



Omaha Theater Company
for Young People
presents

SHOW TIME **FOR TEACHERS**

Welcome to *Show Time*, a performing arts resource guide published by the CSB/SJU Fine Arts Education series. This edition of *Show Time* is designed to be used before or after a performance of *Miss Nelson is Missing!*. Check out the ideas for curriculum connections to this theater production. From ten-minute suggestions to two-hour lessons, you may pick the activities that best suit your needs. Be sure to check out *Show Time for Kids*, a one-page activity that may be done independently or as a group.

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MISS NELSON iS MISSING!

A musical adaptation of the books *Miss Nelson is Missing!* and *Miss Nelson is Back*.

Written by Harry Allard
and

Illustrated by James Marshall



STORY SCAN

Miss Nelson is Missing!, was written by Harry Allard and published in 1977. The book has been on library shelves everywhere since! Of all the books Mr. Allard wrote, *Miss Nelson is Missing!* is his personal favorite.

The kids in Room 207 take advantage of their teacher's good nature until one day when she disappears. Now they are faced with the mean and mysterious substitute Miss Viola Swamp. What happened to Miss Nelson? Was she gobbled up by a shark? Did she go to Mars? Was she carried off by a swarm of angry butterflies? Will the kids of Room 207 ever see their beloved teacher Miss Nelson again?

The book was a runner-up for a 1977 Edgar Allan Poe Award and won the Colorado Children's Book Award in 1985. Booklist said of *Miss Nelson is Missing!*:

"Rarely has the golden rule been so effectively interpreted for children."



CLASSROOM COMPARISON

Make a chart with the headings 'Room 207' and your own classroom number. Invite your students to compare their own classroom behaviors to Room 207 before Miss Nelson went missing.

- * What are the similarities and differences?
- * How could the students in your classroom improve their behavior?
- * What could Miss Nelson's students learn from your students?

Ask your students to create posters that might help Miss Nelson's class improve their behavior.



LANGUAGE ARTS

HELP-WANTED: TEACHER AND STUDENTS

Miss Nelson's students were unhappy with their substitute teacher. Suppose they were given the opportunity to advertise for a new teacher. Ask your students to write a "help-wanted" ad from the perspective of the students in Room 207 describing the qualifications and characteristics they desire in a substitute teacher.

Miss Nelson's students took advantage of her kind character by behaving badly. Invite your students to write another "help-wanted" ad from Miss Nelson's perspective. What qualities might she look for in students?

Post teacher and student ads on the wall and discuss why the qualities your students listed are necessary for a successful classroom.

SWAMPY SYLLABLES

Discuss with your students the personality traits of Miss Swamp. Invite the students to write a syllable poem based on her personality. They may work alone or in a group. The poem structure looks like this:

one syllable
two syllables
three syllables
four syllables
three syllables
two syllables
one syllable

Generally, the first and last line of the poem are the same. When the poem is done, ask your students to choose one line of the poem to illustrate.

Show Time for Kids: Martian Fieldtrip

_____ Name

Miss Nelson's students think that their teacher may have gone to Mars! Read on for the latest "Martian Facts":

B-r-r-r-r...The average surface temperature of Mars is -64 F!

Into thin air! The atmosphere on Mars is 95% carbon dioxide.

Sweet...You weigh only 1/3 as much on Mars as you do on Earth!

Are you thirsty? Water can exist on Mars only as a gas or solid.

Ho-hum...Mars takes almost twice as long as the Earth to orbit the Sun.

I see red...Mars is called the "Red Planet" because it has a reddish hue from the dust and rocks on its surface.

Ouch! Seasonal dust storms with winds up to 80 mph are common on Mars.

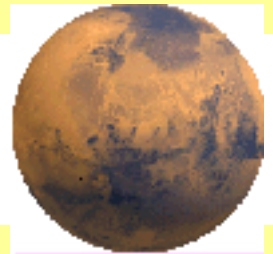
Long flight! Depending on its orbit, Mars is between 33,900,000 - 249,000,000 miles from Earth.

Small, medium or large? Mars is half the size of the Earth and twice the size of the Moon.

Navigate this website for more Martian games, activities, and info:

<http://marsrovers.jpl.nasa.gov/classroom/students/asip.html>

(click on mars for kids).... *We visited this website. It is very good!!*



What items would Miss Nelson need to pack for a trip to Mars? Why?
packing list: _____

If Miss Nelson weighs 120 lbs. on Earth, how much would she weigh on Mars? _____ How much would you weigh on Mars? _____

About how long would summer last on Mars? _____

What is the solid form of water? _____ What is the gas form? _____

Design a vehicle that Miss Nelson might use to travel around on the surface of Mars. Draw it on the back of this sheet.



VISUAL ART

A.K.A.

Miss Nelson's disguise included a mask that transformed her into Miss Viola Swamp. A mask is a piece of material worn on the face. Masks have been used for centuries to "reveal and conceal." In other words, donning a mask helps the wearer reveal a different character or conceal the wearer's identity. Masks may be used for practical or ceremonial purposes.

Discussion questions:

- * How was Miss Swamp's "face" different from Miss Nelson's face?
- * Ask students to think of masks that are used in everyday life. (Welding, hockey, underwater, and surgical masks may be worn for protection.)
- * Ask students to think of ceremonial uses for masks. (Many cultures use masks for religious celebrations, storytelling, and rituals.)
- * What are some situations when masks might be used to hide the wearer's identity? (Criminals wear masks to avoid being identified.)
- * When might a mask be used to create a new identity for the wearer? (Actors sometimes wear masks in theater and dance performances.)

