



Welcome!

Thumbelina: A Little Musical is a new adaptation of the classic tale by Hans Christian Andersen about a girl who forges her path, embraces her differences, and finds her place.

This Toolkit contains resources to help kids, families, and teachers learn together about *Thumbelina: A Little Musical*. A story summary (pages 4-5), interviews with the playwright (pages 8-10) and director (pages 11-13), and a collection of fun activities will help bring the story to life (pages 14-23).

These materials are recommended for parents wanting further insight into the play, teachers preparing their students for a visit to the theater, and kids who want to keep engaging with the story even after the show is over.

See you at the theater!

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Thumbelina: A Little Musical TOOLKIT

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Thank you for participating in the A.R.T. Education Experience!

If you have questions about using this Toolkit in your class, or to schedule an A.R.T. teaching artist to visit your classroom, contact A.R.T. Education and Engagement at:

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The Story

The musical opens on a woman in her garden, who wants a child more than anything else in the world. Hearing her wish, an enchantress appears and gives her a seed. The woman plants the seed in her garden and it grows into a big, beautiful flower. When this flower blooms, it reveals a tiny girl. She is as small as a thumb, so the woman names her Thumbelina.

The woman raises Thumbelina, teaching her how to **tend** to the garden, giving her books to read, and protecting her from the outside world.



After her mother's death, Thumbelina stays in her garden until her friend, a bird named Blue, reveals that there is a world beyond her home. Thumbelina sees pictures of fairies as small as her in a book, so she writes letters looking for other tiny people. Blue delivers the letters when he migrates south for the winter.

> Tend: take care of Migrates: when birds fly somewhere warmer for the winter

Apothecary: a person or place that sells medical supplies Reluctantly: in an unwilling or

hesitant way

Astonished: surprised and

amazed

Mrs. Toad runs an **apothecary** with her son. Toad. One day, she finds one of

Thumbelina's letters and decides that Thumbelina will make a good wife for her son. When Prince Julian, the Fairy Prince, comes to buy herbal medicine for his mother, the Fairy Queen, Mrs. Toad demands that he kidnap Thumbelina in exchange for the medicine. Julian reluctantly agrees and goes to Thumbelina's garden. Thumbelina is **astonished** to meet someone her size! Julian convinces her to come on an adventure with him to fairyland. Secretly, however, he



The Story (cont.)

is planning to take her to Mrs. Toad.

After traveling for a day to the Toads' on foot, Thumbelina and Julian meet Mr. Mole, who offers to take them in his underground train, the Apollo Express.

Spoilers ahead! Don't read on if you don't want to know the end of the play!

Despite the wonderful service on the train, Julian is **quaking** with fear from being underground. Suddenly, Mr. Mole reveals that he is angry with Prince Julian, because the fairy kingdom has been harming the moles' **environment**. He ties them up and throws Thumbelina and Julian into the locked coal car.

Inside the coal car, Thumbelina suggests that Julian fly up to the window at the top of the car. Julian admits that his wings are fake and made out of wire and fabric. Thumbelina figures out how to use the wire from his fairy wings as a lockpick to escape the coal car.

Julian and Thumbelina tumble out of the train right in front of Mrs. Toad's **apothecary**. Toad captures Thumbelina and locks her in the cellar. Julian tries to change his deal with Mrs. Toad to save Thumbelina, but she refuses and captures him, too. Thumbelina uses her lockpick again to escape and fights Mrs. Toad and Toad to save Julian. They escape and run away to Fairyland.

As an expert gardener, Thumbelina is able to find and grow the herbal medicine that the Fairy Queen needs. She becomes an **apothecary** and changes how fairies treat their environment and fellow creatures. With her guidance, the fairy royalty even **make amends** with the other creatures. Thumbelina makes a home in Fairyland with her new friends.

Reflection Questions

- What other stories do you know that start with a wish?
- What would you wish for from an enchantress?
- What would be challenging about being as small as Thumbelina and Julian?

