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The Conductor: Harriet Tubman and the Under- ground Railroad

By Jerry R. Montoya

Teacher's Guide

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BEFORE THE PLAY

SYNOPSIS

Montoya blends the trauma of Harriet Tubman's formative years as a young slave girl with her harrowing experience as a conductor on the Underground Railroad. Sold to the Cook family as a nanny, Araminta (Minty) Ross flees their brutal treatment before returning as the free Harriet Tubman to guide those still living in bondage to freedom. She and her newest passenger, Jeremiah Clark, must escape the savage pursuit of slave hunter Glenn Beede in order to capture the true meaning of freedom.

THEMES: Black History, Civil Rights, Historical Women, Courage, Perseverance, Leadership, Self-Esteem, Character Counts, Social Justice

THEATRE TERMS

VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS
3.0 Historical & Cultural Context

Make sure you know the following terms so you can use them later.

SCRIPT: The written play that tells actors what to say and what to do.

ACTORS: The people who say the words and do the actions on stage.

CHARACTER: The person or thing that an actor portrays.

DIRECTOR: The person who tells the actors how to say the words and how to do the actions.

SCENERY/SET: The backdrops, furniture, and other pieces that show the audience where the play is happening.

COSTUMES/WARDROBE: The clothes and other items the actors wear to show who they are.

PROPS: The things that actors use (such as a book or a broom) during the play.

SOUND: The sound effects (like a doorbell or thunder) that help to tell the story.

LIGHTING: The lights that help the audience to see the actors and scenery on the stage.

THEATER: The place where a play is performed. It is from the Greek word *THEATRON*, which means "watching place".

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

LISTENING & SPEAKING 1.0 Strategies: Comprehension
K:1.2 3:1.3 4:1.1 5:1.2

LISTENING & SPEAKING 1.0 Strategies: Organization and Delivery of Oral Communication

1:1.4 2:1.6 5:1.5

VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS

1.0 Artistic Perception

1. What is the difference between a live play and a movie?
2. Introduce the terms listed in the Theatre Terms list provided. Can you give examples of these terms from plays or movies you've seen?
3. Share what you know about what life was like for black slaves in the Antebellum South. What kinds of work did they do? Where did they live? What did they eat? What religious beliefs or practices did they share?
4. What kinds of music do you like to listen to and why? Did this music originate from a specific tradition or have a specific purpose?
5. What are the most meaningful lessons your family and friends have taught you?
6. How can you tell the difference between right and wrong? Who or what do you use to help you decide? Why?

DURING AND AFTER THE PLAY

AUDIENCE BEHAVIOR

While watching a live theatre performance, it is important to sit quietly and listen. It does not mean that you need to be silent. Be sure to laugh at the funny parts (or cry at the sad parts), and certainly applaud at the end! Actors love it when an audience is involved with the show by actively watching and listening.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

LISTENING & SPEAKING 1.0 Strategies: Comprehension

K:1.2 3:1.3 4:1.1 5:1.2

LISTENING & SPEAKING 1.0 Strategies: Organization and Delivery of Oral Communication

1:1.4 2:1.6 5:1.5

VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS

1.0 Artistic Perception

4.0 Aesthetic Valuing

5.0 Connections, Relationships, Applications

1. Who were the main characters? How do you know?
2. Refer back to the Theatre Terms list on page 3. What examples of these terms did you find in the play?
 - a. What did you think of the scenery, costumes, and props? Did they help you to understand the story the actors told? Why or why not?
 - b. How did the music or sound effects used during the show help you to understand the story being told?
3. Why do you think author Jerry Montoya showed you Harriet as a child and then as an adult? How did this help you to understand her as a character and her motives?
3. Name a character whose individual actions impacted others in a positive or a negative way, and describe the impact of his/her actions.
4. Helping slaves escape was wrong according to some laws, but many people felt it was the right thing to do. How can something be wrong and right at the same time?
5. Explain the following quote: "As long as there is one slave left in this land, ain't none of us free."

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

Vocabulary

VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS

5.0 Connections, Relationships, Applications

Activity 1: Runaway Words!

