

**Study Guide
for**

FLIGHT OF THE DODO

at Lifeline Theatre

6912 North Glenwood Avenue

Chicago, Illinois 60626

773-761-4477

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This study guide is only to be used in conjunction with performances of

FLIGHT OF THE DODO
at Lifeline Theatre in Chicago, Illinois.
Any other use is strictly forbidden.

Introduction

Lifeline Theatre's KidSeries

Lifeline Theatre's KidSeries is committed to bringing children's literature to the stage to entertain, educate and empower both kids and adults. Our goal is to help students develop greater appreciation of literature and theatre as art forms, to excite kids about reading, as well as to teach them about various subjects within each individual show.

We encourage you to use this study guide to enrich your students' experience of Lifeline's KidSeries, and to enhance the educational value of the performance you attend.

Illinois State Board of Education Fine Arts State Goals

The Illinois State Board of Education ("ISBE") has three State Goals for the Fine Arts:

- Students should know the language of the arts.
- Through creating and performing, students should develop an understanding of how works of art are produced.
- Students should understand the role of the arts in civilizations, past and present.

This study guide and the activities included herein will help your students to reach these goals, as well as other Illinois State Goals listed throughout this guide.

The Play

The Adaptation

Lifeline Theatre's production of *Flight of the Dodo* is a musical adaptation of the book *Flight of the Dodo* by Peter Brown. The play *Flight of the Dodo* was written by Robert Kauzlaric and Victoria DeIorio. Mr. Kauzlaric wrote the spoken part of the play, which is called the "book." Ms. DeIorio wrote the music for the songs. And the words to the songs, which are called the "lyrics," were written by both Mr. Kauzlaric and Ms. DeIorio. Lifeline's production of *Flight of the Dodo* uses dance, music, singing, acting and puppetry to tell the story. In this study guide, we will generally refer to Mr. Brown's *Flight of the Dodo* as "the book" or "the story" and Lifeline's *Flight of the Dodo* as "the play."

Play Synopsis

Penguin has a beautiful new jacket. A new jacket that he has saved up for months to buy, even waiting until it went on sale. And he's terribly excited to be able to wear it today, and to show it off to his friends Cassowary, Ostrich, and Kiwi. But before he gets a chance, a Flock of Geese fly overhead and...well...do what geese do, leaving an unsightly stain right on the shoulder of Penguin's new jacket.

Penguin calls a meeting with the other flightless birds, or Waddlers, to suggest that maybe they need to figure out how to fly, just like the Geese and the other Flappers do, since they've never had a "bird's eye view" of the world. Cassowary isn't quite sure about this plan, but eventually the other Waddlers convince her and they commence to build a flying machine. After several failed attempts, they finally come up with a hot-air balloon contraption and take to the skies. They dub their flying machine the Dodo, in honor of their extinct flightless friend the dodo bird.

Once up in the air, each of them gets to try something they've always been prevented from doing because they were earthbound: Kiwi does an ultimate cannon-ball into a lake; Ostrich goes "fly" fishing; and Cassowary tastes a cloud. Then it's Penguin's turn and he decides he wants to try target pooping. He's quite good at it, hitting an old rock on his first attempt.

As the Waddlers are enjoying their new-found freedom, the Geese fly by and Penguin challenges them to a flying contest. His acrobatic flying tricks are not appreciated by Cassowary, Ostrich and Kiwi, and they beg him to stop, but he only does so when they all realize a huge storm is coming towards them. Their flying skills aren't good enough to outrun the storm, and they realize they need the Geese's help. However, the Geese are on the ground and can't hear the Waddlers' cries, so Penguin decides to target poop towards them in the hopes that that will get their attention. Luckily it does, and the Geese come to the Waddlers' aid, rescuing them from the storm.

Once safe and sound back on the ground, Penguin apologizes to the Geese for being a jerk, and the Geese apologize for not looking where they poop. The Geese offer to teach the Waddlers how to fly the Dodo better, and Penguin agrees to teach the Geese the finer points of target pooping, leading to new cooperation between the Flappers and the Waddlers.

Before the Play

Discuss with your students proper theatre etiquette. For example, it's okay to clap and laugh, but it's not okay to talk to your neighbor. Have students compare and contrast the difference between watching a movie and watching a play. Ask if students have been to a play before. If so, what play? What was the experience like? What do they think this particular experience will be like? If the students have not been to Lifeline before, have them think about what they might expect: a big theatre or a small one, many seats or only a few, young actors or older ones, etc.

