand a character. If Dracula entered the stage to a playful waltz instead of dark, dramatic music, would you see him differently? That is one of the powers of ballet: the orchestra tells part of the story, and the dancers tell the rest.



Franz Schubert (1797-1828)

An Austrian composer known for beautiful melodies and expressive music. Though he lived only 31 years, he created more than 1,500 works.

Johann Strauss II (1825-1899)

An Austrian composer known as the “Waltz King.” His lively, elegant dance music helped make the waltz famous throughout Europe.



Richard Strauss (1864-1949)

A German composer famous for bold, colorful orchestral music. He was especially skilled at using music to create vivid characters, emotions, and stories.

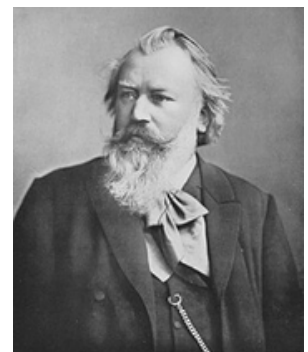
Mahler Foundation. (n.d.). Richard Strauss (1864-1949) [Photograph].

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

A German composer known for music that combines rich emotion with strong musical structure. His works include symphonies, concertos, chamber music, and music for piano and voice.

World History Encyclopedia. (n.d.). Johannes Brahms [Photograph].

https://www.worldhistory.org/Johannes_Brahms/



How Do You Tell a Horror Story Without Words

No dialogue? No problem. Ballet can make an audience feel suspense, danger, surprise, and even fear without anyone saying a single word. In “Dracula,” the dancers and designers work together to give us clues about what is happening and what might happen next.

Movement

A dancer’s body becomes part of the storytelling. Sharp, sudden movements can suggest danger or panic, while slow, controlled movement might make a character seem mysterious or threatening. Even stillness can build suspense. Sometimes the scariest movement is no movement at all!

Music

Music tells our ears that something is coming before our eyes see it. Changes in tempo, rhythm, dynamics, and instrumentation can create tension, signal danger, or make an ordinary moment suddenly feel unsettling.

Lighting

Shadows, silhouettes, darkness, and sudden changes in light can transform the mood of a scene. Lighting designers can direct our attention toward something important or deliberately leave something hidden.

Facial Expression & Gesture

A frightened glance. A reaching hand. A character slowly turning toward something the audience can already see. Facial expressions and gestures communicate emotions and relationships without dialogue.

Costume & Character

Shape, texture, movement, and color help tell us who a character might be before they ever dance a step. A costume can make someone appear powerful, vulnerable, mysterious, elegant... or dangerous.

Timing

Horror depends on when something happens. Choreographers can build anticipation by making audiences wait, repeat a movement, interrupt a pattern, or suddenly change what we expect.

Watch for It!

During “Dracula,” notice how these elements work together. When you feel suspense building, ask yourself:

“What did the artists do to make me feel that way?”

That’s the trick behind telling a horror story without words: the audience may not hear the story spoken, but we can still see it, hear it, and feel it.

Ballet Vocabulary

Ballet — A form of dance that uses precise, highly developed movement technique to communicate music, emotion, and story.

Arabesque — A position in which a dancer stands on one leg while extending the other leg behind the body.

Choreography — The movements and steps created and arranged to make a dance.

Corps de Ballet — A group of dancers who perform together as an ensemble.

Pas de Deux — A dance performed by two dancers, often used to show a relationship between characters.

Plié — A bending of the knees while keeping the body upright. Pliés are fundamental to many ballet movements.

Pirouette — A turn performed on one leg.

Relevé — A movement in which a dancer rises onto the balls of the feet or onto pointe.

Tableau — A stage picture or arrangement of performers that creates a striking visual moment.

En Pointe — Dancing on the tips of the toes while wearing specially constructed pointe shoes.

Partnering — Movement in which dancers work together, often supporting, lifting, turning, or balancing one another.

Choreographer — The artist who creates and organizes the movements that dancers perform.

Silhouette — The visible outline or shape of a dancer or costume, often emphasized by lighting. In “Dracula,” silhouettes can help create mystery and suspense.

Bodice — The fitted upper portion of a costume or dress. Ballet bodices are designed to create a character’s look while allowing the dancer to move freely.

Cape — A sleeveless outer garment that hangs from the shoulders. Closely associated with Dracula in popular culture, a cape can exaggerate shape and movement dramatically onstage.