READING 1.0: Vocabulary and Concept Development

3:1.7-8

4:1.2-4,6

5:1.4-5

6:1.2

7:1.2

8:1.1

LISTENING & SPEAKING: 1.0 Strategies: Organization and Delivery of Oral Communication

3:1.7

The following words can be used in discussion of the play and in other activities.

- | | | |
|-------------|----------------|---------------|
| 1. bondage | 6. pursue | 11. charity |
| 2. fugitive | 7. curfew | 12. arson |
| 3. ignorant | 8. hospitality | 13. gourd |
| 4. harbor | 9. opportunity | 14. property |
| 5. freedom | 10. contraband | 15. negotiate |

1. Use a **DICTIONARY** to do the following:
 - a. Define the words and identify their parts of speech.
 - b. Divide each word into syllables and identify roots, prefixes, and suffixes. Can you add any prefixes or suffixes to make different words?
 - c. Do any of these words have multiple meanings? Describe the different meanings.
 - d. Identify the origins of five of these words and explain how the origin of each word compares with its common usage today?
2. See if you can use three of these words in a sentence.
3. Harriet Tubman and those who helped her used the following words and phrases figuratively to safely communicate about their work. Describe these shades of meaning and why they were useful:

underground railroad

conductor

signal

stationmaster

Activity 2: Secret Synonyms

READING 1.0: Vocabulary and Concept Development

3:1.4

4:1.2

5:1.3

Play the following game with words from the show and their synonyms.

grateful
escape
equal
helping
bondage
liberty
contraband
negotiate
pursue

appreciative
flee
same
abetting
slavery
freedom
smuggled
discuss
follow

1. Divide the class into groups of 3 to 4.
2. Write these words on the board and have each group copy them onto 3 x 5 index cards.
3. In each group, the students should shuffle the cards and place them face down. Take turns flipping the cards over and matching pairs of synonyms until all of the cards are matched. The student who finds the most matches wins!
4. Play the game again: how many pairs of antonyms can you find?

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

Activity 3: Taking A Stand

WRITING: 2.0 Applications

3:2.3 5:2.4 6:2.5 7:2.4 8:2.4

LISTENING AND SPEAKING: 2.0 Applications

6:2.4 7:2.4 8:2.4

The Underground Railroad was not a rail line with a train, but a network of ordinary people willing to take action against something they knew was wrong: slavery.

Choose a civil rights or social justice issue that is important to you, and write a letter, pamphlet, or speech in support of your position. Suggest ways that everyday people can take action. Be sure to use the persuasive strategies discussed in class.

LISTENING AND SPEAKING

VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS

5.0 Connections, Relationships, Applications

LISTENING AND SPEAKING: 1.0 Strategies:

Organization and Delivery of Oral Communication

LISTENING AND SPEAKING: 1.0 Strategies:

Comprehension

Listen carefully to your classmates' presentations and ask them questions. Which of your classmates' suggestions would you use?

WRITING

VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS

5.0 Connections, Relationships, Applications

WRITING: 1.0 Strategies: Organization and Focus, Penmanship

WRITING: 1.0 Strategies: Evaluation and Revision

2:1.4 3:1.4 4:1.10 5:1.6 6:1.6

Be sure to revise and edit what you write.

Activity 4: Rave Reviews!

WRITING: 2.0 Applications

4:2.2 5:2.2 6:2.4

Reviews give insightful and critical opinions on plays that help people decide if they want to go see the play or not. Write a review that gives your honest opinion of B Street's production of *The Conductor* and tells why people should or should not go see it. Be sure to:

1. Include a short summary of the play.
2. Mention actors who performed well (or badly) and any outstanding design features (scenery, costumes, lighting, sound.)

Activity 5: Breaking It Down

READING: LITERARY RESPONSE AND ANALYSIS

4:3.5 5:3.4-5 6:3.4,7 7:3.4 8:3.5

Choose a song or songs from the play (lyrics included on pages 14-16) and analyze the song's construction, imagery, themes, and use of literary or rhetorical devices. What story does it tell? What message is it trying to send? How relevant is this song to you today? What recurring themes do you find?