Quaking: shivering or trembling in fear
Environment: the physical surroundings, including air, water, soil, plants, and animals
Make amends: to try to correct a mistake

one made and to seek

forgiveness



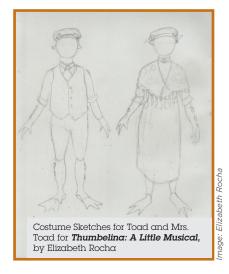
The Characters

Mother: an older woman who gardens and longs to have a child; loving and protective

Enchantress: a magical woman who grants the mother's wish

Thumbelina: a three-inch tall girl who grew out of a flower. She loves to read and longs to go on an adventure; brave, curious, and creative

Blue: a blue jay and Thumbelina's friend; kind and loyal



Mrs. Toad: a toad who runs an apothecary and schemes to kidnap Thumbelina as a wife for her son; devious

Toad: Mrs. Toad's son who loves eating bugs; lazy

Prince Julian: the Fairy Prince who needs medicine for his mother, the Fairy Queen; loyal and determined

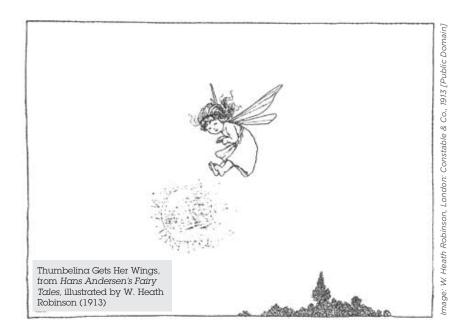
Mr. Mole: the conductor of the Apollo Express, an underground train; charming

Character Walk Activity:

Lead students in an acting exercise where they learn about different characters from *Thumbelina* through creative play! Here are some prompts to get you started:

- Make a statue of a mole. Statues should be still and quiet. What does a mole look like?
- Walk around the classroom like a mole. Voices should be low for walks. How do moles walk? Are they fast or slow? How can you show that with your body?
- Now, make a statue of a toad. How would a toad stand?
- Walk around the classroom like a toad. Remember to respect the space of your fellow ensemble members! How do toads move?
- Make a statue of Thumbelina. How can you show that you're very, very small?
- Keep going with the characters of the play listed above. You can even expand to other creatures one might see in Thumbelina's world.





A Little Musical for a Big Stage:

An Interview with Playwright and Composer Julia Riew

Outside of writing and composing **Thumbelina** at the A.R.T.'s Loeb Drama Center, Julia Riew is a Junior at Harvard University's Lowell House studying Theater, Dance & Media and Music. She sat down with A.R.T.'s Publications and Dramaturgy Assistant Lama El Homaïssi to talk about her work on this season's family holiday show.

When did you know you wanted to be a writer-composer? How did it all start?

Theatre and music were always a part of my life. I started my classical training in violin at the age of four, then singing when I was six. I would always make up plays that I would perform with my cousins at family reunions and with my friends as we forced our teachers to watch during recess! In Middle School, it all naturally came together when I started writing my own music and stories. Then I was part of the Arch City Theatre Troupe, which was run by kids from ages eight to eighteen, and we held cabarets to raise money for juvenile diabetes. I also did a lot of school musicals, until one day I thought..."what if I wrote my own?"

What drew you to the story of *Thumbelina* for this production?

Most people are familiar with the fairytale - they'll say, "Oh! Isn't she the little girl who's the size of a little thumb?" - but no one really knows her story very



A Little Musical for a Big Stage (cont.)

well. This meant I had the opportunity to rewrite her story so she's no longer just a little victim of her circumstances. Instead of her story being determined by a Prince who comes to the rescue, my Thumbelina is a voracious reader. Instead of her just being sheltered in her mother's garden, she spends the time gaining expertise through books, and reading adventure novels that fill her with curiosity and desire for her own journey.

How are you bringing the fantasy world of *Thumbelina* to life on stage?

We thought it would be really fun to play with the idea of size, so our set and



costume designers have created pieces that are scaled way up like giant flowers and trees. Our characters look like small fairies, animals, and insects in comparison. There's a song called "Anywhere" that goes, "take a look inside a story book, and your mind becomes a stage." I wrote it to invite kids to channel their imagination and collaborate with us to tell this story.

A.R.T. commissioned *Thumbelina* after your show *The East Side* received a student production at Harvard's Farkas Hall in April 2019. That show was centered around Asian-American identity and was born out of an urgency to tell stories authentically. Can you speak more to your role as an emerging Asian-American artist?

Growing up in Missouri, I didn't see many people who looked like me, especially on stage. The first time I ever saw a Korean on a stage, I was nineteen and I'm twenty now! It was *Endlings* by Celine Song at the Loeb Drama Center, and I was in such awe because I was finally watching a Korean story. Hamilton had come out recently, and it made me realize that stories like mine weren't being told enough, either. That's why I wrote *The East Side*, which is about my Asian-American experience. My collaborators and I decided to form the Asian Student Arts Project, a pan-Asian arts group at Harvard. We wanted to reach the Asian artists on campus. We asked, "where were they?