Atmosphere — The overall feeling or mood created onstage through the combination of movement, music, costume, scenery, and lighting. In “Dracula,” atmosphere helps turn the stage from simply dark into mysterious, romantic, or frightening.

Designing Dracula: Costume, Lighting, Scenery, & Atmosphere

Designing Dracula

Costume, Lighting, Scenery & Atmosphere

Before a dancer takes a single step, design is already telling the story. Costume, lighting, scenery, and the arrangement of dancers onstage work together to create the mysterious world of Dracula.

Costume: Who Are You?

Costumes give us immediate clues about character, time period, personality, and status. Fabric, shape, texture, and silhouette can make a dancer appear powerful, vulnerable, romantic, or threatening. Designers must also consider movement: a beautiful costume still has to allow a dancer to leap, turn, partner, and lift!

Watch for Character in the Details

In “Dracula,” watch for ways costuming may help distinguish the human world from Dracula’s darker, supernatural world. Differences in silhouette, fabric, movement, formality, or period-inspired details can help establish character and relationships. Pay particular attention to Dracula: how might a costume allow him to appear elegant and romantic in one moment, but powerful or threatening in another?

Lighting: What Can You See?

In a horror story, what we cannot see can be just as important as what we can. Lighting can create shadows and silhouettes, isolate a character, direct our attention, or hide something from view. Changes in brightness and direction can transform the same stage from romantic to dangerous in seconds.

Watch the Shadows

A story like “Dracula” gives a lighting designer plenty to play with! Watch for shadows, silhouettes, isolated areas of light, and changes in brightness that may help create suspense or shift the emotional tone of a scene. Lighting can also change how we see a dancer: the same character might appear vulnerable in one moment and mysterious or dangerous in the next simply because of how they are illuminated.

Scenery: Where Are We?

Scenery establishes the world surrounding the dancers. Rather than explaining a location with words, designers use shape, scale, levels, entrances, exits, and scenic elements to suggest where the story is taking place and how that place should make us feel.

Watch How the World Changes

Forleo's "Dracula" moves between different places, relationships, and moments in time, so scenery and staging can help audiences understand when the world of the story has changed. Watch for levels, entrances and exits, movable scenic pieces, open space, or architectural shapes that may suggest locations without recreating every detail literally. Sometimes a few carefully chosen elements allow the audience's imagination to build the rest of the world.

Tableau: Freeze the Story

A tableau (tab-LOH) is a carefully arranged stage picture in which performers create a strong visual image. Forleo's original "Dracula" is structured in three tableaux, making the idea especially important to this ballet.

A tableau can show relationships without dialogue. Consider where each dancer stands, who is closest together, who is separated, where they are looking, and how their bodies are positioned. One frozen image can reveal love, fear, conflict, power, or danger before anyone moves.

Watch the Picture

Because Forleo's original ballet is organized into three tableaux, watch for moments when the dancers' positions create an especially powerful stage picture. Who stands beside Dracula? Who keeps their distance? Who reaches toward another character, and who turns away? Even when the dancers do not completely freeze, their arrangement onstage can create a living picture that reveals love, isolation, temptation, conflict, or power.

Atmosphere: Put It All Together

Atmosphere is the overall feeling of a scene. No single element creates it. A shadow falls across the scenery. Music begins. A cape changes a dancer's silhouette. Performers form a dramatic tableau. Suddenly, an empty stage feels like "Dracula." Horror isn't necessarily something we see; sometimes it's something the artists make us anticipate.

Watch and Feel

Perhaps the most exciting thing to watch for in "Dracula" is how all of these choices combine. A dancer may enter slowly as the lighting changes, the music grows darker, costumes move through the shadows, and the performers form a striking stage picture. No single element has to say, "Something dangerous is coming." Together, they can make the audience feel it.

Watch Like a Designer

As you watch, ask yourself:

"What do I know because of what I see, hear, and feel... not because someone told me?"

Notice a moment when the stage feels especially romantic, mysterious, dangerous, or frightening. What combination of costume, lighting, scenery, movement, and tableau helped create that feeling?

You've heard the legend. Now see it move, hear it breathe, and feel Dracula come alive.

Dracula Timeline



1431 — Vlad III is born in Wallachia, in present-day Romania. Later known as Vlad the Impaler, the historical ruler would eventually become associated with the Dracula legend.

1897 — Bram Stoker publishes “Dracula.” His Gothic novel introduces Count Dracula and characters including Mina Murray, Jonathan Harker, and Professor Van Helsing.