Activity 6: Raise Your Voice

LISTENING AND SPEAKING: 2.0 Applications

2:2.1 3:2.1,3 4:2.1,4 5:2.1 6:2.1

WRITING: 2.0 Applications

2:2.1 3:2.1-2 4:2.1 5:2.1 6:2.1-2

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

2.0 Creative Expression

Folk songs like "Follow the Drinking Gourd", which re-emerged in popular music during the 1960s, helped to unify and galvanize civil rights activists. The song's lyrics outline a path toward freedom that was inspiring and empowering.

Think of a challenge you have overcome in your life and re-write the song to tell that story using imagery meaningful to you. Use the song's meter and rhyme scheme if you can. Sing or recite your new version for the class. (See lyrics printed on page 14 of this guide.)

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

HISTORY

VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS

5.0 Connections, Relationships, Applications

Activity 7: The Economics of Slavery

HISTORY AND SOCIAL SCIENCE

People Who Make a Difference 2.4

Continuity and Change 3.5

By definition, a slave is a person who is the property of another person and works without pay. During the 1800's, many farmers forced slaves like Minty Ross and her parents to pick their cotton and grow the food they sold to consumers. While these farmers provided food and shelter for their slaves, they did not pay them for their labor or allow them to leave the farm.

In groups or as a class, create a Venn Diagram to compare/contrast the slavery system with today's system of food production and consumption.

- What are the benefits of using slaves to produce food, and what are the costs?
- How do economic costs differ from personal costs? What are the personal costs of having slaves produce food?

Why do you think it is better to produce food in a way that does not use slaves?

Activity 8: Movers of Mountains

HISTORY AND SOCIAL SCIENCE

People Who Make a Difference 2.5

Continuity and Change 3.4:6

Growing Conflict 8.7,9

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

2.0 Creative Expression

Explore the lives of those who worked to end slavery and bring equality to African-Americans throughout American history by researching their lives and accomplishments. Show how their personal life experiences helped to shape the ideals they held and the actions they took—like in *The Conductor*—by writing and performing a skit, monologue, song, spoken word poem, or other creative piece that shows the class what you found.

Lucretia Mott
Sojourner Truth
Frederick Douglass
Abraham Lincoln
Nat Turner

Rosa Parks
Martin Luther King Jr.
Malcolm X
William Still
John Brown

Booker T. Washington
W.E.B DuBois
Thurgood Marshall
Hosea Williams
Denmark Vesey

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

Activity 9: A War of Words

HISTORY AND SOCIAL SCIENCE

Making A New Nation 5.4:6

Growing Conflict 8.6-7,9

LISTENING AND SPEAKING 1.0: Organization and Delivery of Oral Communication

LISTENING AND SPEAKING 2.0: Applications

5:2.2 6:2.2, 2.5 7:2.3-4 8:2.3-4

7

Organize your students into groups and have them do research according to one of the following prompts:

- A. Some of the first people to speak out against slavery and urge others to end their practice of it were members of the Religious Society of Friends (or Quakers) like Lindsay and Abbie Carter in *The Conductor*. Learn about the early Quaker critics of American slavery--George Fox, William Edmundson, William Penn, George Keith, William Southeby, Ralph Sandford, Benjamin Lay, and others—and examine their reasons for arguing against slavery and proposals for ending it.
- B. In 1840, the American Anti-Slavery Society split into two factions over the issue of women's participation in the organization (among other issues). Proponents of Walter Lloyd Garrison's abolitionist views remained with the organization while others formed the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society. Learn more about the breakup of the American Anti-Slavery Society and the conflicting strategies and priorities of its leaders.

Have each group present their research to the class using prepared statements and visual aids. Each group's presentation should cover the following information:

- Basic biographical information on the people or groups researched.
- The leader or group's guiding philosophy: why do they say that slavery is wrong?
- The leader or group's main strategies: how did this person or group propose to end slavery?

Hold debates between two groups representing opposing views. Have the students submit questions for the debating groups to answer according to the presentations given. Be sure to allow each group time for a pre-written opening statement, alternating responses, and summaries of their positions. Illustrate the arguments presented in the debates on posters or by other visual means.

