

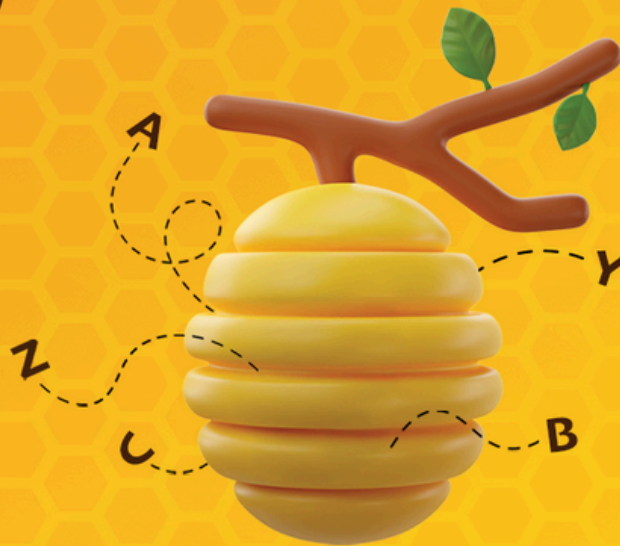


RALEIGH LITTLE THEATRE EDUCATION



RALEIGH
LITTLE
THEATRE

Akeelah and the *Bee*



February 7 - 23

ADAPTED FOR THE STAGE BY **CHERYL L. WEST**
BASED ON THE ORIGINAL SCREENPLAY BY **DOUG ATCHISON**

Directed by Monét Noelle Marshall

Study Guide

Made by Rayden Leeder
For use by Raleigh Little Theatre

Raleigh Little Theatre

Founded in 1936, Raleigh Little Theatre (RLT) is one of the oldest, continuously operating, community theatres in the United States. RLT offers entertainment, education, and community programs year-round, reaching over 40,000 people. As a community theatre, RLT engages hundreds of volunteers, under the guidance of professional staff, to achieve its mission and to bring quality live theatre to the Triangle area.

Visit www.RaleighLittleTheatre.org for more information.

About the Playwright

Cheryl L. West was heavily inspired by the two greatest storytellers she knew, her grandmother Lemmie and great grandfather Willie. West says her goal with her works is "to keep our family's legacy and oral traditions alive while telling stories that highlight the poetry in everyday life as expressed through southern vernacular."

West has written many fantastic plays and other works that show a variety of stories centered around black culture, history, and experiences. Some of these works include *Addy: American Girl Story*, *Lizzie Bright and the Buckminster Boy*, *Pullman Porter Blues*, and *Jar the Floor*.

West's inspiration for this play came from seeing how much her daughters loved the movie it was based on. West made slight changes to the original film to make her adaptation better reflect the experiences she and others in her community grew up with. You can learn more about West by visiting her website, <https://cheryllwest.com/>

History of Spelling Bees

The first ever official spelling bee was The Scripps National Spelling Bee, also known as just “The National Spelling Bee”. It was founded by The E. W. Scripps Company in 1925. The spelling bee has always been held as a not for profit event that celebrates the achievement of spelling.

The National Spelling Bee has been running every year since it started in 1925, only missing the bee 3 times; 1943–1945 due to World War II and 2020 due to COVID. While it is held in the US and the main participants are from America, people from other countries come to participate in this event. Some of these countries include Canada, China, Mexico, and Nigeria.

The National Spelling Bee is the longest running and largest event made to promote education in the US. The goal of the spelling bee is to encourage children to engage in the art of spelling, help students enlarge their vocabularies, and widen their knowledge of the English language.

You can learn more about the National Spelling Bee by visiting their website here; <https://spellingbee.com/about>

Synopsis

Based on the movie of the same name, this play follows Akeelah, an 11 year old girl living in Chicago with her mother Gail and brother Reggie. Akeelah faces many challenges in life. She has a strained relationship with her mother and her brother is getting involved in criminal activity. While she struggles in school, Akeelah is incredibly talented at spelling and wins her school's spelling bee. Despite her peers teasing her, the principal and a professor named Dr. Larabee see Akeelah's potential and encourage her to participate in the district wide spelling bee. Akeelah and Dr. Larabee often bicker as he tries to coach her, but they both are determined to win.

