



## Sensory Guide: *Dr. Seuss's The Lorax*

Best enjoyed by ages 5+

Approximately 2 hours (including one-15 minute intermission)

The Old Globe understands that kids with Autism Spectrum Disorders have unique and varying sensory issues. Sensory accommodations are balanced with preserving the genuine theatre experience desired by all children and families.

**Sensory Friendly Performance Accommodations:** Not all aspects of the show may be modified due to their relevance to the story, the show's artistic integrity or production constraints. House lights will stay dimly lit for the entire show. There will be a few minimal modifications to lighting, sound and the performance. Strobe effects will be lessened in intensity. For additional sound reduction, The Old Globe provides disposable earplugs in the lobby.

**Please be advised:** Entering an auditorium with many people can be challenging for some audiences. Added Globe staff and volunteers from San Diego Autism Society will help provide a supportive and welcoming environment. During the show, audience members are free to talk or move, or 'take a break' in the lobby or in the Quiet Room located at the rear.

**A few potential triggers and anxious scenes to prepare for in the show include:**

At the beginning and end of the show, The Once-ler is seen as only glowing eyes and green hands.

At the end of Act 1, we see the machine The Once-ler has invented to chop down trees very quickly – the Super Axe Hacker. The Super Axe Hacker looks like a giant motorcycle. It drives towards the audience and the headlight is shown into the audience. It is driven by dancers wearing masks and are making tree-chopping motions with axes.

The Once-ler pushes The Lorax and argues with him.

Actors who are flying the Swomee-Swans puppets will come down the stairs by the stage and cross across the space between the first row and the stage.

Strobe lights, sirens and heavy fog are used. (Effects will be lessened for the Sensory Friendly performance, but are still somewhat present)

Tree chopping, factory noises and musical numbers can be loud.

All of the Truffula trees are cut down.

**A Swomee-Swan dies after being overcome by smog. (Full description in the timeline below)**

**The Humming Fish's pond becomes full of Gluppity-Glup and Schloppity-Schlopp making them sick.**

**The Bar-ba-loots all get crummies in their tummies because there are no more Truffula Fruits to eat.**

**What to Expect:** A large-scale musical telling the story of *The Lorax* by Dr. Seuss. The musical uses a mixture of costumed actors and puppets to tell the story of The Lorax. While it uses the book as a base, the story has been expanded.

**Positive Themes:** There are many positive themes in *Dr. Seuss's The Lorax*, including protecting the environment, friendship, respecting the ecosystem, problem solving, standing up for what's right, and encouraging and reinforcing that everyone can affect change.

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## Timeline of Potentially Intense Moments for *Dr. Seuss's The Lorax*

*(Be warned: This contains show spoilers and complete descriptions of staging.)*

When you arrive in the theatre, the curtain is up revealing the set. The stage has a post-apocalyptic feel. There are black strings hanging down and fog slowly rolling along. The lights flicker and buzz as if there is power shortage or rolling blackouts. (The flickering lights and buzzing will be cut for the Sensory Friendly performance. The fog intensity is decreased, but still present.) Some of the actors will be playing instruments while they are on stage. There is also a live band that accompanies the actors.

7:04: An actor runs from the side of the stage and up the staircase to center stage as other actors join her and begin to tell the story of The Lorax and The Once-ler

7:05: The black string curtain parts as a tall tower appears; at the top, we see huge yellow eyes and hear the sounds of someone moaning "unless".

7:06: The child then asks The Once-ler what a Lorax is.

7:07: After agreeing to pay 50 cents, some jam, and a snail, The Lorax lowers down the Whispa-Ma-Phone and says to her, "For the secrets I tell are for your ears alone."

7:08: The Once-ler begins to tell his tale of the village of Oncetown and his family's moof-muffering mill. **\*\*\*Song: Life is Tough\*\*\***

7:14: After his family gives his bed to Small Ed, The Once-ler sets off on his journey to find a new home and a new business **\*\*\*Song: I Could Be a Great Man\*\*\***

7:18: The Once-ler falls asleep after his long journey and is awakened by the song of a Swommee Swan. The Once-ler follows the Swommee Swan to a beautiful valley full of swans, bears, and fish. The Swommee Swans are portrayed as puppets on long poles. The swan puppeteers will do a cross in front of the stage with the swans. The Bears are portrayed by humans in bear costumes. The fish are also portrayed as puppets. The Truffula Trees descend down from the top of the stage.