A Little Musical for a Big Stage (cont.)

How could we make more of them?" Now we host open mic nights, workshops, guest speakers, and we plan to put on a show every semester. It's a great community and platform for people to share their work, and we're even collaborating with other minority theatre groups on campus to bridge our worlds.

What your thoughts were as you were headed into the casting for Thumbelina?

For me, diverse casting is definitely very important. As a person of color who has auditioned for a lot of shows before. I know the importance of highlighting different

voices. I definitely had the audience in mind, thinking... "who are these kids going to see when they look up on stage? Are they going to see someone they can relate to?" That was really important to me, so I made it a point not to picture what I thought the cast would look like beforehand. When Janiah Lockett walked in the room and engaged with the other actors, I instantly knew she was going to be Thumbelina.

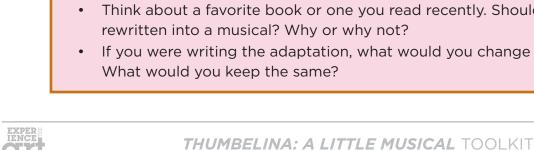
What are you hoping audiences take away from Thumbelina's journey?

First of all, I hope the show is fun for parents, kids, anyone! I want them all to laugh and have a good time, but also learn that it's okay to be different. In fact, it's the things that make us different that make us who we are. The power of friendship is also a big theme in the show; that although we may be different, we have a lot more common than you think, and we must come together. I also want everyone to chase their dreams just like Thumbelina did after years of dreaming.

Interview by A.R.T. Dramaturgy and Publications Assistant Lama El-Homaïssi This article first appeared in the Winter 2019/2020 A.R.T. Guide.

Reflection Questions

- Think about a favorite book or one you read recently. Should this story be rewritten into a musical? Why or why not?
- If you were writing the adaptation, what would you change from the story? What would you keep the same?







Bringing Thumbelina to Life

An Interview with Director Emma Watt

Thumbelina: A Little Musical is a story of a small girl's adventures in a big world. The following is a conversation between A.R.T. Education Intern Katie Heveran and director Emma Watt about her vision to bring this tale to the stage.

What does it mean to be a director?

The director's job is to understand the story of the play and to imagine how to tell the story on stage as clearly and vividly as possible. I collaborate closely with the actors, designers, and other team members to make sure all of the elements of the play are working together. It's my responsibility to make sure all of the other artists are able to do their very best work. I also shape the rhythm of the production: which moments need to be big and which should feel more intimate and how one moment lead to the next.

What has been the process of creating *Thumbelina* for the A.R.T.? How do you go from the script to the actual performance?

I got attached to the project in August and Julia, our writer, had already written the script and most of the songs. From there, we went into auditions and found our cast. At the same time, I worked with the designers to figure out what the set pieces would help us tell the story, what the costumes should



Bringing Thumbelina to Life (cont.)

be like, and how we're going to bring all the characters and places to life. Julia and I have been meeting to revise the play to make it more clear and exciting.

In rehearsals, I've been working with the actors to develop the characters and shape the blocking for each scene. We spend a lot of time making each other laugh, and finding ways to share our silliness with the audience. Our choreographer, Ryan Kapur, has created wonderful dance for the piece, and we've been refining the movement to make sure the songs are telling the story just as much as the scenes.

For **Thumbelina**, a lot of the directing is about how you tell the story of a person who is very small. We have been figuring out what things we can have on stage or use as props to tell the story that she is very tiny and our world is very big.

How are you showing Thumbelina's size on stage?

We have a couple of set pieces that are going to really help us. We have a giant book on stage and some really tall flower trees that we've made. The toads in the story have little toadstool stools that they sit on and a little toadstool table. All of the props have to be at the right scale. If there's a pencil, it's a golf pencil, and it has to look as big as her body. The same goes for the costumes. She would have to make her own clothes since she's so tiny, so our costume designer, Elizabeth Rocha, and I have talked a lot about how she would make them and what they would be made out of.

In this show, the cast plays multiple roles, including different animals. How do you portray different animals on stage?

We're thinking a lot about how each animal moves.