After the Play

Ask students if they enjoyed the play. Based on this experience, would they like to see other plays? If they've seen plays before, how did this play compare? Was it better? Funnier? More enjoyable? What happened that they were expecting to happen? What happened that they weren't expecting? Was seeing a play a better experience than seeing a movie? Why or why not?

Critiquing the Play

Have the students write a review of the play. Use the attached form or have them write a paragraph or two on their own. Encourage the students to be specific about why they enjoyed a certain part of

the play. If they liked a scene because it was funny, have them explain *why* it was funny to them, what the characters *did* or *said* that was funny, etc.

Have the students draw a picture or make a collage of their favorite scene or character. Have them show their picture to the class and explain why that scene or character was their favorite. Feel free to send the reviews and pictures to Lifeline – we enjoy reading them!

Comparing the Story to the Play

Illinois State Goal 25.B.3 Students will be able to compare and contrast the elements and principles in two or more art works that share similar themes.

Before the Play

Read *Flight of the Dodo* to your students, or have them read the book themselves, before the production. After reading the book, ask the students the following questions:

1. Who are the characters in the story?
2. What happens in the beginning of the story? The middle? The end?
3. What is your favorite part of the story? Why?
4. Who is your favorite character? Why?
5. Is there a character in the story you don't like? What makes you dislike this character?
6. What do you think you will see on stage as the actors tell this story?
7. How might the play be different from the story? How might it be the same?

Beginning, Middle and End

To encourage sequential thinking, have students act out the beginning, middle and end of the story. Split the students into three groups (or more, depending on the number of students in your class) and have one group enact the beginning, have the next group enact the middle, and the final group the end. Have the students watching the performances help the group to remember any parts they may have left out. Give the groups the chance to redo their performances, including any elements suggested by their classmates.

After the Play

Ask the students the following questions:

1. How were the book and the play different?
2. How were the book and the play the same?
3. What elements of the play surprised you, based on your knowledge of the book?
4. Which did you enjoy more, reading the book or watching the play?
5. What was your favorite part of the play? Was that your favorite part of the book as well?
6. Were there any characters in the book who were not in the play?
7. Were there any characters in the play that were not in the book?
8. Some parts of the play are different from the book. Why do you think the playwright added or subtracted certain parts?

Cast of Characters

There are five actors – one man and four women – in *Flight of the Dodo*. Four of the actors play one character and one of them (the Stage Manager) plays several characters. The following is a list of the characters in *Flight of the Dodo*:

Penguin	Kiwi
Cassowary	The Stage Manager (who also plays the Rosebush, the Cloud, the Flock of Geese, the Rock, etc.)
Ostrich	

Before the Play

Ask the students the following questions:

1. What are some ways that you think the designers (costumes, sets, lights, props) will help the actors to play their characters?
2. When you watch the play, see if you can figure out which actor plays more than one character. [The Stage Manager]
3. Do you think it is hard or easy for an actor to play so many characters?
4. Why might it be hard for an actor to play so many characters? [Having to come up with different character voices and mannerisms; remembering which prop/puppet to use]
5. Why might it be fun for an actor to play many different characters in one play?
6. If you were in a play, would you like to play just one character, or more than one? Why?
7. Why do you think the playwright decided to have some of the actors play more than one character? [Cost/salary considerations; some parts are very small, so it's better to have one actor play those smaller parts]
8. The birds in the play (Cassowary, Kiwi, Penguin, Ostrich and the Geese) are from different parts of the world. How do you think the actors might make it clear where their characters are from?

After the Play

Ask the students the following questions:

1. In what ways are the characters different in the play than in the book?
2. In what ways are the characters the same in both the book and the play?
3. What different characters does the Stage Manager play? [Rosebush, Rock, Geese, Cloud, Poo, etc.]
4. What else does the Stage Manager character do? [Change the set pieces; bring on props for the bird characters; manipulate the puppets]
5. Do you think it was difficult for the Stage Manager character to play multiple parts? Why or why not?
6. How did the designers help the actors to play their parts? [Costume pieces that made them look like birds; puppets for the Stage Manager instead of full costume changes]
7. How did the actors make it clear where the birds they played were from? [Different accents; slang that people use in the part of the world where those birds are from]

Creating a Character

Illinois State Goal 26.A.2b Students will be able to describe various ways the body, mind and voice are used with acting, scripting and staging processes to create or perform drama/theatre.