Activity 10: Time-warped!

HISTORY AND SOCIAL SCIENCE

Ancient Civilizations, Medieval and Early Modern Times

Compare and contrast (visually and/or orally) the societal standing, treatment, political agency, and social mobility of slaves as you saw them depicted in *The Conductor*, with slaves in ancient Greece, Rome, Mesopotamia, or other early modern societies you have studied.

Consider the following:

1. Where and how did these societies obtain slaves? Could a person be born a slave? Could a slave obtain his or her freedom in this society?
2. What kind of work did slaves do, and how were they treated?
3. Did any notable figures (political leaders, intellectuals, religious leaders, etc.) speak out against this society's practice of slavery?
4. Did proponents or opponents of American slavery draw on any political or social philosophies propagated by these societies?

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

CHARACTER COUNTS

VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS

5.0 Connections, Relationships, Applications

Thematic Questions for *The Conductor*

Courage:

1. Which characters acted courageously and why?
2. Often, when people are faced with adversity, opposition, or threats, they must overcome their fears and objections in order to act courageously. Which characters in the play struggled with fears or objections? How did they overcome their fears?
3. What would have happened if...
 - a. Minty hadn't run away from her new owners?
 - b. Mr. Stevenson hadn't stood up for Moses and Jeremiah?
 - c. Abbie hadn't run after Moses and Jeremiah to warn them about Mr. Beede's trap?
4. Where in your life can find examples of people having courage and acting bravely? How do their actions affect you?
5. When you find yourself afraid to do what you know is right, what can you do to find courage?

Perseverance:

1. What does it mean to persevere? Which characters in the play chose to persevere and how did they do this?
2. Describe a time when you chose to persevere. What did you hope to achieve and why was this goal worth the efforts or sacrifices you made?
3. Why is it important and necessary to persevere when faced with adversity or opposition?
4. What happens when we choose not to persevere?

Trust:

1. What characters from the play would you trust? What characters from the play would you not trust? Why?
2. Why was it important for Jeremiah to trust Moses and the stationmasters she looked to for assistance on the Underground Railroad?
3. When you need help, how do you decide whom to trust?
4. People like Harriet Tubman, William Still, and Martin Luther King Jr. knew that they needed the strength of an entire movement to bring about change. Why do you think it would be important for leaders to trust the members of their movement? Why is it important for members to trust a leader?

Leadership:

1. Make a list of leadership strategies you have seen others use (ex. leading by example, force, persuasion). Name people from history or from your own life who have used these strategies successfully.
2. Which of these strategies were used by characters in *The Conductor*? Give examples from the play.
3. Of the strategies you listed, which do you think is the most effective and why?
4. When in your life have you tried to lead others using one of these strategies? How could you have been a better leader?

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

SCIENCE

VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS

5.0 Connections, Relationships, Applications

Activity 11: Reaching for the Stars

SCIENCE

Earth Science 3:4

5:5

8:4

A Map of Constellations in the Winter Sky: Astronomy Online
http://astronomyonline.org/Observation/ConstellationsNorthernHemi_Winter.asp?Cate=Observation&SubCate=MP08&SubCate2=NorthernHemisphereWinter

Sailors, explorers, and others looking for freedom and prosperity in faraway lands have long used the stars to guide them on their quests. Use the suggested website to investigate what constellations you might be able to see in the night sky during the winter.

With a parent or other adult, find a dark place to observe the stars five nights in a row. Try to observe at different times of night. Share your findings with the class.

1. What constellations can you see?
2. Does it matter what time of night you stargaze in order to see different constellations?
3. Does anything, such as light pollution, prevent you from seeing the stars?
4. What phase is the moon in? Does its position seem to change throughout the night?

The Big Dipper, or Drinking Gourd, can help you orient yourself by telling you which way north is. Create a map of the constellations you see and use them to write a set of directions leading to a nearby place. How well do you think the stars can help you get to this place?