What does that look like on the human body? In auditions, we had everybody read for the bird character, Blue, who's a blue jay. We played a lot with how birds shift their weight from foot to foot, like they aren't comfortable being on the ground. What does that look like if you're walking around? You're sort of hopping. We thought a lot about the bird's chest and how the bird puffs himself up to take up more space. When he's having an emotional reaction, he puffs up.



Thumbelina and the Swallow from Fairy Stories from Hans Christian Andersen, illustrated by Margaret Tarrant (1910)

Bringing Thumbelina to Life (cont.)

We're doing the same thing for every animal in the story. We're thinking about the way that toads walk and hop around or the way that a mole's hands are always out and ready to dig. We've watched videos in rehearsal of the different animals to look for movements and sounds that the actors can imitate. We're also working a lot with our costume designer to find the feature of each animal that's most identifiable and clear. We're never going to make a human look like a toad. So, what are the elements that signal to an audience member right away that that's the toad? For the bird, we're thinking about wings of course. For the toads, we're thinking about the way that their eyes protrude off their head and about having webbed feet for them.

What has been your favorite part of directing Thumbelina so far?

It's really fun to do a play where the main purpose is the joy it can bring. The cast's sense of humor and sense of fun is great. Figuring out what's most exciting and what's most silly about each character has been a really enjoyable experience. And, I'm excited for our scenic design for fairyland, which I will not give away.

Reflection Questions

- What would you use for clothes, tools, and furniture if you were Thumbelina's size?
- What would be the most fun or exciting part of being a director?
- What would be challenging about being a director?



Educational Activities

Lesson Plan Index

The following activities can either precede or follow a viewing of *Thumbelina: A Little Musical*. To explore *Thumbelina* further, contact the A.R.T. Education and Engagement office about workshops by emailing education@amrep.org or calling 617.496.2000 x8891.

SMALL ADVENTURES

Grades K-5 Pages 15-16

In this activity, students will go on an imagination journey similar to the adventure that Thumbelina goes on in the musical. An imagination journey is an acting exercise that allows children to practice collaboration and creative problem-solving.

THE WORLD FROM THUMBELINA'S HEIGHT

Grades K-5 Pages 17-18

In this activity, students will draw classroom objects at an enlarged scale to practice observational drawing, specifically noticing the shapes and textures of objects. They will imagine the world from three inches tall and reflect on how everyday items and their classroom environment look different from this perspective.

LETTERS TO A NEW FRIEND

Grades K-5 Page 19

In this activity, students will write letters seeking a friend who shares something in common with them. Students will write both personally and creatively. They will discuss and practice conventions specific to letter writing.

THUMBELINA GARDEN CRAFT:

Construction Paper Flowers

All ages with supervision Page 20

This craft is for the flowers that are used in the show to represent Thumbelina's garden. Audiences make their own flowers in the lobby before the show. We encourage you to bring your flowers to a performance!

APPENDIX

Thumbelina Drawing Worksheet, Page 21 Letter Worksheet, grades K-2, Page 22 Letter Worksheet, grades 3-5, Page 23



Lesson Plan: Small Adventures

OBJECTIVES

In this activity, students will go on an imagination journey similar to the adventure that Thumbelina goes on in the musical. An imagination journey is an acting exercise that allows children to practice collaboration and creative problem-solving.

This activity can either precede or follow a viewing of Thumbelina: A Little Musical.

SUGGESTED STANDARDS ALIGNMENT

Theater | Acting

ARTS.T.01.04 [PK-4] - Create characters through physical movement, gesture, sound and/or speech, and facial expression.

ARTS.T.01.06 [PK-4] - Demonstrate the ability to work effectively alone and cooperatively with a partner or in an ensemble.

Theater | Critical Response

ARTS.T.05.01 [PK-4] - Describe and demonstrate audience skills of observing attentively and responding appropriately in classroom presentations, rehearsals, and live performance settings.

ARTS.T.05.02 [PK-4] - Identify and describe the visual, aural, oral, and kinetic details of classroom dramatizations and dramatic performances.

