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Teacher's Guide

PRESIDENTIAL PALOOZA

**By Jerry Montoya, Greg
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BEFORE THE PLAY

SYNOPSIS

They wrestle with congress, balance budgets, and negotiate for peace. How hard can the job of President really be? And what does a First Lady do? Let Abraham Lincoln, William Howard Taft, Teddy Roosevelt, James K. Polk, and George Washington tell you in this colorful, engaging, and fast-paced tribute to the 44 uncommon citizens who have occupied the highest office in the land!

THEMES: History, Character Counts,
Creative Arts

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 pretends to be or portrays.

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

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

COSTUMES or WARDROBE: The clothes and other things an actor wears to show who they are.

PROPS: The things that actors use (such as a book or 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

SPEAKING & LISTENING: Comprehension & Collaboration
K.1 1.1 2.1 3.1 4.1 5.2

SPEAKING & LISTENING: Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas
K.4,6 1.4,6 2.6 3.6 4.6 5.6

VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS

1.0 Artistic Perception

1. What is the difference between a play and a movie?
2. Introduce the terms listed in the Theatrical Terms list provided. Can you give examples of these terms from plays or movies you've seen?
3. Who is serving as the President of the United States right now? What does he do? Who wants to be President once his time expires?
4. Who is the First Lady and what does she do?
5. How many past Presidents can you name? What important and memorable things did they do as President? How else are they remembered?
6. How do we decide who our next President will be? What characteristics and experiences do you think make a good President?
7. Every President selects a “cabinet” or group of people who lead the major departments of the executive branch and advise him as he makes decisions. If you were President, who would be in your cabinet and why?

DURING AND AFTER THE PLAY

DURING 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:

SPEAKING & LISTENING: Comprehension & Collaboration

K.2 1.2 2.2 3.2,3

SPEAKING & LISTENING: Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas

K.4,6 1.4,6 2.6 3.6 4.6 5.6

VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS

1.0 Artistic Perception

4.0 Aesthetic Valuing

5.0 Connections, Relationships, Applications

1. Refer back to the Theatrical 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 understand the stories that were told? Why or why not?
 - b. How did the music and sound effects used during the show help you understand the stories being told?
2. Which was your favorite character or story from the play and why? Which was your least favorite and why?
3. What themes or ideas did the playwrights develop throughout the play?
4. During the play, Presidents Lincoln, Taft and Roosevelt were inspired to act and create great change because of life-changing experiences or deeply held beliefs. Define these moments or beliefs for each President represented and describe the actions or changes they inspired:
 - a. What impact did these actions or changes have?
 - b. Why is it important for leaders like these to be committed to their causes and beliefs?
 - c. What can we learn from these leaders?
5. Guns have many different uses: for sport, hunting, protection, and weaponry in war. In your opinion, where and when is it (in)appropriate to carry a gun? Why?

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

VOCABULARY

LANGUAGE: Vocabulary Acquisition and Use

2.4,6 3.4 4.4 5.4

READING (Foundational Skills): Phonics and Word Recognition

2.3 3.3 4.3 5.3

VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS

5.0 Connections, Relationships, Applications

Activity 1: A Word with the President

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

- | | | |
|--------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1. President | 6. pristine | 11. chambermaid |
| 2. precedent | 7. secede | 12. grandiose |
| 3. elect | 8. conservation | 13. Reinforce |
| 4. policy | 9. wheeze | 14. dull |
| 5. differ | 10. disarray | 15. reject |

Use a DICTIONARY to do the following:

- Define the words and identify their parts of speech
- Divide each word into syllables and identify roots, prefixes, suffixes, and language of origin. Can you add any prefixes or suffixes to make different words?
- Do any of these words have multiple meanings? Describe the different meanings
- Which two of these words are homophones? What other sets of homophones can you think of?
- See if you can use any of these three words in a sentence

HISTORY

HISTORY AND SOCIAL SCIENCE

People Who Make a Difference; Continuity and Change; Making a New Nation

VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS

5.0 Connections, Relationships, Applications

Activity 2: Setting a Precedent

As the first President, George Washington made many decisions about how the President would govern and what the new nation's priorities would be. As a class, look at the list of Washington's "firsts" and precedents below and discuss why these decisions were so important. What would our government be like if Washington had not made the decisions he did? What else could he have done?

- | | |
|--|--|
| • 1 st Presidential inauguration | • 1 st cabinet of advisors and department heads |
| • 1 st copyright law signed into effect | • Designated a specific day for Thanksgiving |
| • Tradition of serving two terms | • Rarely attended Congressional debates |
| • Directly ordered a militia to keep order during the Whiskey Rebellion | • Negotiated with other autonomous nations without Congressional oversight |
| • Insisted that only the President should choose who went to enter foreign conflicts | • Allowed others to publicly criticize him without political consequences |

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

Activity 3: Find Your Story

WRITING: Text Types and Purposes

1.3 2.3 3.3 4.3 5.3

Write or tell a story using one of the following prompts. Share it with the class.