1922 — “Nosferatu” reaches the screen. The unauthorized silent-film adaptation changes the characters’ names but draws heavily from Stoker’s story, helping establish the vampire as a movie monster.

1931 — Bela Lugosi stars in “Dracula.” His performance helps create the elegant, mysterious, cape-wearing image of Dracula that becomes a pop-culture icon.

1958 — Christopher Lee becomes Dracula in “Horror of Dracula,” bringing a more physically imposing and frightening Count to a new generation of moviegoers.

1992 — Francis Ford Coppola directs “Bram Stoker’s Dracula.” The film emphasizes romance and introduces the idea that Dracula’s centuries-long existence is connected to the loss of his beloved Elisabeta.

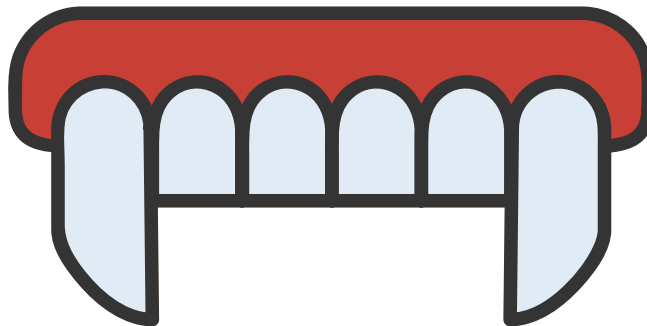
2011 — Ballet San Antonio premieres its first “Dracula.” Choreographed by Gabriel Zertuche with music by Philip Feeney, this earlier production brings the vampire legend to San Antonio through dance.

2023 — Roberto Forleo’s Dracula premieres with The Florida Ballet. Created in collaboration with conductor Kevin Fitzgerald, the ballet uses classical music to explore love, loss, obsession, and redemption through movement.

2026 — A new Dracula comes to Ballet San Antonio. BSA presents Forleo’s interpretation, introducing San Antonio audiences to a different choreographic vision of the legendary Count.

What Comes Next?

For more than a century, artists have continued to reinvent Dracula. Every storyteller changes the legend—and every audience gets to see it with new eyes.





Dracula Becomes a Pop Culture Icon

You probably knew Dracula before you knew Dracula.

Since Bram Stoker's novel appeared in 1897, Count Dracula has become one of the world's most recognizable fictional characters. Movies and stage productions helped establish the familiar cape, formal clothing, dramatic accent, mysterious castle, and fear of sunlight. Over time, those characteristics became so recognizable that artists could play with them, exaggerate them, or turn them completely upside down.



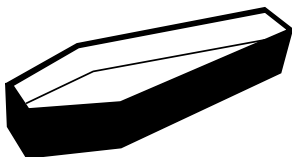
Dracula and Dracula-inspired vampires have appeared everywhere: movies, television, cartoons, comics, video games, Halloween costumes, breakfast cereal, toys, comedy, music, and dance. Count von Count taught generations of "Sesame Street" viewers to sequence numbers. Count Chocula turned the vampire into a cereal-box character. "Hotel Transylvania" imagined Dracula as an overprotective dad. Other stories have made vampires frightening, funny, romantic, heroic—or sometimes all four!

From Character to Symbol

That is what happens when a character becomes a cultural icon. We recognize the clues even when no one tells us who the character is. A bat. A castle. Two A sweeping cape. Two pointed fangs. A figure appearing from the darkness. Dracula has become bigger than any single version of his story. That makes Ballet San Antonio's "Dracula" especially interesting. You arrive at the theatre carrying more than 100 years of Dracula images and ideas with you. Choreographer Roberto Forleo can choose to use those expectations, change them, or surprise you completely.