7:19: The Once-ler is admiring the beautiful valley when a piece of a Truffula Tree tuft floats down. The Once-ler is amazed as to how soft it is and tries to create something out of it.

7:21: The Once-ler decides he needs more of the Truffula tuft so he chops down one of the Truffula Trees to get to it. As soon as the tree falls, The Lorax appears from its stump. The Lorax is portrayed by a puppet and has three puppeteers that create his movement and voice. He is very angry about the tree being cut down.

7:24: The Once-ler explains that he needed more of the tufts to make Thneeds. He then tries to explain to The Lorax what a Thneed is.

7:26: The Lorax explains that The Once-ler doesn't need Thneeds, and that everything he needs is all around him.

**\*\*\*Song: Everything You Needs Right Here\*\*\***

7:30: The Lorax plants a seed to grow a new Truffula tree and tells The Once-ler to watch over it.

7:31: The Lorax says goodbye to The Once-ler and heads off to his summer home in Ho-Hay. Before he leaves, he proclaims the area Once-ler's Nook and promises to come back and see The Once-ler one day.

7:32: A man in a suit comes hurrying by and then stops short when he sees the Thneed on the ground. He is enthralled and wants to buy the Thneed.

7:33: The Once-ler decides that people do indeed need Thneeds, so he calls his family to come to Paradise Valley to set up a Thneed knitting factory. **\*\*\*Song: When We Get Rich\*\*\***

7:36: Small Ed has arrived with the family and asks for a job. The Once-ler is not happy to see the "bed stealer." The Once-ler hires Small Ed as his P.A. (personal assistant)

7:38: The Lorax wakes up. It's a lovely morning in Ho-Hay. After greeting his various friends, he climbs up one of the trees and begins to see that The Once-ler has chopped down hundreds of trees. He summons a Swan with a "Caw-Caw!" call to fly him immediately to Once-ler's Nook

7:40: The Once-ler tells The Lorax that making Thneeds was the job he was born to do, so they needed to cut down the trees, but there are still millions left. He also proclaims that they are building a town, and that people love living here, even the baby in his drawer. He opens his desk drawer to reveal a baby. (Which is played by a doll)

7:42: The Once-ler promises to only cut down trees in Once-ler's Nook. The Lorax and The Once-ler sign a contract. The Lorax asks The Once-ler if he really does promise. The Once-ler says break a promise would never be something he would do. The Lorax says that if he breaks it, "Then woe betide you."

7:43: Right after The Lorax flies away, The Once-ler's family enters and tells them that they need more trees and are planning to chop down trees from all over the place, not just Once-ler's Nook. The Once-ler tries to protest because he had just promised The Lorax he wouldn't cut down any trees outside of Once-ler's Nook.

7:46: Three lawyers enter and look over the contract between The Once-ler and The Lorax. Channeling their inner 60s Motown Girl Group, they try to convince The Once-ler to rip up the contract. **\*\*\*Song: Great Man\*\*\***

7:50: The Once-ler rips up the contract.

7:51: The dawn breaks over Ho-Hay. There is a distinct haze to the morning which looks like fog. A Swommee swan enters to sing and dance its dawn song. The Swommee Swan during this section is portrayed by an actor in costume. The Swommee swan begins its ballet and tries to sing its dawn song, only to start croaking and coughing. The haze isn't fog, but smog from the factory in Once-ler's Nook. The smog rolls in thicker and thicker choking the swan until it falls to the floor coughing and gasping for breath after inhaling too much smog. The swan is unable to get enough oxygen and dies in The Lorax's arms. **[Please note: this is one of the more emotional moments in the show and can upset**

*kids who are very empathetic. We strongly recommend reviewing this moment prior to seeing the show so your child is prepared.]*

7:52: The Once-ler arrives in Ho-Hay at The Lorax's summer home to discover it completely blanketed in smog.

7:55: The Once-ler tells The Lorax of his plan to create a nature preserve call Lorax Park and to build a statue of The Lorax on a stump, with a tuft, yelling about nature and stuff. He says it will be on place where the tree chopping is ended.

7:58: They pick up The Lorax and take him to Lorax Park and hoist him on a pedestal. The mayor begins a speech telling everyone to enjoy their BBQ, fireworks, and loud music where nature is allowed. The whole scene is a circus, and one of the Barbaloot bears is tethered on a chain. The Lorax becomes quite upset, yells, "NO!" and begs everyone to leave. He wants the old forest that he used to know where the bears played and the fish hummed and the swans sung all day.