Actors use their bodies and their voices to create characters who are different from themselves (talking birds; birds/people from different parts of the world; inanimate objects).

1. How do the actors use their voices and their bodies to show which characters they're playing?
2. Do the actors playing birds (Cassowary, Ostrich, Penguin, Kiwi) move or speak differently to make themselves appear to be birds instead of people?
3. How do the actors use the way they speak to show that the birds they are playing come from different places? [Different accents/dialects: African, Australian, New Zealand; slang words]
4. Do you think it is hard for the actors to learn to speak as if they are from a different part of the world? Why or why not?
5. How do the actors playing birds move to make themselves seem more like birds?
6. How do the costumes help you to know who each character is? [Different textures/fabrics that mimic feathers; masks/beaks to mimic the different birds' beaks]
7. What sort of preparation do you think the actors did to get ready to play the birds? [Reading about the birds they were playing; watching videos and looking at pictures; working with a dialect coach to learn their accents]

Have students practice using just their bodies and voices to create the different characters in the story. Have students choose character traits that make sense for each character—for example, a penguin moves differently than an ostrich does. Have a student come to the front of the room and move as if she is a character from the play without speaking. Have the class guess which character she is. Have them describe how she moved in words (rather than by saying "she moved like this" and showing it with their bodies) and how that helped them to guess which character she was playing. Play follow the leader, with the class moving or shaping their bodies the same way the student playing the character does.

Jobs in the Theatre

Illinois State Goal 27.A.3a Students will be able to identify and describe careers and jobs in and among the arts.

When we create a play at Lifeline, we create a community of artists working together to make a complete production. The following is a list of people who helped to create *Flight of the Dodo*:

Playwright/Adaptor/Author - writes the play

Composer - writes the music for the show

Lyricist - writes the words (or "lyrics") for the songs in the play

Director - directs the play: makes decisions about costumes, lights, sets, etc.; gives actors their blocking (where to go on stage)

Choreographer - creates and teaches the actors the dances in the show

Dialect Coach - teaches the actors the various dialects or accents they will use in the play

Lighting Designer - designs and hangs the lights for the show; designs the light cues (when to change the lights)

Set Designer - designs and builds the scenery and props for the show

Puppet Designer - designs and builds the puppets for the show

Sound Designer - designs and records the sound effects for the show

Costume Designer - designs and makes the costumes for the show

Stage Manager - helps the director during rehearsals; sets props and scenery before each performance; runs the sound and lights during the performance [Note that in *Flight of the Dodo* there is also a character called the Stage Manager]

Actors - perform the play

Before the play, ask students to be particularly observant during the performance for the parts of the show that are done by the various people listed above.

After the play, ask the students the following questions:

1. How did the costume designer make the actors look like the characters they were playing?
2. What about their costumes helped you to know what kind of birds they were?
3. Did you have a favorite costume in the show? Which one? Why was it your favorite?
4. How did the costume designer create the birds' costumes so that they would look more like birds than people?
5. What are some of the locations the play took place in? [The ground, the sky, a lake, a river, in a storm cloud]
6. How did the set designer create the different places the play took place? [The backdrop painted like the sky; fabric pieces colored blue or purple for the water and the storm cloud]
7. How did the set designer create the Dodo balloon so that it could move onstage? [Wheels and an open bottom so the actors could move it around by walking]
8. What other ways could you make the balloon move? Why do you think the set designer chose the method she chose? [Machinery can be expensive if making it motor driven; there isn't any fly space at Lifeline, so the balloon couldn't really "fly"]
9. How did the set designer make it so that the inanimate objects (like the Rosebush and the Rock) could "talk"? [By cutting a hole and having the Stage Manager speak through it]
10. What sorts of puppets were in the play? [Small version of the Dodo balloon for the flying competition scene; various set piece puppets]
11. How were the puppets different from other puppets you've seen? How were they the same?
12. What sound effects did you hear in the play? How did those sound effects help you to know what was happening in the play?

Theatre Job Application Letter

Ask the students which job they would like to have in the theatre. Have the students write a job application letter to Lifeline Theatre for the job they would like to do. Have them include what the job is, why they would be good at that job, what qualifications or past experience they have (this can be real or made-up experience), and why they want to do that job. Stress good penmanship in this activity, since they are applying for a job and want to make a good impression on the person reading the letter.

