

**Assembly Scripts for
Charlotte's Web (1952)
by E. B. White**

1. **“Let’s Go to the Fair”** – It’s not Templeton’s idea of the fair, but this skit should represent the same sense of fantastic wonder. Make the audience want to go to the fair (and want to read *Charlotte’s Web*)!

Begin with two characters on stage—a boy and a girl. They are just sitting on a bench or lying against a hay bale talking about all the things they want to do at the county fair.

Avery: You know what time it is, Fern?

Fern: Course I know. It’s suppertime.

Avery: Naw, I don’t mean today. I mean this month.

Fern: (*confused*) What time is it this month?

Avery: Sure. Know what’s coming up?

Fern: Course I know. Everyone knows. It’s time for the Fair!

Avery: I been looking forward to it since last fall. I don’t know how I waited this long.

Fern: You silly goose. Who doesn’t look forward to the Fair?

Avery: Well maybe it’s different for boys.

Fern: I doubt it. You gonna ride the Ferris Wheel?

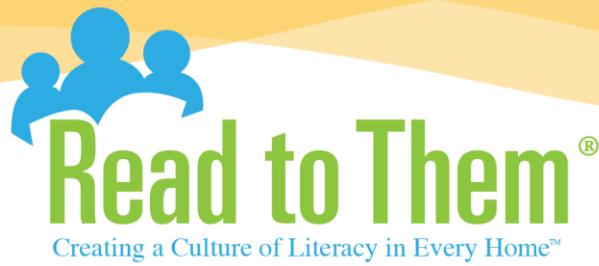
Avery: Sure. But that’s not all...

Fern: What else you gonna ride?

Avery: I really wanna ride the bumper cars. And I heard they got an aeroplane on a chain, and you can ride it around, and I want to save up my tickets and see how many times I can make it go...

Fern: The Ferris Wheel is all right by me.

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Avery: Aw, you just wanna ride with Henry Fussy.

Fern: I do not! Everyone likes the Ferris Wheel.

Avery: What do you like about it?

Fern: I like that you can see the whole Fair from up there. You can see the cotton candy machines. And the carousel. And the 4-H animal pens. And all the roads leading into the Fair. Sometimes, if it's not too near sunset, I can even see the farm.

Avery: I still think you just like being there with Henry Fussy.

Fern: Aw, Avery. I know you don't mean that. I know you'll ride the Ferris Wheel with me.

Avery: So, you gonna bring that pig with you?

Fern: I have to!

Avery: You think he'll win a ribbon?

Fern: I don't really know. I hope so. He sure is a special pig.

Avery: You're sure right about that. You know how to get him ready for the Fair?

Fern: I've seen Pa do it. But I bet Lurvy will help me.

Avery: All I know is, it takes a lot of buttermilk.

Fern: What else you gonna do at the Fair?

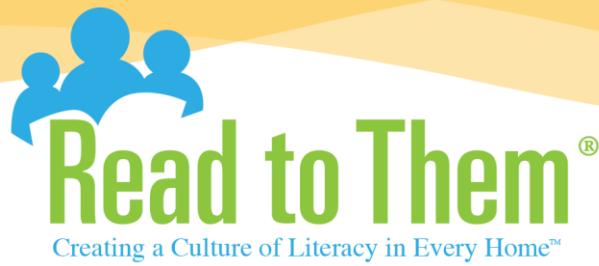
Avery: I'm gonna eat. There's so much to eat...

Fern: What are you gonna eat this year?

Avery: I'm gonna have frozen custard. And cheeseburgers. And raspberry soda pop. And...

Fern: Avery?

Avery: Wha'?



Fern: Will you help me bathe Wilbur?

Avery: What?

Fern: You heard me. I know you're thinking about your stomach, but...

Avery: Of course I'll help you. We'll get Wilbur all ready for the Fair. Don't you worry.

Fern: All right, Avery. Thank you. I'm getting tired now. I think I'll go to bed—dreaming of the Ferris Wheel.

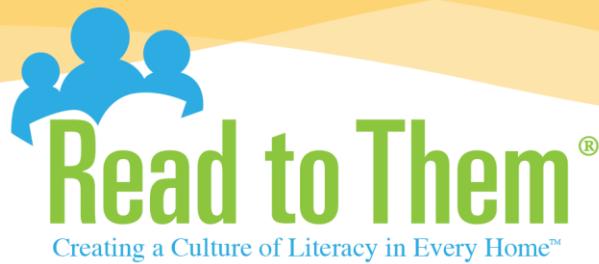
Avery: And Henry Fussy, more like it.