8:00: The Once-ler is tired of The Lorax's arguments and always being negative. He riles up the crowd who end up throwing The Lorax into the trash can. The stage goes dark.

8:01: All of a sudden, we see a blinding light and the lights begin flashing like we're at a rock concert. The tempo is furious, and both the music and roar of a machine are loud. We are introduced to The Once-ler's new invention – the Super Axe Hacker, which looks like a motorcycle with people along side of it dressed in dark clothing and holding tree-chopping axes. **\*\*\*Song: Super Axe Hacker\*\*\*** *[Please note: even though this song will have reduced volume and light intensity, it can still be overwhelming for someone with a sensory sensitivity. Please feel free to exit during The Lorax Park scene and watch it either in the quiet room or out in the lobby.]*

8:03: The Lorax tries one last time to stop The Once-ler **AND** the Super Axe Hacker machine. He stands in front of the Axe Hacker and yells at The Once-ler that he broke his promise. The Once-ler yells back to get off his hacker.

8:04: The Axe Hacker continues with loud noises and bright lights. The Lorax stands center stage and declares he will not let one more tree be chopped – it has to stop!

8:05: **INTERMISSION**

8:20: **ACT 2 – at the gates outside The Once-ler's Factory**

8:21: The Lorax breaks into the factory by shipping himself to The Once-ler.

8:23: He unlocks the gate and sends out animal calls to rally his friends. Animals enter from right next to the stage and run up the steps onto the stage.

8:24: The animals manage to overpower Small Ed and tie him up so he can't warn The Once-ler.

8:25: The Lorax sings a protest song as the animals take over the factory and lock it up from The Once-ler. **\*\*\*Song: We are One\*\*\***

8:27: Samelore Bews shows up from Channel 4 news to cover the protest. The Once-ler shows up and is very angry that they've locked him out from his own factory.

8:28: Suddenly a siren sounds and two inspectors arrive. They are from an Environmental Health agency and they are there to do an inspection of the factory looking for pollution.

8:31: The Lorax gets caught in a machine in the automatic knitter room. Even though it looks smooth and clean we discover The Once-ler has put it on “Demonstration Mode.” The Lorax turns the knob to the correct working setting and the room starts to fill with smog.

8:33: The Lorax leads the inspectors over to a pond where the water used to be clear and is now filled with schlopp. The fish in the pond are very sickly and are moving away from the factory.

8:35: While The Once-ler keeps trying to tell everyone it’s not as bad as it looks, we hear a large fart sound. The Barbaloot bears have lost their main food source of Truffula tree fruits and now have crummies in their tummies.

8:36: The inspectors give the factory a failing grade and force it to close.

8:40: The Once-ler tells the inspectors and Samelore about all they accomplished with the factory, bigger roads, bigger gardens, bigger swimming pools, bigger cars, bigger freezers and fridges, and even holidays. He says they can stop getting bigger and go back to not having stuff, not having phones, not having more than beans for food. But, before he stops, he asks if they would like to see their new line. A red light starts flashing as a runway appears and models wearing the new Thneeds start parading down the runway. **\*\*\*Song: Thneed 2.0\*\*\*** The inspectors rip up their score sheets and everyone wants the new Thneeds.

8:46: Small Ed comes in and tells The Once-ler that there is a problem. They’ve over estimated how many trees are left. Almost all the trees are gone.

8:46: The last of the Truffula trees falls. The stage goes dark and all we see are stumps where Truffula trees once stood. The Lorax sits alone on a tree stump. Samelore tries to interview him about the animals leaving and the forest being chopped down, but The Lorax says nothing. The Lorax begins to sing: **\*\*\*Song: Take it Wherever You Go\*\*\***

8:51: The Once-ler goes off in search of his friend. He asks if he can still be The Lorax’s friend. The Lorax says, “no” – he is very upset. There is no forest left and it is time for him to go. He has looked after that place for hundreds of years, but once it’s gone, there is no place for Loraxes there.

8:54: The Lorax lifts himself by the seat of his pants, flies upwards, and through a hole in the smog, leaves without a trace. **\*\*\*Song: Take It Wherever You Go\*\*\***

8:56: Slowly the tower of The Once-ler advances forward as The Once-ler finishes his tale.