MATH

VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS

5.0 Connections, Relationships, Applications

Activity 12: Measuring Up

MATHEMATICS

3.MD:2

4.MD:2

Activity 13: Convert This

MATHEMATICS

4.MD:3

5.MD:1

Solve the following word problems:

1. Moses and Jeremiah must leave the Carters' and walk north towards Canada. If they walk for 8 hours the first day, 7 hours the second day, 9 hours the third day, and 4 hours the fourth day before hiding in another safe house, how long have they walked?
2. Someone offers Moses and Jeremiah a ride to the nearest Quaker meetinghouse, which is 65km away. If they travel 36km before resting, how many more kilometers must they ride to reach Canada?
3. A neighbor gives Lindsay some flour to store and use for the winter. If she is given 5.25 lbs of flour in 3 large bags, how many pounds of flour does each bag hold?

Solve the following word problems.

1. Glenn Beade covers 100km before losing track of Moses. How much ground did he cover in decameters, meters, and decimeters?
2. Minty's mother wants to make Minty some new dresses. She knows she needs 2.75 yards of cloth to make 1 dress. How much cloth does she need to make 3 dresses? How many inches of cloth does she need?
3. In problem 3 of the last activity, express how many total ounces of flour Lindsay receives and how many ounces of flour each bag holds.
4. If Mr. Stevenson's boat is 9 meters long by 5 meters wide, what is the perimeter of his boat? What is the area of his boat?

RESOURCES & ADDENDUMS

FURTHER READING & LEARNING

Harriet Tubman: Leading the Way to Freedom

By Laurie Calkhoven

Sterling (ISBN 9781402741173)

Easy Reader Biographies:

Harriet Tubman: Follow the North Star

By Violet Findley

Scholastic Teaching Resources (ISBN 9780439923309)

Harriet Tubman

By Kem Knapp Sawyer

DK Publishing (ISBN 9780756658069)

Harriet Tubman: Conductor on the Underground Railroad

By Patricia Lantier

Crabtree Publishing Company (ISBN 9780778748380)

A Picture Book of Harriet Tubman

By David A. Adler

Holiday House (ISBN 97808236410651)

Harriet Tubman and the Freedom Train

By Sharon Gayle

Aladdin Paperbacks (ISBN 9780689854804)

Who Was Harriet Tubman?

By Yona Zeldis McDonough

Grosset & Dunlap (ISBN 9780448428895)

An Apple for Harriet Tubman

By Glennette Tilley Turner

Albert Whitman & Company (ISBN 9780807503959)

Harriet Tubman: A Woman of Courage

By Renee Skelton & Time Magazine

Harper Trophy (ISBN 9780060576073)

RESOURCES & ADDENDUMS

FURTHER READING & LEARNING

Electronic Resources

Slavery and the Making of America

<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/slavery/index.html>

Black History Timeline

<http://www.biography.com/tv/classroom/black-history-timeline>

Quakers and the Underground Railroad

http://trilogy.brynmawr.edu/speccoll/quakersandslavery/commentary/organizations/underground_railroad.php

American Abolitionism

<http://americanabolitionist.liberalarts.iupui.edu/index.htm>

Web Activities

Myths of the Underground Railroad

http://teacher.scholastic.com/activities/bhistory/underground_railroad/myths.htm

The Underground Railroad: Escape from Slavery

http://teacher.scholastic.com/activities/bhistory/underground_railroad/slideshows/escape_slides.htm

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Runaway Words! Word Search

Find these words in the word search.

- | | | |
|-------------|----------------|---------------|
| 1. bondage | 6. pursue | 11. charity |
| 2. fugitive | 7. curfew | 12. arson |
| 3. ignorant | 8. hospitality | 13. gourd |
| 4. harbor | 9. opportunity | 14. property |
| 5. freedom | 10. contraband | 15. negotiate |

H G R Y E H T H M H Y P G E S
Y G L U U N E D G B K R O J D
T T L F U G I T I V E O U H U
C V I Z G C I R B E M P R K D
E S I N Q L J G T D E E D B N
Q J L P U H B A N U T R T U A
Y T I L A T I P S O H T Z Z B
R D H L V T R R Y E R Y V O A
O G J U O O U O U T D A N S R
B I D G H P U P P U I D N B T
R S E C U R F E W P A R N T N
A N M O D E E R F G O R A G O
H K V C D B F Z E K R H S H C
E X I G C D B A Y E C L J O C
E V P C N I N E Y D A H J C N