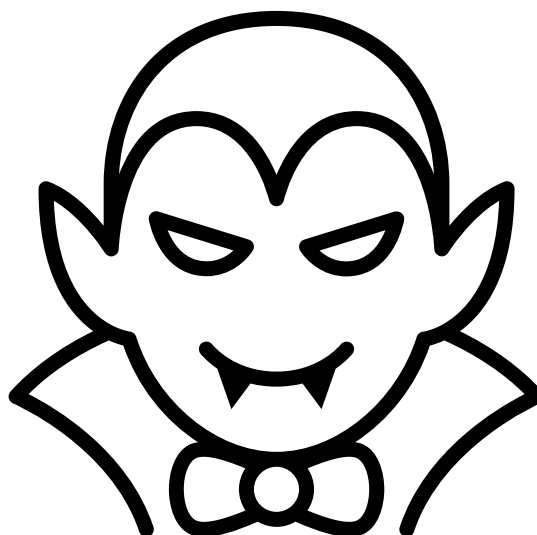
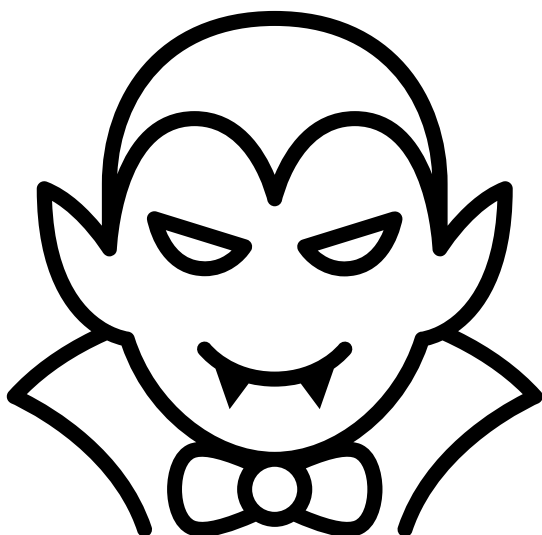
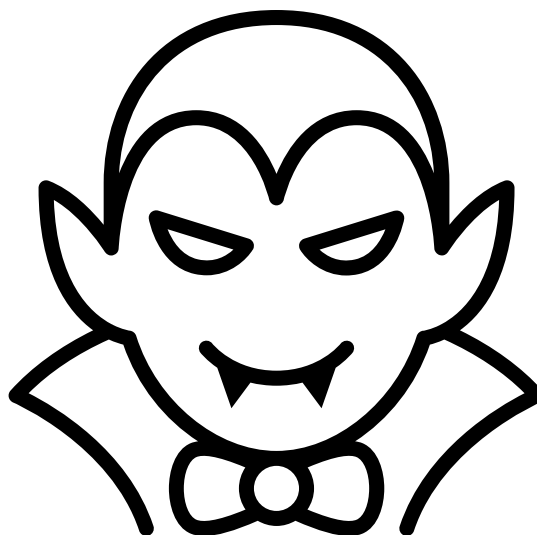
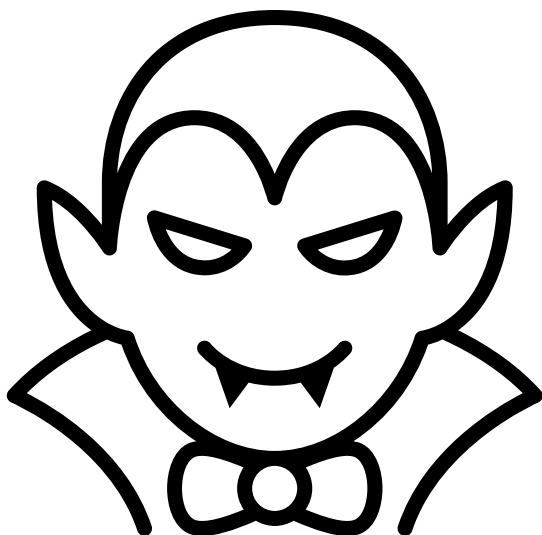
What Does Your Dracula Look Like?

Before the curtain rises, picture Dracula in your mind. What did you imagine first? Now watch what happens when ballet takes a character you think you know and tells you—with no words at all—who this Dracula will be.



Color Exploration

Name: _____ Date: _____



How does Dracula look if explored in a variety of colors?
The Bela Lugosi costume has become Dracula's traditional "look."
A black cloak, black hair, red tie...
What other colors would you like to explore?

Main Characters

Count Dracula — A mysterious Transylvanian nobleman and vampire whose longing for lost love drives much of the story.

Mina Murray — Jonathan Harker's fiancée, who becomes the focus of Dracula's attention and his connection to a love from his past.