8:59: The child who ask The Once-ler to tell her the story begs him to throw down a seed so she can plant it. Just like The Lorax, the child plants the seed, waters it, and sits to wait. The child falls asleep.

9:01: Overnight, the seed grows into a small Truffula tree! The Once-ler, now an old man, comes down from his tower. He tells the child that unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing will get better – no, it will not. The kid asks if The Lorax will come back. The Once-ler says “no,” because he doesn’t need to. They can **all** speak for trees, and **all** make a fuss, and **all** be a Lorax.

9:03: **END OF SHOW**

## How to prepare for the Story (before the show):

Here is a full story synopsis – but, please be warned, as a *full* synopsis, it is full of spoilers!

### Plot Synopsis

written by Elissa Adams, former Director of New Play Development

Edited by Kristina Miller, Senior Audience Services Manager

A crowd enters the stage and tells the audience about The Once Happy Once-ler, a reclusive man who lives on a dark street in town. In front of his house is a crumbling statue, at the base of which is written the word “Unless.” The crowd pleads with The Once-ler to explain the mystery behind the word. He begins to tell them his story...

When The Once-ler was young, he lived with his family, who owned a moof-muffering mill. They dug moof out of the ground and sold it. It was steady work but never made much money. The young Once-ler never fit in with his family or his moof-muffering neighbors. He was always dreaming up fantastic inventions and wondering if there was something more to life than mining moof. When the day comes that his family is finally very tired of his questions and general dreaminess, they send him off into the world to make his own way. The Once-ler strikes out on his own, full of optimism, taking with him only a set of knitting needles given to him by his granny. After traveling for a long while, The Once-ler sees a beautiful bird fly overhead and decides to follow it. The Swomee Swan leads him into a beautiful valley populated by extraordinary colorful trees. The Once-ler is enchanted by the beauty of the trees, and struck by the softness and lightness of their tufts; he begins to knit a tuft that has blown off the tree (using his granny's knitting needles) into a fantastic fabric/shape he calls a thneed. Wanting to reach the tufts at the very top of one of the trees, The Once-ler chops the tree down. Instantly, there appears a strange orange creature—The Lorax. The Lorax is the protector of the beautiful valley and, in particular, of the trees, which The Once-ler learns are called Truffula Trees. He demands that The Once-ler stop chopping the Truffula trees down. The Once-ler explains to The Lorax that his future depends on being able to make and sell the thneeds he makes from the Truffula tufts. The Lorax gives The Once-ler a tour of the beautiful valley, showing him that it is a perfectly sustained ecosystem of plants and animals and that The Once-ler, should he choose to stay in the valley, will have everything he needs and therefore no reason to chop down Truffula trees and make thneeds. The Once-ler is won over. He decides to stay in the valley and soon he and The Lorax are great friends.

One day, when The Lorax has to leave the valley to go care for other Truffula trees, The Once-ler promises to stay and protect the Truffula trees in the beautiful valley which has been renamed “Once-ler’s Nook.” But soon, a business man comes to the valley and buys The Once-ler’s thneed. The Once-ler convinces himself that he can make money and still take care of the trees; what harm can come of harvesting a few tufts? But, pretty soon, the thneed business begins to grow, and The Once-ler's family moves to the beautiful valley and sets up a thneed knitting factory. More and more Truffula trees are chopped down.

When The Lorax climbs into a tree to enjoy a beautiful sunrise, he sees the devastation that has occurred in the beautiful valley—hardly any trees are left! The Lorax is infuriated and saddened and confronts the now-rich Once-ler. The Once-ler promises The Lorax that he will set up a protected place where no more Truffula trees will be chopped down. But, as the market for thneeds expands and The Once-ler gets caught up in the acclaim he receives for having become such an important business man, he sacrifices the trees he promised The Lorax he would save.

One night, The Lorax and the animals who once made their home in the beautiful valley sneak into the thneed factory to protest The Once-ler's giant thneed operation. The Lorax has even called environmental inspectors to show them the pollution from The Once-ler's factory. However, The Lorax is no match for the sneakiness of The Once-ler or the TV crews and crowds who have come to report on The Once-ler's great enterprise. The Once-ler manages to convince all the people around him that they have no need for nature, just as he did himself. The Lorax disappears, and we soon find out that in the expansion of the thneed business, there is a massive Truffula tree shortage. The Once-ler's family, now rich from their venture, leaves The Once-ler behind, taking all his money. At that very moment, left alone in his office, The Once-ler finally hears the sickening chop-chop of an axe as the last Truffula tree of the forest is cut down.