As Akeelah progresses through the spelling bee world, she meets new people such as her new friend Javier and her new rival and former spelling bee winner Dylan. Both boys come from affluent neighborhoods and schools than Akeelah. We see Akeelah work through her spelling bee challenges while also facing the difficulties and the challenges she faces at home. The distance that grows between her and the others in her life makes Akeelah start to falter. It is then that her community comes together to help Akeelah succeed. Her mother and neighbors step up to coach her as her friends support her and empower her to continue. In the end, will Akeelah be able to defeat Dylan and take home the trophy, proving she is the spelling bee champion?

Post Show Questions

Confidence and self-assurance

1. How does Akeelah's sense of self and confidence in her talents change throughout the play?
2. What role does Akeelah's family and friends play in either building or breaking her confidence?
3. How can you work to be more confident in your own skills?
4. How can you help others feel more confidence in themselves?

Community

1. How does where Akeelah grew up and live affect who she is?
2. Why was it so important that Akeelah's community, even her bully, came together to help her succeed? What does this tell us about the importance of community and helping one another?
3. What are some ways you can work to build and strengthen your own community?

Family

1. What depictions of families do we see in this play?
2. How are characters like Akeelah and Dylan shaped by their families and how they were raised? How does seeing Dylan's family change Akeelah's perspective?
3. How does Akeelah's mother grow and change through the story? What sparks this change for her?
4. How do you think Akeelah and her family will be after the events of the play are over? Do you think they are better off now than at the start of the play?

Glossary

Grovel - to abase oneself

Attitude - a negative or hostile state of mind

Dictator - one holding complete autocratic control

Pulchritude - beauty

Grandiloquence - a style or manner of speaking that uses complicated language in order to attract admiration and attention

Staphylococci - A bacterium that can cause pus formation, especially in the skin and mucous membranes

Cacophony - a harsh discordant mixture of sounds

Evanescent - Meaning fleeting, short-lived, fading

Exemplary - serving as a desirable model; representing the best of its kind

Alfresco - in the open air

Galoot - a clumsy or oafish person

Intrepidity - an ability to confront fear, pain, uncertainty, or intimidation

Dipsomaniac - craving alcohol

Esthete - a person who has or affects to have a special appreciation of art and beauty

Sisyphean - denoting or relating to a task that can never be completed

Viscerally - in a way that is based on deep feeling and emotional reactions rather than on reason or thought

Sesquipedalian - characterized by long words; long-winded

Appurtenances - an accessory or other item associated with a particular activity or style of living

Xanthosis - yellow discoloration of the skin from abnormal causes

Triskaidekaphobia - extreme superstition regarding the number thirteen

Mix and Match!

Can you match these common spelling bee words to the correct definition? Draw arrows to connect the words to their definitions!

Of the richest and finest kind

Of, relating to, or occurring in the air or atmosphere

A complete failure

A small shrill flute whose range is an octave higher than that of an ordinary flute

An envelope often largely of silk which an insect larva forms about itself

A character in a story or play who opposes the hero

A problem involving a difficult choice

To move from one country, place, or locality to another

A wild headlong rush or flight of frightened animals

Word Bank

Aerial

Cocoon

Dilemma

Fiasco

Luxurious

Migrate

Piccolo

Stampede

Villain

Fill in the Blank!

Test your own spelling knowledge! Can you fill in the missing letters to complete the sentence?