The Playwright

The play *Flight of the Dodo* is based on a picture book by the same name. It is an *adaptation* of the book, meaning that the book is changed so that it becomes a play. Ask the students the following questions:

1. What sort of changes did the playwright make?
2. Why do you think the playwright made those changes?
3. Do you agree with the changes that the playwright made?
4. Would you have made different changes? What would they have been?
5. How might the play have been different if it weren't a musical?
6. Do you think you would have liked the play better if it weren't a musical? Why or why not?
7. What story would you like to make into a play?
8. Do you think it would be hard to change a story into a play? Why or why not?
9. Why do you think some stories might be easier than other stories to adapt? [Stories with a lot of dialogue are easier to adapt because much of the writing is already done; long stories can be harder to adapt because there's more that has to be cut; short stories can be hard to adapt because the playwright must add more to fill out the play]

The Fine Arts

Illinois State Goal 25.B.2 Students will be able to understand how elements and principles combine within an art form to express ideas.

The Illinois State Board of Education defines four fine arts in its State Goals for Arts Education: **Visual Arts, Drama, Dance and Music.** *Flight of the Dodo* makes use of all four of the fine arts:

Visual Arts: scene painting; sculpture (props, three-dimensional set pieces, puppets); costumes

Drama: acting; script; characterization

Dance: choreography

Music: singing; musical accompaniment

Have students identify how the four fine arts are used in *Flight of the Dodo*. How would the play be different without music? Without dancing? Without the sets? Without the costumes? Which elements of the four fine arts are absolutely necessary to tell the story and which elements could be left out?

Have the students identify how the fine arts are combined in other entertainment (dance concerts, movies, TV, music videos). Which of the fine arts do they prefer? Why? Have students identify places in their town or city where they can see or experience each of the four fine arts.

Have the students plan out and perform an all-dance performance of *Flight of the Dodo*. Have them tell the story through pictures only (painting or drawing). Have them tell the story of *Flight of the Dodo* by writing song lyrics to a tune they already know (a folk song, popular song, nursery rhyme).

Music

Illinois State Goal 26.A.1c Students will be able to identify a variety of sounds and sound sources (e.g., instruments, voices and environmental sounds).

Illinois State Goal 25.A.1c Students will be able to identify differences in elements and expressive qualities (e.g., between fast and slow tempo; loud and soft dynamics) in a piece of music.

The background music for *Flight of the Dodo* is pre-recorded. How would the play have been different if live music were used? Why do you think the composer decided to have recorded music rather than live music? [It is less expensive to have recorded music rather than live musicians; there is no space on stage for musicians; one can do effects that can't be done live; you can have a larger orchestration than you can in a theatre space]

Discussion

1. What are the advantages of using recorded music? The disadvantages?
2. What are the advantages of using live music? The disadvantages?
3. What sort of instruments can you hear on the recording?
4. How would the music sound different with different instruments?
5. What styles of music were used in the play? [1960s pop and rock]
6. What other styles of music might have been used?
7. What styles of music might not have made sense in the play?

Further Adventures

Illinois State Goal 3.B.1a Students will be able to use prewriting strategies to generate and organize ideas (e.g., focus on one topic; organize writing to include a beginning, middle and end; use descriptive words when writing about people, places, things, events).

Illinois State Goal 3.B.1b Students will demonstrate focus, organization, elaboration and integration in written compositions.

At the end of *Flight of the Dodo*, the birds agree to help each other out: Penguin says he will help teach the Geese to target poop so that they don't hit anyone down below, and the Geese agree to help the Waddlers to fly better in the Dodo balloon. Have students write a continuation of the story, in which one of the birds helps the other birds learn a new skill. Before beginning to write, have students answer the following questions:

Who - is in the story? Who is doing the teaching and who is doing the learning?

Where - does the story take place?

What - is it that the birds are doing that they need to be taught to do differently?

When - do they need to learn the new skill by?

How - does the teacher teach this new skill? How well do the learners learn it?

When the students have come up with these answers, have the students incorporate them into their own story about the Waddlers and the Flappers.

Different Points of View

Illinois State Goal 2A.1a Students will be able to recognize that others may experience situations differently from oneself.

Illinois State Goal 2A.1b Students will be able to use listening skills to identify the feelings and perspectives of others.