Songs from *The Conductor*

“GO DOWN MOSES”

When Israel was in Egypt's land
Let my people go
Oppressed so hard they could not stand
Let my people go

Go down Moses
Way down in Egypt land
Tell old Pharaoh “Let my people go”
“Thus spoke the Lord” bold Moses said
Let my people go
“If not I'll smite your first born dead
Let my people go
No more in bondage shall they toil
Let my people go
Let them come out with Egypt's spoil”
Let my people go

“FOLLOW THE DRINKING GOURD”

When the Sun comes back
And the first quail calls
Follow the Drinking Gourd,
For the old man is a-waiting
For to carry you to freedom
If you follow the Drinking Gourd.
The riverbank makes a very good road.
The dead trees will show you the way.
Left foot, peg foot, travelling on,
Follow the Drinking Gourd.
The river ends between two hills
Follow the Drinking Gourd.
There's another river on the other side
Follow the Drinking Gourd.
When the great big river meets the little river
Follow the Drinking Gourd.
For the old man is a-waiting
For to carry you to freedom
If you follow the Drinking Gourd.

“ALL AROUND MY HAT”

All around my hat I will wear the green willow
All around my hat for a twelvemonth and a day,
And if anyone should ask me the reason why I'm wearing it
It's all for my true love who is far, far away

Fare thee well cold winter and fare thee well cold frost
Nothing have I gained but my own true love I've lost
I'll sing and I'll be merry when occasion I do see
He's a false deluding young man, let him go farewell he.

The other night he brought me a fine diamond ring
But he thought to have deprived me of a far better thing
But I being careful like lovers ought to be
He's a false deluding young man, let him go farewell he

Here's a half a pound of reason, and a quarter pound of
sense
A small sprig of time and as much of prudence
You mix them all together and you will plainly see
He's a false deluding young man, let him go farewell he.

“SIMPLE GIFTS”

'Tis the gift to be simple,
'Tis the gift to be free,
'Tis the gift to come down where we ought to be,
And when we find ourselves in the place just right,
It will be in the valley of love and delight.

When true simplicity is gained,
to bow and to bend, we will not be ashamed
To turn, turn, will be our delight,
'Til by turning, turning, we come round right.

“FREE AT LAST”

Free at last, free at last
I thank God I'm free at last
Free at last, free at last
I thank God I'm free at last
Way down yonder in the graveyard walk
I thank God I'm free at last
Me and my Jesus going to meet and talk
I thank God I'm free at last
On my knees when the light pass'd by
I thank God I'm free at last
Tho't my soul would rise and fly
I thank God I'm free at last
Some of these mornings, bright and fair
I thank God I'm free at last
Goin' meet King Jesus in the air
I thank God I'm free at last

BOOK EARLY AND SAVE! B Street Theatre 2013-2014



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Student matinees you come to us.

Beauty and the Beast

An Original Adaptation

Embark on a magical adventure where love conquers all and beauty is truly in the eye of the beholder. Enjoy a fanciful family treat just in time for the Holidays!

NOVEMBER 15 – DECEMBER 29, 2013

The Conductor: Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad

by Jerry R. Montoya

Follow the incredible story of one woman's extraordinary courage and her riveting journey from slavery to freedom.

JANUARY 17 – FEBRUARY 23, 2014

Recommended for children ages 8+

The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes

by Jerry R. Montoya

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's greatest mysteries spring to life as Dr. Sherlock Holmes cracks the world's most baffling cases and outsmarts the infamous Professor Moriarty!

MARCH 7 – APRIL 13, 2014

Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good Very Bad Day

Book and Lyrics by Judith Viorst

Music by Shelly Markham

Help poor Alexander conquer life's daily dramas in this exuberant, heart-warming musical tale of love and hard-learned lessons.

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Times can be altered to accommodate large groups.

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School tours we come to you.

What the Dickens?

Charles Dickens' legendary tales come to life in a whirlwind of adventure, mystery and romance!

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