Fern: Now you stop that! It's not fair. If I dream of anything it'll be Wilbur's pen—and all the animals in the farm. The cow, and the horse, and the ducks, and the sheep...and even Templeton and Charlotte. They're all part of the farm.

Avery: Aw, good night, Fern. I think I'll keep it simple and just dream of raspberry soda pop.

Fern: Good night, Avery.

Avery: Good night, Fern. I sure do love the Fair.



2. **Templeton at the Farm** – Here is a monologue in Templeton's unique voice about life at the farm.

A character dressed and acting like a rat emerges on the stage and scurries about, back and forth, sniffing, collecting, snooping, surveying. Probably retrieves a couple of items from the sides or wings or back of the stage. Let this action happen for 60 or even 90 seconds. The audience will be curious, interested, and expectant.

Eventually Templeton notices the audience. Picks his head up. Sniffs. Reacts.

Templeton: Oho, there are a lot of you. You really should mind your own business. I'm just going about my business... What's my business? You don't know who I am? ... Well, well, well. Allow me to introduce myself. My name is Templeton. Templeton the rat. And this is my farm...

Well, actually it's not *my* farm. It belongs to Farmer Zuckerman. Zuckerman's Farm. But it's my playground, my trash heap, my paradise and delight. I can go anywhere I like and find anything I need. It's my true heaven...

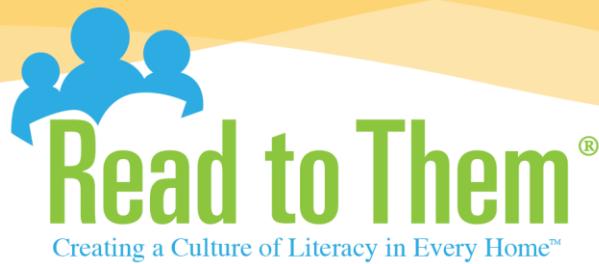
Now I live in the stable by the barn. My home is perfectly nestled under the feeding trough. It's perfect because that's where they feed the pigs and the pigs' eatings—the pigs' *leavings*—is the best eating. Pigs are, well, pigs, and they spill and leave all kinds of stuff for me...

What do pigs eat? They eat whatever humans don't eat—and that makes great eating for a rat. Every day the humans collect what they don't eat, put it in a bucket, and bring it out and feed it—the slops—to the pigs. Mmm, mmm good! Why would I ever go anywhere else?

Ah, but I do. A rat gets restless. And besides, I have work to do. I am a forager. I collect things. All kinds of things. Whatever I can find on the farm. Whatever's useful or interesting. And it's not all food either. But, in truth, food is the best... What's my favorite food? Oh, definitely eggs. Eggs are the best. And any kind of egg. Aren't they everyone's favorite food?

Where do I store my stuff? Well, I'll tell you. Not under the trough. No, it wouldn't be safe there. No, I have a special tunnel that leads into the barn. It allows me to get back and forth and no one can see me. Rats are sneaky. They have to be. Nobody likes rats, so I have to slink along the corners and the edges, hiding in the shadows...

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I store everything in a special place in the barn, in one of the stables, in a special hiding place under the hay. I'm not telling you exactly where. I don't trust you either...

But I'll tell you, I can go anywhere I want on the Farm. I generally stay away from the house because they have a cat. But I don't need to go there. They bring the food to me! ... I can go to the pond, or the meadow, or any of the fields. I have friends out there. And occasionally I find stuff I'm not expecting... But out in the open is no place for a rat. It's easier to be seen—and you have to watch for predators.... So the stable yard and the barn are the best...

That's the life for a rat... I'm not alone there of course. There are some horses, and sheep, and geese—the geese are a very talkative lot. And the humans come to the barn, too. Mostly Lurvy. He feeds me—I mean the pigs—the slops. But you know what I mean. Farmer Zuckerman comes along, too, sometimes.

And there's this girl, Fern. She's Farmer Zuckerman's niece. She comes a lot now. She is sweet on this new pig. His name's Wilbur. I understand he was the runt of the litter. He's not a very smart fellow. But she loves him. She comes and talks to him and gazes all moony-eyed at him. And she listens to the animals talk. Personally I think it's none of her business. The fewer humans around the barn the better...

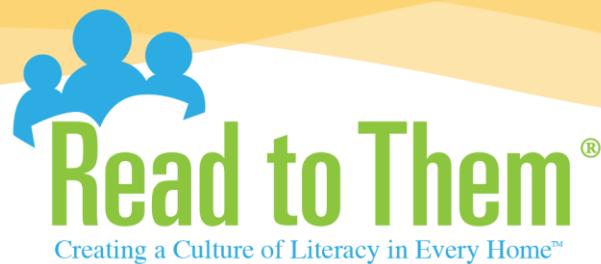
Oops, I hear them coming. I've got to be on my way. I hear there may be a new nest of eggs down by the pond... Oh, and by the way. I've noticed a lot of spider webs in the barn lately. You'll want out keep your eye out for them...