In the play, the Geese do not realize that they've pooped on Penguin. Once they are told what they've done, they agree to be more careful. Sometimes we do or say something that hurts someone's feelings without realizing we've done it; or someone says or does something to us that hurts our feelings. Can you think of a time that this has happened to you? Did you let the person know that you'd been hurt? How did that feel? Did the person apologize, or offer to change their behavior? If you kept the hurt to yourself, how did that feel?

Sometimes it helps to think about the other person's point of view before we say or do something. This is referred to as "putting the shoe on the other foot" or "walking in someone else's shoes." Ask students the following questions:

1. Why do you think those phrases are used to mean "looking at someone else's point of view"?
2. When might it be a good idea to think about someone else's way of seeing things?
3. If you've hurt someone's feelings, sometimes it is helpful to put yourself in the other person's place and to think about how they feel. Why do you think this might help you understand how they feel?
4. How might this help you to keep from hurting the other person in the future?
5. If someone has said or done something that has hurt your feelings, do you think it might make you feel better if you explain to them how they've hurt you? Why or why not?
6. If someone pointed out that you'd hurt their feelings, would that help you to change your behavior so that it didn't happen again?

Extinct Animals

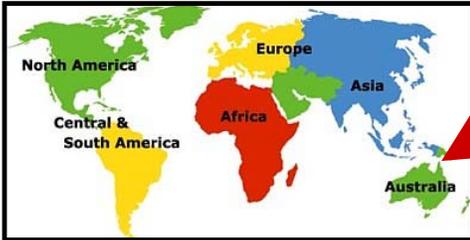
The birds in the play christen the balloon the Dodo, in honor of their extinct friend, the dodo bird. Have students research the dodo, as well as other extinct animals. When did the bird or animal become extinct? Why did the bird or animal become extinct? [Loss of habitat; introduced predators; over hunting; etc.] Have students also research animals that are endangered and list what is being done to try to keep them from becoming extinct. Ask students what they can do to help prevent certain animals from becoming extinct.

The Birds

There are five kinds of birds in the play: penguin, cassowary, kiwi, ostrich and geese. The following pages have some facts about the flightless birds and a few pictures. Have the students use these pages as examples to create their own pages about these birds, or about other birds that interest them. Have them divide the birds into birds that fly and birds that are flightless (or, as the play refers to them, Flappers and Waddlers).

The CASSOWARY

Cassowaries are large flightless birds native to the tropical forests of New Guinea and northeastern Australia.



Cassowaries are **shy, secretive** birds of the deep forest, good at disappearing long before a human knows they are there.



Cassowaries are **frugivorous**, which means they eat mostly fallen fruit and fruit on low branches.

(They'll also eat fungi, snails, insects, frogs, snakes and other small animals.)

Cassowaries have horn-like crests called **casques** ("kasks") on their heads.

Cassowaries make a very low "booming" sound, to help communicate in dense rainforests. Their "boom" is the lowest known bird call, on the edge of human hearing.

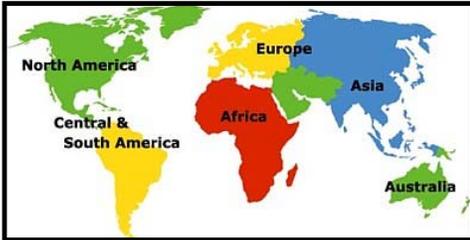


The female cassowary does not care for her eggs or chicks; the male incubates the eggs for two months, then rears the brown-striped chicks for nine months, defending them fiercely against all potential predators... including humans.

The cassowary can run as fast as 32 miles per hour!

The Kiwi

Kiwis are small, pear-shaped, flightless birds native to New Zealand.



Kiwis have a good sense of **smell**, and are the only birds in the world with **nostrils** at the tip of their beaks.



Kiwis are **nocturnal**, which means they are mostly active at night.

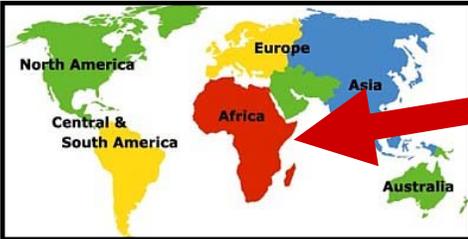
Kiwis eat small insects, seeds, grubs and **many varieties of WORMS**.



Once bonded, a male and female kiwi tend to live their **whole lives** together as a **couple**. These relationships may last for up to **20 years!**

The OSTRICH

Ostriches are large flightless birds native to Africa.



Ostriches are the **largest birds in the world**, and they lay the **largest eggs** of any bird species.