TIME

45 Minutes

MATERIALS

- Four envelopes
- Paper

PROCEDURE

- 1. The goal of an imagination journey is to lead the students on an adventure using their bodies, mind, and limited details. As the facilitator, you should guide the story along while also being open to hearing and incorporating the ideas of the students.
- 2. Before beginning the activity, independently choose the who, what, where, and why for this imagination journey. They should be connected to the story of Thumbelina and will form the starting points for the imagination journey. Please reference the summary on pages 4-5. Some suggestions include:
 - Who are you? Someone small: birds, mice, squirrels, butterflies, toads, fairies
 - What do you have? A backpack filled with: seeds, string, fairy wings, a thimble, an acorn, a toothpick, or other small objects that can be used creatively
 - Where are you? In a garden, in an underground train, floating down a river
 - Why are you here? A challenge related to being small:
 - Examples include: there is a storm coming and we need to get somewhere safe, we need to find the other fairies, we need to go and find a special medicine
- 3. Once you have selected one answer for each question, write them down and place each answer in an envelope. For an added adventure, hide the envelopes throughout your classroom before class.
- 4. Prompt students to find the four envelopes. Collect them and read them to the students.
 - An example of a full story might be: We are a group of mice with backpacks filled with seeds, string, and a toothpick. We fell into a river and need to get home to our



Small Adventures

garden.

- 5. To start, ask students to make a statue of the character that they are. From there, challenge students to think about how they move as the characters that they are. As students become more comfortable, you should lead them through the various aspects of the story.
 - An important note: for help imagining the story as it plays out, consider splitting
 the group up for certain moments so that some people can create the characters
 while others create the setting. When someone says an idea, prompt them to do
 or become that thing. Prompting questions might include:
 - What might you see in a garden?
 - Who can make a statue of a flower?
 - Can you go and make a flower over there?
 - How do we move through the garden of flowers being careful of our fellow ensemble members?
- 6. This exercise continues as students come up with more ideas to solve problems and act out different parts of the story. It is ultimately up to you to conclude the story when the mission has been accomplished.
- 7. Following the completion of the imagination journey, lead students in a discussion:
 - What problems did you face? How did you solve them?
 - What was fun about acting it out?
 - · What was difficult?
 - What was something that you tried during the journey that you have never done before?



Lesson Plan: The World from Thumbelina's Height

OBJECTIVES

In this activity, students will draw classroom objects at an enlarged scale to practice observational drawing, specifically noticing the shapes and textures of objects. They will imagine the world from three inches tall and reflect on how everyday items and their classroom environment look different from this perspective.

This activity can either precede or follow a viewing of Thumbelina: A Little Musical

SUGGESTED STANDARDS ALIGNMENT

Visual Arts | Elements and Principals of Design

ARTS.VA.02.04 [PK-4] - For shape and form, explore the use of shapes and forms in 2D and 3D works. Identify simple shapes of different sizes, for example, circles, squares, triangles, and forms, for example, spheres, cones, cubes, in the environment and in artwork.

ARTS.VA.02.03 [PK-4] - For texture, explore the use of textures in 2D and 3D works. Identify a wide variety of textures, for example, smooth, rough, and bumpy, in the environment and in artwork Create representations of textures in drawings, paintings, rubbings, or relief.

Visual Arts | Observation, Abstraction, Invention, and Expression

ARTS.VA.03.01 [PK-4] - Create 2D and 3D artwork from direct observation.

TIME

30-40 Minutes

MATERIALS

- Worksheets for each student (page 21)
- Pencils, crayons, markers, or other preferred drawing supplies
- Rulers
- Objects for students to draw
- Optional: magnifying glasses

PROCEDURE

- 1. To start, explain that Thumbelina is three inches tall. Show how tall that is with a ruler and ask everyone to show how little that is with their hands. Ask students to think of themselves as being that small and how the world might look.
- 2. Have students look around to find something around the classroom that they will draw next to Thumbelina. If possible, bring in materials or everyday items that students could use for this.
- 3. When students have found something to draw, ask them to get close to the item and observe it. Encourage students to spend time observing their items closely. Some prompting questions might include:
 - What shapes make up the item?
 - What textures does it have?
 - What details do you notice when you get close to it?
 - Using the ruler, how long is the item? How wide is it?
 - If the item is bigger than your worksheet, what part of it will you draw?
- 4. Pass out drawing tools and worksheets with the outline of Thumbelina that can be found on page 21. Students should now draw their item next to Thumbelina, so that it is as big as she would see it. Remind students that she is three inches tall, so the item will look



The World from Thumbelina's Height

- much bigger on their page.
- 5. Encourage students to draw the shapes and textures with the amount of detail that you would notice if you were Thumbelina's size.
- 6. Students can also add details to Thumbelina, draw the background and environment that she is in, and color their pictures.
- 7. Once each student has finished their creation, hold a gallery walk with students' pictures next to their object.
- 8. Lead the students in a conversation about the activity. Some questions that might serve as a jumping off point include:
 - What was challenging about drawing objects up close? What was fun?
 - What did you notice when observing your object closely?
 - How do every day, classroom objects look different when we look at them from three inches tall?
 - If you were three inches tall like Thumbelina, what do you think would be difficult to do at her size? How might you use your creativity to do certain things?