1. Think of an issue you are passionate about or a belief you hold and recall the experience that inspired you to feel the way you do.
2. Recall a time when you worked really hard to make something happen. What did you want? What steps did you take? Who did you work with and how did you work with them? What obstacles did you face?

SPEAKING AND LISTENING

SPEAKING & LISTENING: Comprehension and Collaboration

SPEAKING & LISTENING: Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS

5.0 Connections, Relationships, Applications

Listen carefully to your classmates' presentations and ask them questions.

WRITING

WRITING: Production and Distribution of Writing

1.5 2.4,5 3.4,5 4.4,5 5.4,5

WRITING: Range of Writing

LANGUAGE: Conventions of Standard English

LANGUAGE: Knowledge of Language

VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS

5.0 Connections, Relationships, Applications

Be sure to revise and edit what you write.

Activity 4: Defining Moments

WRITING: Text Types and Purposes

1.3 2.3 3.3 4.3 5.3

WRITING Research to Build and Present Knowledge

1.7,8 2.7,8 3.7 4.7 5.7

HISTORY AND SOCIAL SCIENCE

People Who Make a Difference; Continuity and Change, Making a New Nation

VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS

2.0 Creative Expression

Explore the lives of other Presidents who worked to make a difference by finding out what personal life experiences shaped their ideals and the actions they took. Have your students create and perform skits, monologues, songs, spoken word poems, or other creative pieces in groups or on their own that show what they found just like in *Presidential Palooza*.

Use the following questions to help you in your research:

- Who were the President's role models and why?
- What mistakes did he make and how did those mistakes effect other people?
- What jobs did he do before becoming President?
- Did he serve in the military?
- Who advised him as President and why?

Activity 5: Make Your Stand

WRITING: Text Types and Purposes

1.1 2.1 3.1 4.1 5.1

WRITING Research to Build and Present Knowledge

1.7,8 2.7,8 3.7 4.7 5.7

Even though the internet has made communication easier and faster, letters, pamphlets and speeches can still persuade people just as effectively as they did in Washington's time.

Choose an issue that is important to you, and write a letter, pamphlet, or speech in support of your position. Research the topic more so that you can have specific facts and examples to back up your opinions and ideas. Decide who the audience of your piece will be and write with them in mind.

Share your letter, pamphlet, or speech with the class. Which of your classmates was most persuasive and why?

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

SCIENCE & HEALTH

SCIENCE

Life Sciences 5.2

VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS

5.0 Connections, Relationships, Applications

Activity 6: Asthma Action Plan

Though relatively little was known about asthma in Teddy Roosevelt's time, asthma sufferers today have the knowledge, social awareness, and medication necessary to lead a healthy life style while keeping the condition under control.

As a class, help Teddy make an Asthma Action Plan by answering the following questions:

- Teddy's doctor tells him to take a long-term medication every day to prevent asthma symptoms. What can Teddy do to remember to take his medicine?
- Teddy also needs to carry an inhaler for emergencies. Where should Teddy keep his inhaler so that he has it when he needs it?
- Teddy has found that he is allergic to dog hair and pollen from plants. These things make his asthma symptoms worse. What should he do to avoid these things?
- Catching a cold or the flu can also make Teddy's asthma symptoms worse. How can he avoid these illnesses?

Activity 7: What's On the Menu?

After stepping down from the Presidency, William Howard Taft reportedly lost about 60 lbs. His methods, as revealed in a series of letters written between Taft and his doctor, are very similar to the methods people use to lose weight today.

Your students can help President Taft plan a healthy diet by doing the following:

- Look at health magazines and recipe websites to find healthy recipes for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Have each student bring a few of their favorite recipes to class.
- Mark several large sheets of paper, or whiteboard space, as 'Daily Menus' with the categories of breakfast, lunch, and dinner.
- Have your students mix and match their recipes using one or more of these 'Daily Menus' to create some sensible, healthy, balanced menus for President Taft.
- As you go over each menu, ask your students why they made the choices they did.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

ANTI-BULLYING AND CHARACTER COUNTS

SPEAKING & LISTENING: Comprehension & Collaboration

K.2 1.2 2.2 3.2,3

SPEAKING & LISTENING: Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas

K.4,6 1.4,6 2.6 3.6 4.6 5.6

VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS

5.0 Connections, Relationships, Applications

7

Anti-Bullying Thematic Questions for *Presidential Palooza*

1. Which characters in the story are bullies? Which characters get bullied?
2. What do the characters do to bully each other? Why are these types of behavior unacceptable?
3. Why was Christina Polk teased at school? What can you do when you are teased because of someone else's actions, appearance, or habits?
4. Though President Polk was not directly teased or made fun of, the way people ignored him still made him feel bad. What can you do to make sure everyone feels included in class or free time activities and discussions?
5. To 'ostracize' someone means to intentionally exclude someone from your activities, conversation, and general circle of friends. How is this a form of bullying? What can you do to stop it keep it from happening?
6. As seen in the story of President Taft and his bathtub, the humor found in plays, books, movies & tv shows, and everyday life sometimes comes at someone else's expense because of how they look, think, or act. How can we know when our jokes are appropriate or inappropriate?