Ostriches have sharp eyesight and hearing, which helps them to notice **predators** (other animals that hunt and eat Ostriches, such as LIONS) from far away.

Ostriches can live for **75 YEARS!**



Ostriches like to eat seeds and small plants, though they're known to eat just about anything.

They swallow **pebbles**, which helps to grind up their food.

Though they can go a long time without drinking water, Ostriches love to take **BATHS**.

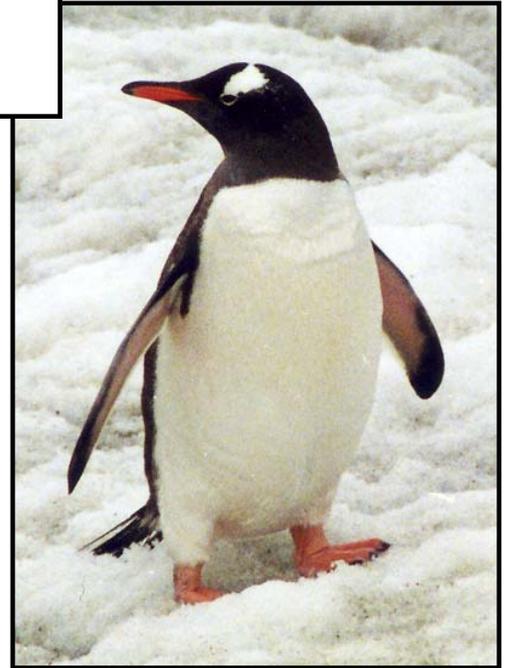
The ostrich can run as fast as 40 miles per hour!

The PENGUIN

Penguins are a group of flightless birds living almost exclusively in the Southern Hemisphere.



Not all Penguins live in cold climates. Only a few species live as far south as Antarctica.

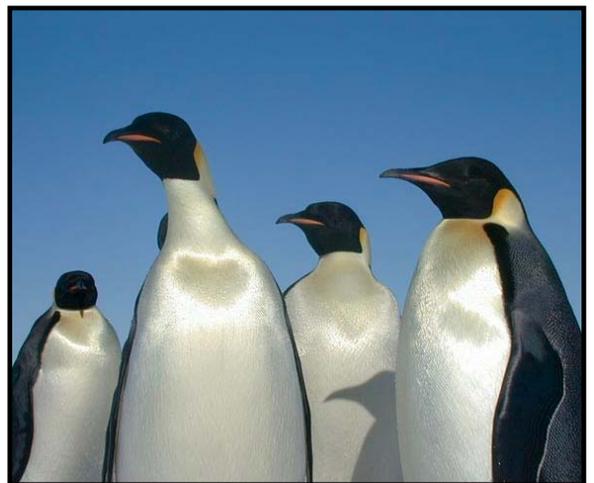


Penguins are **aquatic** birds; they live half their life on land and half **in the water**.

Penguin wings have become **flippers**, helping them swim with grace and speed.



Penguins either **waddle** from place to place, or slide on their bellies across the snow, a movement called **tobogganing**.



Penguins can swim as fast as **27 miles per hour** when frightened by predators.

They can dive as deep as **1870 feet!**

Review of *Flight of the Dodo*

By: _____

I give this play (circle the number of stars):



My favorite part of the play was _____

I liked this part of the play because _____

My favorite character was _____

He/she was my favorite because _____

I think everyone should go see this play because _____

Teacher Comment Form

Please fill out as much (or as little) of this comment form as you would like. When you are finished, please either: 1) mail it to Erica Foster, Lifeline Theatre, 6912 North Glenwood Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60626; 2) fax it to 773-761-4582; or 3) bring it with you when you come to see the performance. Thank you for your time!

School: _____ Grade Level: _____ Number of Students: _____

1. On a scale of 1 to 10 (ten being the best), how would you rate the **performance** of *Flight of the Dodo*? _____

2. On a scale of 1 to 10 (ten being the best), how would you rate the **study guide** for *Flight of the Dodo*? _____

3. What were some words your students used to describe the play? _____

4. Would you want to bring your students to another performance at Lifeline? Yes No

5. Why or why not? _____

6. Which activities in the study guide were most beneficial to your students? _____

7. How did your students benefit from these activities? (If possible, please give specific examples.)

8. What could we do to improve the **study guide** or **our productions**? _____

9. Are there any other books you would like to see Lifeline adapt? _____