He collects his things and goes on his way, exiting the stage.

*Then your principal comes up on stage and introduces the book, *Charlotte's Web*.*

Principal: Templeton the rat is just one of the many characters from Zuckerman's Farm you'll meet in *Charlotte's Web*. If you'd like to find out more about Fern and Wilbur—and what that spider web is about—let's start reading the book at home tonight with your families...

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3. **Templeton at the Fair** – And here's another one starring Templeton, this time about going to the fair.

Templeton the rat furtively scurries back and forth across the stage. He is arranging something on the side. Some sort of bedding or hiding place. He arranges hay in the corner or the side or even the front of the stage (but on the side)—until he's satisfied. He is also whistling. "I'm going to the Fair. I'm going to the Fair. Everyone loves the Fair..."

When he is done arranging things, and just settling down to be comfortable and hide—he notices the audience...

Templeton: What are you looking at?! Shoo! Mind your own business. Go somewhere else. This is my spot...

Where am I going? I'm going to the Fair... Can't you tell? They're all going to the Fair. And I'm going with them...

What am I talking about? Well, I'll tell you, as long as you promise to be on your way when I'm done. You promise...? Okay.

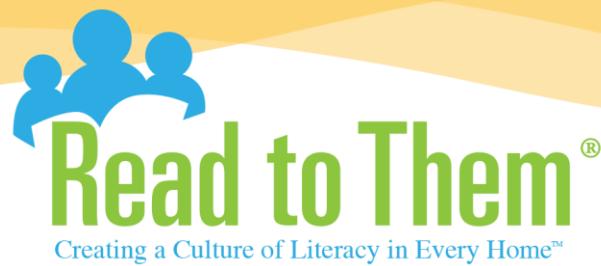
My name is Templeton. I'm a rat as you can see. I live on Zuckerman's Farm. And I have to say, it's pretty sweet. I have everything I need. They bring me food—well, they bring the pig food, but I get to eat it. I have the run of the place. I can go wherever I want. It's pretty great. But it's not as great as the Fair. At least that's what I hear...

See, the humans are going to the County Fair. They're getting all dressed up. They're bringing some of their farm animals with them to show off. And they're bringing their money...

Why do I care? Well, apparently, there'll be LOTS of humans there. And they'll all be spending money, and buying things, and buying food, and being careless. And from what I hear, it's a rat's paradise! More food than I can possibly imagine. Different kinds. Why I don't even know what all I'll find there!

How do I know this? Have I ever been to a Fair? Well, no, not exactly. I actually heard it all from the sheep. But boy did she make it sound terrific. This is what she told me... She said they have everything at a Fair. Games and rides and displays and entertainments. But mostly food! Food, food, food. She said everywhere I go I'll find food for a rat...

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She said, if I go to the barn, there'll be oats! And if I go to the infield, they'll be the remains of everyone's lunches! Lunchboxes! Crackers and cheese and sandwiches. Crusts and bacon! Ooh, I hope there's tuna fish! ... And doughnuts! Bits of doughnuts and doughnut crumbs! Yummm! ... And she said if I go to the Midway there'll be popcorn and apples and lollipops. Sugar! I don't get many sweets on the Farm. So the Fair is the place for sweets for me.

I can't wait! ... I'll tell you my very favorite thing... Greasy paper! ... What? What's that look on your face? You don't like greasy paper? ... Well, more for me! Greasy paper is the best. You never know what you're going to get. It's like a little surprise treasure each time you unwrap some greasy paper. And you know it will always be good. You need to learn to think like a rat. French fries! Curly fries! Onion rings! Fried sandwiches! Nuggets! Corndogs! Aah, yes. Greasy paper is the best. And it's all at the Fair! ...

So I am going to go and have myself a time, I'll tell you. I'm going to eat like a...well, like a pig, to be honest. But I can't eat it all there. I'm going to see what I can scrounge and save and store and bring back to the Farm! That's what this spot is for. So you—you keep away! If you want to go to the Fair, too, that's fine. I'm sure there's plenty for everyone. But stay away from my stuff. This is my spot and I'm bringing it back... Go along now. That's enough talking now...

And he continues to arrange and rearrange his spot and his stuff. But he stays jaunty.

Templeton: *(sing-song boasting) I'm going to the Fair. I'm going to the Fair. Everyone loves the Fair. There's so much good food at the Fair..."*