Character Counts Thematic Questions for *Presidential Palooza*

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 *Presidential Palooza*? 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?
5. What qualities do you look for when asked to select a leader or someone to represent you?

Citizenship:

1. Name specific incidents from the play where you saw characters do something that positively or negatively affected their community.
2. Which characters in the play believed that what they did counted? What did they do that made a difference in the long run?
3. What risks did the Presidents and First Ladies presented take in order to better their country?
4. Doing something of value to help the community doesn't always take risk. It may just be something that takes up your time and your energy. What do you do in class or at home that makes a difference to those around you?
5. Many have risked their lives so that future generations of Americans could live freely and peaceably. What are you able to do today because of their sacrifices? What little things can you do to honor their sacrifice?

RESOURCES & ADDENDA

FURTHER READING & LEARNING

Electronic Resources

White House Biographies of the Presidents
<https://www.whitehouse.gov/1600/Presidents>

American President: A Reference Resource
<http://millercenter.org/president>

The Mayo Clinic—Asthma
<http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/asthma/basics/definition/con-20026992>

Mount Vernon on George Washington
<http://www.mountvernon.org/george-washington/>

Online Activities

What does the President Do? A Listen-and-Read Book
http://teacher.scholastic.com/commclub/president_activity1/

If You Were President: A Scholastic News Online Activity
http://teacher.scholastic.com/scholasticnews/games_quizzes/electiongame/game.asp

U.S. Presidents: A Math Hunt Activity
<http://teacher.scholastic.com/mathhunt/StartGame.asp?QuizID=2>

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HISTORY AND SOCIAL SCIENCE

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A Word with the President

Word Search

Find these words in the word search.

- | | | |
|--------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1. President | 6. pristine | 11. chambermaid |
| 2. precedent | 7. secede | 12. grandiose |
| 3. elect | 8. conservation | 13. Reinforce |
| 4. policy | 9. wheeze | 14. dull |
| 5. differ | 10. disarray | 15. reject |

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



"The kids were completely engaged and entertained."

— Staff Member, Shriners' Hospital

SCHOOL MATINEES

You come to us!

Anansi the Spider

September 29 – November 6, 2015

Adapted by Dave Pierini

INTRODUCING! Anansi, the Spider! One of the GREAT folk heroes of the world! He is a rogue, a mischief-maker, and a wise, lovable creature who triumphs over larger foes. These African folktales will delight all ages.

A Christmas Carol

November 17 – December 18, 2016

Adapted by Buck Busfield

Dust doesn't have time to settle on this age-old story! And more than just dust flies with this B Street adaptation!

Frankenstein

February 16 – March 18, 2016

Adapted by Jerry Montoya

Travel in time to the first science fiction story ever written! Journey with Viktor Frankenstein and encounter his doomed creature! A surprising tale of friendship, alienation and love.

Alice in Wonderland

April 12 – March 18, 2016

Adapted by Buck Busfield

Don't be late for these very important dates! Come down the rabbit hole with Alice!

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www.bstreettheatre.org/for-educators/school-matinees

B Street Theatre Outreach & Education 2015-2016

"You put the spark in them to write."

- 4th Grade Teacher, Cordova Villa Elementary,
Rancho Cordova

WORKSHOPS & RESIDENCIES

We come to you!

Introduction to Playwriting

Single interactive 90-Minute Playwriting Workshop designed to inspire and empower students to write their own plays.

Playwriting Towards Production

Three interactive 90-Minute Playwriting Workshops designed to lead students from inspired ideas to completed drafts of original plays.

Bespoke Theatre!

After-School Workshops & Residencies

Our Teaching Artists will tailor your after-school program to suit your organization's needs. Participants:

- Learn theatre games and exercises!
- Develop communication and performance skills!
- Perform plays either from their own writing or from B Street's own catalog of scripts!



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www.bstreettheatre.org/for-educators/workshops-&-residencies



"The quality of the production was outstanding."

— 5th Grade Teacher, Pine Grove Elementary, Jackson

SCHOOL TOUR

We come to you!

PRESIDENTIAL PALOOZA!

November 2 – 25, 2015

They manage congress, balance budgets, and negotiate for peace. How hard can the job of President be? Find out more in this colorful, engaging, and fast-paced tribute to the uncommon citizens who mastered the art of multitasking while occupying the highest office in the land!

PRESIDENTIAL PALOOZA - with a TWIST!

November 30 – December 18, 2015

Our B Street School Tour performers add our traditional holiday twist to the antics in the Oval Office!

HISTORY EXTRAVAGANZA II

January 18 – March 11, 2016

From Ancient Greece to the California Gold Rush, from Medieval Europe to the Making of a New Nation, and onto the Industrial Revolution! Enjoy this veritable buffet of select plays written by students of ALL grade levels based on topics tied directly to curriculum.

FANTASY FESTIVAL XXX

March 28 – June 3, 2016

Now in our 30th year! The winning plays of our annual playwriting contest for kids. Behold the extraordinary results of putting a professional theatre's staff at the service of young writers' talents.

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