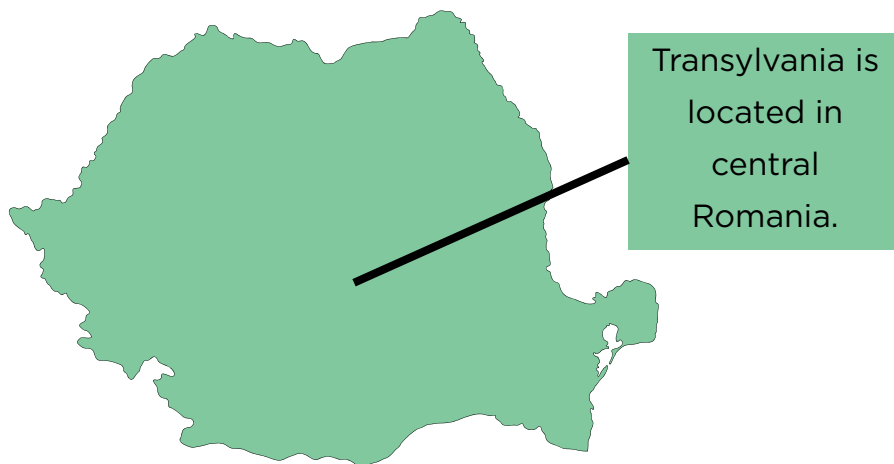
Jonathan Harker — A young English solicitor and Mina's devoted fiancé who encounters Dracula and becomes caught in his dangerous world.

Elisabeta — Dracula's beloved from centuries earlier, whose tragic loss shapes his transformation and his search for love across time.

Professor Van Helsing — A knowledgeable and determined adversary of Dracula who understands the supernatural danger the Count represents.

Lucy Westenra — Mina's close friend whose encounter with Dracula draws her into the supernatural events surrounding him.

Renfield — A troubled man under Dracula's mysterious influence who becomes an unsettling link between Dracula and the human world.



We Have Liftoff!

The Anatomy (and Physics) of a Lift

First Things First: What Is a Lift?

In ballet, a lift is a partnering movement in which one dancer supports another dancer off the floor for part of the movement. A lift might last only a moment during a jump or carry a dancer high overhead. While it may look like one dancer is simply picking up the other, successful lifts are actually cooperative movements: both dancers use strength, timing, balance, momentum, and precise technique to make the movement happen.

**In other words: a ballet lift
isn't something one
dancer does to another.
It's something two dancers
do together.**



She Jumps, He Helps

In an assisted jump or lift, the ballerina doesn't simply wait to be picked up—she jumps! As she pushes down against the floor, the floor pushes back with an upward force. Her partner times his own upward force to work with her jump, helping create additional height or distance. This is why timing matters as much as strength. When both dancers apply force at the right moment, they work together to create the lift.



Up and Over

A one-handed overhead lift may look like a feat of pure strength, but physics makes it possible. The cavalier creates a stable base of support while positioning the ballerina so their weight and center of mass remain balanced over that base.

Hold something directly above your head and then hold the same object out in front of you. Which is easier? The weight hasn't changed, but its distance from your body has. That distance creates torque, or a turning force. Good alignment reduces torque and makes a lift more efficient.

It Takes Two

The ballerina isn't simply being carried. She uses core strength, alignment, balance, and body tension to create and maintain a predictable position. The cavalier uses strength, timing, alignment, and a stable base to guide and support the movement. When both dancers do their jobs well, something requiring tremendous strength and technique can appear almost effortless.



The Physics Behind the Magic

FORCE — A push or pull that changes motion.

GRAVITY — The force pulling the dancers toward Earth.

MOMENTUM — Motion that can help carry a dancer through a lift.

CENTER OF MASS — The point around which the body's mass is balanced.

TORQUE — A turning force created when force acts away from the body's center or support.

Think About It

A ballet lift isn't:

Strong dancer + light dancer = lift.

It's much closer to:

**Force + Timing + Momentum + Alignment
+ Balance + TWO trained dancers =
LIFTOFF!**



Next time you see a dancer soar overhead, don't just ask, "How strong is that cavalier?" Ask, "How are BOTH dancers using physics to make that possible?"

How to Talk about Ballet: The B.E.S.T. Method

You don't have to be a dancer to talk about dance! But there is a difference between sharing an opinion and making an observation. "I liked it," "It was weird," or "That was scary" tells us how you felt about what you saw. That matters... but it doesn't tell us what happened onstage that made you feel that way.

When we talk about dance, we begin with evidence: what we can actually see and hear. Describing movement helps us slow down, notice details, support our ideas, and understand how dancers and choreographers communicate without words. Once we describe what happened, we can use those observations to explain what we think it might mean. That's where B.E.S.T. comes in!

B — BODY

What is the body doing? Look at shapes, gestures, balance, facial expressions, and which body parts lead the movement. Is the dancer reaching, twisting, stretching, collapsing, or holding completely still?

E — ENERGY

How is the movement performed? Movement can be sharp or smooth, powerful or gentle, sudden or sustained, tense or relaxed. Does Dracula move differently from Mina or Jonathan? What might that tell you about each character?