Lesson Plan: Letters to a New Friend

OBJECTIVES

In this activity, students will write letters seeking a friend who shares something in common with them. Students will write both personally and creatively. They will discuss and practice conventions specific to letter writing.

This activity can either precede or follow a viewing of Thumbelina: A Little Musical.

SUGGESTED STANDARDS ALIGNMENT

Writing | Production and Distribution of Writing

W.PK-12.4 - Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

Writing | Range of Writing

W.PK-12.10 - Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Language | Conventions of Standard English

L.PK-12.2 - Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

TIME

30 Minutes

MATERIALS

- Worksheets
- Pencils

PROCEDURE

- 1. To start, prompt students to think about letter writing:
 - Have you written a letter before? Who did you write it to and what was it about?
 - How do you start a letter? How do you end a letter?
 - Why would someone write a letter?
- 2. Introduce students to Thumbelina's letters in the musical. In *Thumbelina: A Little Musical*, Thumbelina writes letters looking for other people as small as she is. Blue drops these letters as he migrates south for the winter with the hope that Thumbelina will be able to find a friend. If your class has seen the musical, prompt students to recall this scene. Students will be writing letters to try to find a friend with a similarity to them.
- 3. Lead a conversation with the students:
 - Do you think Thumbelina's letter writing works?
 - What do you look for in a friend?
 - What is something special about you? What is something about you that you don't have in common with many people?
- 4. Pass out the letter writing worksheets found on page 22 for grades K-2 or page 23 for grades 3-5. Students should fill in the blanks to write their letter seeking a friend.
 - For "Dear," address the letter to "a new friend" or what you want to have in common with this person. For Thumbelina, this would be "other tiny people."
 - For "I am," students should share something special or unique about themselves.
 - For "You can reach me," students can be creative about how someone reading this letter who wants to be friend them should reply. It can be fantastical. For example:



Letters to a New Friend

"You can reach me by writing a letter, putting it in a bottle, and sending it out to sea."

- 5. As students finish writing their letters, they can color in the border and decorate their letters.
- 6. Encourage students to share their letters with a partner or with the rest of the group.



Thumbelina's Garden Craft: Construction Paper Flowers

Lots of flowers are needed to bring Thumbelina's garden to life! Before performances of *Thumbelina: A Little Musical*, audiences will be able to make their own flowers in the lobby to use during the show. Below is the construction paper craft for building these interactive props. We encourage you to make your own flowers at home or in the classroom, though you can also make them in our theater lobby during your visit to *Thumbelina*. Be creative with your flowers! There is no right or wrong flower for Thumbelina's fantasy garden!

MATERIALS:

- Construction paper
- Markers
- Scissors
- Glue (optional)
- Hole punch
- Pipe cleaners
- Beads

PROCEDURE:

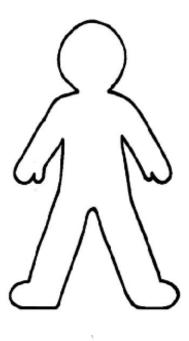
- Draw a flower shape on a piece of construction paper. Make it as big as you can and try to fill the page!
- 2. Cut out the flower.
- 3. Repeat with one or two more smaller flower shapes.
- 4. Color and decorate all flower shapes.
- 5. If you want any of them to be 3D, cut a slit
 - between two petals. Overlap them and glue the overlap.
- 6. Hole punch two holes in the center of each flower shape, so they'll line up when they're stacked together.
- 7. Twist two pipe cleaners together.
- 8. Thread these pipe cleaners through one hole in the flowers, through 2-3 beads, and back through the other hole in the flowers.
- 9. Twist the pipe cleaners together to secure. **TIP:** Use just the top 1-2 inches of the pipe cleaners through the button to make a longer stem. You can also twist another pipe cleaner onto the stem to make it stronger.





Name:							

Draw Thumbelina in your classroom!





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2	Dear:	1
	My name is	6
6	l am	
		y
	I am looking for someone who	6
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8		
	You can reach me by	P
6		
		9
d	Sincerely,	
)		P
**	e sette de	**