- Akeelah wins her school spelling bee with the word di__at__r.
- Akeelah's skill catches the at__ent__on of Dr. Larabee, who agrees to co__ch her.
- At Javier's house, Akeelah and Dylan spend hours competing in Scrab__le.
- Dr. Larabee helps Akeelah i__prove her spelling by having her spell while __ump r__ping
- Akeelahs co__m__nity steps up to help her train for the champi__nship
- In the end, Akeelah and Dylan both end up winning with a t__e

Word Search

Test your knowledge and see if you can find some of the words used in Akeelah and the Bee below!

Akeelah and the Bee

B	C	A	C	O	P	H	O	N	Y	L	A	C	R
R	I	P	L	F	T	O	C	C	L	A	S	O	T
P	Y	R	S	U	E	C	U	H	I	H	A	E	A
L	E	V	O	R	G	C	S	C	A	E	B	R	L
A	H	D	I	C	T	A	T	O	R	U	S	I	F
A	C	U	A	S	A	L	E	R	L	R	E	S	R
L	R	O	N	S	E	E	E	S	U	I	I	C	E
V	X	E	S	T	H	E	T	E	F	S	L	B	S
I	A	O	T	O	O	L	A	G	T	T	U	U	C
A	C	H	O	I	L	L	I	T	B	I	N	S	O
H	R	T	G	S	T	A	S	I	U	C	H	R	E
N	T	O	N	S	D	E	C	C	O	C	E	U	R
X	A	N	T	H	O	S	I	S	D	I	T	A	B
T	S	R	G	E	O	A	O	C	I	A	R	S	A

CACOPHONY
HEURISTIC
ABSEIL
ESTHETE
DOUBTFUL
GALOOT
ALFRESCO
GROVEL
XANTHOSIS
DICTATOR

Play this puzzle online at : <https://thewordsearch.com/puzzle/7962904/>

Coming up at RLT!



SPRING BREAK



RaleighLittleTheatre.org

Spend your Spring Break at the theatre! Camp is offered for students in Grades K-5 the week of March 31. Rotate to four daily classes Monday-Friday taught by different instructors: acting, movement/dance, voice/song and theatrical design. The skills you build in each class support collaborative creative work, culminating in an original performance shared at the end of the week!



SUMMER CAMP

Raleigh Little Theatre's summer camps are a ton of fun! Camps are for Pre-K - 8th graders from June - August, offered in one- or two-week sessions. We also have an immersive program for high schoolers (including rising 9th graders) called Teens on Stage and Teens Backstage. They will present *Hadestown: Teen Edition* this summer! Camp registration always fills up fast, so reserve your spot soon!



SIX-WEEK CLASSES

Outside of Spring Break and Summer Camps, RLT offers six-week classes all year long. We have classes for all ages, from toddler through high school + adults too! Our next session begins the week of March 3 and includes a playwriting class for middle school, scene study for high school, and several skill-building classes for elementary and Pre-K students. Classes are great for beginners & intermediate too!



BACKSTAGE NIGHT

Do you ever wonder what a theatre looks like backstage? Or how the costumes and sets are made? Come out to **RLT's Backstage Night on March 26 @ 7pm** for a full tour of the theatre! During the tour, you'll get to meet staff members and volunteers and learn about all the different ways you can get involved at the theatre. No experience is required to volunteer at RLT. We're happy to teach you everything you'll need to know! Run a spotlight, paint sets, sew costumes, hand out programs... The opportunities (for all ages) are endless! Hope to see you there!



SCHOOLHOUSE ROCK LIVE! JR.

May 3 - 11

Saturdays and Sundays @ 1:00pm & 3:00pm

A pop culture phenomenon comes to the musical stage in *Schoolhouse Rock Live! JR.* Tom, a nerve-wracked school teacher, is nervous about his first day of teaching. He tries to relax by watching TV, when various characters representing facets of his personality emerge from the set and show him how to win his students over with imagination and music.

Inspired by the Emmy Award-winning 1970s Saturday morning cartoon series that taught history, grammar, math and more through clever, tuneful songs, experience *Schoolhouse Rock Live! JR.* in RLT's outdoor amphitheatre.



 RaleighLittleTheatre.org/Schoolhouse-Rock