S — SPACE

Where does the movement happen? Notice levels, directions, pathways, distance, and relationships between dancers. Who moves close together? Who stays apart? Who takes up the most space—and who seems trapped by it?

T — TIME

When and how quickly does movement happen? Look for changes in speed, rhythm, repetition, pauses, and stillness. Does a movement happen suddenly, build slowly, repeat again and again—or make you wait?

From Opinion to Observation

Instead of: “Dracula was scary,” start with what you observed.

“Dracula moved slowly through the space., from shadows into light. He gestures were controlled while the other dancers moved quickly away from him.”

Then interpret: “The contrast made Dracula appear powerful and threatening.”

OBSERVE → DESCRIBE → INTERPRET

Your interpretation can be different from someone else’s. The important part is being able to point to what you saw, heard, or noticed and explain how it shaped your thinking.

Don’t just tell us what you thought. Show us what you noticed.

Pre-Show Discussion Questions

- What does “Dracula,” a Gothic story reimagined through dance, make you think of?
- What do you expect to see, hear, or feel during this performance?
- Where have you encountered Dracula or vampires before in books, movies, television, games, or popular culture?
- Have you ever read Bram Stoker’s “Dracula” or experienced another adaptation of the story? How might a ballet version be different?
- What questions do you have about ballet, the Dracula legend, or this particular production?
- Which parts of Dracula’s story could happen in real life? Which belong to the supernatural?
- What real emotions or experiences—such as love, grief, fear, temptation, obsession, or loss—might help audiences connect to a supernatural story?
- How might your own ideas about Dracula influence what you expect to see onstage?

TEKS – ELAR 6-8: 110.22(b)(1)(A-D); English II: 110.37(b)(1)(A-D), 110.37(b)(5)(A-C);
English IV: 110.39(b)(1)(A-D), 110.39(b)(5)(A-C)

Post-Show Discussion Questions

- When you watched “Dracula,” what did the performance make you think or wonder about?
- What did you see that you expected to see? What was missing or different from what you expected, and where did those expectations come from?
- How was this “Dracula” similar to or different from another ballet, play, movie, book, or performance you have experienced?
- Now that you have seen the performance, what new questions do you have about the story, characters, ballet, or artistic choices?
- Choose one moment that made you feel suspense, fear, romance, sadness, or surprise. What did you actually see or hear that created that response?
- How did movement, music, costume, lighting, scenery, or tableau work together to tell the story?
- Did this performance change the way you think about Dracula as a character? What evidence from the performance shaped your interpretation?

Writing Connections

- Create your own advertisement for the performance.
- Write a review of the performance.
 - Include a show synopsis in your own words.
 - Include at least three positive comments.
 - Include one or two critiques / suggestions for improvement /something you would have liked to have seen in the performance that was not there.
- Describe a favorite moment.
- Create a poem or story based on the show you just saw.

NOTE: Any of the pre- or post-show discussion questions could be reworded to a writing connection.

TEKS – ELAR:

Skill Area	6th	7th	8th	English II	English IV
Foundational Language Skills	110.22(b)(1)ABC	110.23(b)(1)ABC	110.24(b)(1)ABC	110.37(b)(1)ABC	110.39(b)(1)ABC
Respond to Sources	110.22(b)(6)ABC DE	110.23(b)(6)ABC DE	110.24(b)(6)ABC DE	110.37(b)(5)ABCD EFGHIJ	110.39(b)(5)ABCDE FGHIJ
Literary Elements	110.22(b)(7) ABCD	110.22(b)(7) ABCD	110.22(b)(7)ABCD	110.22(b)(7)ABCD	110.22(b)(7)ABCD
Recognize & Analyze Genre	110.22(b)(8) ACDE	110.23(b)(8) ACDE	110.24(b)(8)ACDE	110.37(b)(7)ACD i-iii,E i-iii,F	110.39(b)(7)CD i-ii, E i-iii,F
Author's Purpose & Craft	110.22(b)(9)ABC	110.23(b)(9)ABC	110.24(b)(9)ABC	110.37(b)(8)ABC DEFG	110.39(b)(8)ABC DEFG
Composition: Writing Process	110.22(b)(10)AB i-iii,CD i-v,E	110.23(b)(10)AB i-iii,CD i-v,E	110.24(b)(10)AB i-iii,CD i-v,E	110.37(b)(9)AB i-ii,CD i-vi,E	110.39(b)(9)AB i-iii,CDE
Generate Questions	110.22(b)(12) ACDE	110.22(b)(12) ACDE	110.22(b)(12) ACDE	110.22(b)(12)ACDE	110.22(b)(12)ACDE