The Once-ler, left alone and with nothing, hikes into the valley in search of his friend, The Lorax. He finds The Lorax packing up to leave, after all the animals – Swomee Swans, Barbaloot Bears, and Humming Fish – have left in search of a new home. There are no more animals and no more trees for The Lorax to take care of. Sitting with The Lorax, The Once-ler begins to see for himself the havoc he has wreaked just as The Lorax disappears.

Unable to bear what he has done to his friend and to the beautiful valley he once loved, and no longer able to run his business without any Truffula trees, The Once-ler becomes the recluse we met at the beginning of the play. As he finishes telling his story to the crowd, one of them, a child, asks if it would help to plant a seed. The Once-ler says it would be no use—every seed needs a Lorax to protect it and help it grow—but sends a seed down anyway. The child plants the seed and sits by it through the night. The next morning, a small shoot appears – a very small shoot of a new Truffula tree! The crowd rushes to find The Once-ler and the child, who resolve to both be a Lorax and protect the little tree, because unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It's not.

## Preparing for The Old Globe Experience

### Priming:

Adult audience members attending with youth with Autism Spectrum Disorders and other sensitivity issues may read our guidance and environmental mapping below to prepare for the total experience and excitement at The Old Globe. These tips are for anyone attending any public performances on the UnitedHealth Group Stage, not just the Sensory Friendly shows.

### Getting Ready:

- Coming to the theatre can be a special occasion, or a casual family outing, but it's always fun. Some audience members dress up, and some do not – it's your choice.
- You can bring your own food and drink. The rules are that food must be consumed in the lobby and not the theatre. Drinks with lids are allowed in the theatre.
- Children can bring weighted blankets, their own noise cancelling earmuffs or headphones, and comfort toys as needed. You can bring a camera and take photos in our lobbies, but not inside the theatre. Electronic devices including phones must be turned off in the theatre.
- Check out The Old Globe's social media to learn more about the show you're going to see.
- Always feel free to call our ticket office 619.234.5623 or contact [Tickets@theoldglobe.org](mailto:Tickets@theoldglobe.org) if you have any questions.
- Families may select their own seats online. If you think you might need to leave the show during the performance, we recommend choosing an aisle seat.

### Entering the Theatre:

- Volunteers are there to greet you as you enter the theatre. They have various fidgets and earplugs available.
- When you are ready to go into the theatre, ushers will look at your tickets and direct you towards your seating section.

- We do have a balcony. There is elevator access.
- Ushers will scan the barcode on your tickets at the entrance to the theatre. Once the theatre is open, ushers will be there to direct you to the appropriate door to find your seats.
- Time to turn off electronic devices! Remember: no photography, texting or phone usage in the theatres.

### Need a Break?

- INTERMISSION: There will be one 15 minute intermission. Many people leave the theatre to use the restrooms or buy things at the concession stand or gift shop or just take the opportunity to walk and talk during intermission.
- The crowd can move slowly, and there may be lines.
- You do not have to leave your seats if you don't need or want to. A few minutes after intermission starts, a member of the Autism Society will lead some intermission exercises.

If anyone needs a break *before* intermission or has trouble sitting quietly:

- There are monitors in the lobby, if you need to step out at any point. The sound and viewing quality is not equal to the live experience inside, but it does serve those who want to continue watching the show but need to move around or make noise.
- The Old Globe "quiet room" available at the back of the left side of the audience on the main floor. This room allows you to see the show through a glass window and the sound is broadcast in the room.
- EXTRA HELP: Ushers can help with transitions between areas during the show.

### After the Show:

- The cast always returns for a Curtain Call. Prepare for applause!
- When it's time to leave the theatre, the crowd can move slowly and there may be lines. If you need to wait for the crowd to thin, you can wait in your seats for a few minutes.
- The gift shop and restrooms remain open after the show for approximately half an hour. You are welcome to sit in our lobby and talk about the show during this time.

Contact the The Old Globe Ticket Office at 619.234.5623 or [tickets@theoldglobe.org](mailto:tickets@theoldglobe.org) for more information, seating questions, other requests and more.