After the Bite: Reporting On BSA's Dracula

Grades: 6–12 | Time: 30–45 minutes

Focus: ELAR + Journalism + Theatre

TEKS - ELAR 6–8: §110.22–§110.24(b)(5)(G), (10)(B), (11)(A–E)

Journalism: §110.62(b)(2)(B); §110.62(b)(3)(A–C), (F), (H–K), (M)

Theatre MS 1–3: §117.211–§117.213(b)(4)(A), (5)(C)



Objective: Students will write a short news or feature article using specific evidence from Ballet San Antonio's Dracula to report on the performance.

The Assignment

Imagine you are an arts reporter covering Dracula. Write a 250–350 word article that helps a reader understand what happened onstage and how the artists told the story. Use the BEST Method (Body, Energy, Space, Time) and specific evidence from what you saw and heard to support your ideas.

Build Your Story

- **Headline:** Create a short, attention-grabbing title.
- **Lead:** Answer the basics: Who? What? Where? When?
- **Observe:** Describe one memorable moment using specific details from BEST: Body, Energy, Space, and Time.
- **Analyze:** Explain how movement, music, costume, lighting, scenery, or tableau helped communicate the story.
- **Connect:** Give readers helpful context about Dracula, ballet, or this particular interpretation.
- **Close:** End with a strong final observation about the performance.

Remember

Journalism separates observation from opinion. Instead of “I liked it” or “It was scary.”

OBSERVE → DESCRIBE → INTERPRET

Example: “Dracula remained motionless as dancers scattered around him, creating a striking contrast that made him appear powerful and threatening.”

Extra Bite

Find photos from the production or create a picture to include with your story.

Sink Your Teeth Into A Good Book!

6th Grade

The Graveyard Book — Neil Gaiman

A boy raised by ghosts in a graveyard encounters supernatural dangers while discovering where he belongs.

The Night Gardener — Jonathan Auxier

A creepy Victorian ghost story about two siblings, a mysterious house, and the danger of getting exactly what you wish for.

The Jumbies — Tracey Baptiste

Caribbean folklore comes alive as a young girl confronts supernatural creatures threatening her home.

7th Grade

The Screaming Staircase — Jonathan Stroud

Young ghost hunters investigate dangerous hauntings in a suspenseful story filled with mystery, humor, and supernatural thrills.

Small Spaces — Katherine Arden

A frightening supernatural adventure in which children must outwit mysterious creatures—and learn when not to trust what they see.

The Girl Who Drank the Moon — Kelly Barnhill

A lyrical fantasy exploring magic, sacrifice, fear, love, and what happens when a community believes a story that may not be true.

8th Grade

Dracula — Bram Stoker

Ready for the source material? Strong readers can explore the 1897 Gothic novel and compare Stoker's Count with the character they see onstage.

Frankenstein — Mary Shelley

The perfect companion to Dracula for examining who gets called a monster—and whether the label is deserved.

The Monstrumologist — Rick Yancey

A darker, more intense Gothic horror novel about a young apprentice helping a scientist who studies terrifying creatures. Best for mature middle-grade readers.

Guide Connection

As you read, consider: What makes something frightening—the monster itself, what the monster does, or what we believe about it?

Theatre* Etiquette – Preparing for the Experience

Purpose:

Teaching theatre etiquette helps students understand that audience behavior directly affects a live performance. Unlike movies or TV, live theatre is a shared experience — the audience and the performers influence one another.

“Etiquette” means the expectations for polite or respectful behavior. Another word for etiquette is manners. These expectations often depend on the type of performance and its traditions.

Example:

At a **Gospel concert**, the audience may clap, sing, or move with the music — that’s part of the experience!

At a **Classical Orchestra concert**, the audience usually listens quietly and waits until the conductor lowers their hands before applauding.

When attending a performance at the Tobin Center for the Performing Arts, the following guidelines help students act respectfully and confidently as audience members.

Before the Show

- Arrive early: Allow time to find seats, use the restroom, and settle in calmly before the lights dim.
- Silence devices: Turn off or silence all phones, watches, and electronics to avoid noise or bright screens during the performance.
- Listen for instructions: Ushers or teachers may share information about seating, timing, or theatre rules.
- Discuss expectations: Remind students that live performances require focus, respect, and quiet observation.

During the Show

- Be attentive and quiet: Whispering, talking, or making noise distracts both the performers and other audience members. Performers can see and hear the audience.
- Stay seated: Unless there’s an emergency, students should remain in their seats. If someone must leave, they should do so quietly with help from an usher.
- Applaud appropriately:
 - o Clap when the conductor or key performers enter.
 - o Show appreciation after songs, dances, or acts — applause is a way of saying “thank you.”

- Respect the performance: Avoid unwrapping food, chewing gum loudly, or fidgeting. Encourage students to engage visually and emotionally — there's always something on stage to discover.
- No photography or video: Using cameras or phones can distract others and potentially endanger performers if flashes occur.
- Respond appropriately: Laugh, smile, or react when it fits the scene. Genuine responses show appreciation, but excessive noise or commentary can distract from the performance.

After the Show

- Stay for the curtain call: Performers return to the stage to bow — this is the audience's time to applaud and thank them.
 - If everyone stands while clapping, it's called a standing ovation — a sign of exceptional appreciation.
 - Occasionally, performers return for an encore (pronounced "ON-core") to perform an extra piece.
- Clean up: Dispose of wrappers, bottles, or papers to keep the theatre tidy for the next audience.
- Exit calmly: Walk quietly as you leave. Remind students that even soft talking becomes loud when hundreds of voices echo in the space.

Additional Tips for Students

- Posture matters: Sitting up straight helps others see and shows attentiveness.
- Show respect: Performers dedicate time and effort to their craft. Focused, polite listening demonstrates appreciation for their work.
- Ask for help when needed: Ushers (theatre staff) assist guests with seating, questions, or directions. Encourage students to approach them respectfully if help is needed.
- Be present: Encourage students to enjoy the live energy of the moment — no screens or distractions needed.

Teacher Tips

- Review theatre etiquette as part of your pre-trip classroom preparation. Discuss why these behaviors matter — link them to empathy, discipline, and teamwork.
- Role-play appropriate and inappropriate behaviors before the trip to reinforce expectations.
- Remind students that audience participation (like applause or laughter) is part of the performance energy — the goal is to contribute positively to the shared experience.

Key Takeaway

Middle school students are developing independence and awareness of social norms. Theatre etiquette helps students build self-control, empathy, and respect — essential skills not only for the arts but for life beyond the classroom.

About the Tobin Center for the Performing Arts



An Incredibly Powerful Vision

Situated along the banks of the San Antonio River in the city's heart, the historic Municipal Auditorium, with its original facade preserved, has been transformed into a world-class venue. This theatrical icon is once again the pride of the river and a shining beacon of creativity, fine art, and downtown development. There is no better place — anywhere — to see and hear a live performance.

The remarkable flexibility of the 1,738-seat H-E-B Performance Hall, with its distinctive “flat floor” capability, opens the door for performances and events of almost any sort. The acoustics in the Hall can be “tuned” to fit the performance and physical set-up of the hall. The sound insulation throughout The Tobin Center enables simultaneous use of the Performance Hall, the Studio Theater, and the 600-seat River Walk Plaza.

Audiences can see and hear performers and hear performers and performances of every description at the Tobin Center for the Performing Arts, WHERE THE ARTS LIVE.

www.tobincenter.org

[Tobin Center Floor Flip Video](#)



Generation NEXT connects education and the arts, promoting creative classrooms and culturally relevant learning. We believe creative empowerment is central to a 21st century education.

Powerful Art. Powerful Education. Excellence in both.

Questions?

How to book a field trip or tour:

Visit the education page on our website to book directly: tobincenter.org/education

Support The Tobin Center

As a non-profit organization, The Tobin Center relies on generous donors and arts advocates like you to help us sustain and grow our diverse array of cultural, educational, and artistic experiences that ensure people of all ages and communities have access to the performing arts.

Donate directly on our site: tobincenter.org/donate

Office Hours

Monday - Friday
8:30 am - 5:00 pm

tobincenter.org

115 Auditorium Circle,
San Antonio, TX
78205

**Stay connected to the latest on
our socials!**



@tobincentersa





SUPPORTING PARTNERS

HARVEY E. NAJIM



KRONKOSKY
The Foundation for Profound Good

CIRCLE BAR
FOUNDATION

DICKSON-ALLEN
FOUNDATION

MYRA STAFFORD PRYOR
CHARITABLE TRUST

TND FAMILY
FOUNDATION



THE CHARITY BALL ASSOCIATION
CHILDREN BENEFIT ALWAYS



JOHN R. & GRELI N. LESS
CHARITABLE TRUST