Masks play an important role in creating characters in theater. Primitive societies first experienced theater in the form of dance. Dance may have been used to honor the spirits of ancestors, tell stories, or deal with supernatural powers. Dancers wore masks and costumes to represent spirits.

The first recorded form of European theater began in Ancient Greece around 600 B.C. Masks were worn by Greek actors to show emotion and age. Men played female roles as women were not allowed to perform in Greek Theater. To hide their masculine identity, the men wore female masks.

Discussion questions:

- * What are some materials that may have been used to make masks in primitive societies? (bark, grasses, animal skins, shells, etc.)
- * What are some materials used for mask-making today? (metals, clay, paper, leather, wood, etc.)
- * How has theater changed since Ancient Greek times?



VISUAL ART

QUICK CHANGE!

Students can create new identities (or hide their own) with half masks and wigs. Use tacky glue and allow a day of drying time. Ask your students to make a character from *Miss Nelson is Missing!* or create a mask based on the drama activity on page 6: *Becoming My Opposite*.

BASIC HALF MASK:

Cut a paper plate in half and attach a craft stick to the side for a holder. Use two fingers to measure how far apart the eyes are and mark the paper plate accordingly. Draw and cut out eye holes. Use marker or crayon to draw details on the mask. Create expression by exaggerating the eyes and eyebrows.

The mask can also be worn instead of holding it by the stick. Simply punch holes at the sides and tie 1/4" elastic into the holes.

CHARACTER MASKS:

Follow directions for the half mask, but add details like three-dimensional noses and hair. Use the nose patterns provided on page 7 or create your own. After cutting out the nose, fold it in half lengthwise and make a sharp crease on the fold. Use tape on the inside of the nose to attach it to the plate and allow part of the nose to hang beyond the bottom edge. Add eyebrows, hair, and moustaches made of fuzzy yarn, paper shreds, or curled paper.

FANCY HALF MASK:

Follow directions for the half mask, but make it more elaborate by creating an interesting shape for the mask. (Shapes resembling oversized "smiley" glasses work well.) Decorate the mask with metallic paints and markers. Use glitter to define eye holes or edges. Add bright ribbon streamers, feathers, fake jewels, and more!

HAIR ON A BOWL:

Select a paper or plastic bowl that fits on the head. Turn the bowl upside down and attach "hair" using strips of crepe paper, tissue paper, or yarn. Leave 1/4 of the bowl free of long pieces of hair so the wearer's vision is not obstructed. Add short pieces of hair material for bangs to hide the front of the bowl.



DRAMA

BECOMING MY OPPOSITE

In the book *Miss Nelson is Missing!*, a teacher must become a person very different from herself in order to get the class' attention.

Discussion/journal questions for students:

- * Have you ever had to pretend to be someone different from your usual self? Why?
- * What did you do?
- * How did you feel about trying to be someone different?

Invite your students to list words that describe their personalities. Then ask each student to make a second list of opposite traits. Discuss how clothing and accessories (backpacks, sports equipment, books, music, etc.) also tell about someone's personality.

Discussion/journal questions for students:

- * How does appearance affect how people are treated by others?
- * What does your appearance tell the world about you?

Ask students to imagine a version of themselves that is an opposite from their real self in every way.

Option 1:

Invite students to choose clothing and props that would describe their opposite and act out something about their opposite.

Option 2:

Invite students to draw their opposites with a descriptive costume and props. Hang the drawings in the classroom and invite others to guess who the opposite of each character might be.

Discussion/journal questions for students:

- * What do you like about your "opposite self"?
- * Would you like to be your opposite for a day? What would you do and where would you go? Why?
- * Do you think you and your opposite would be friends? Why or why not?



DRAMA

A DIFFERENT STORY!

The story of *Miss Nelson is Missing!* could have turned out differently if Miss Nelson really had been missing. What if Miss Nelson was no longer willing to teach her misbehaving students and Miss Swamp really existed as a separate person?

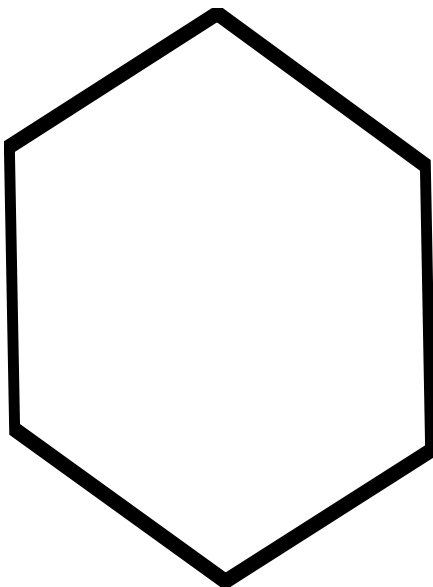
Divide students into small groups. Invite each group to create a scene that shows an alternate ending to the story. They may choose one of the following endings or come up with their own ideas:

1. The class has to figure out how to live with Miss Swamp for the rest of the school year.
2. The students go to Miss Nelson's house to convince her to return to school.
3. Miss Nelson has to be rescued from one of the scenarios in the book (like being carried off by angry butterflies).

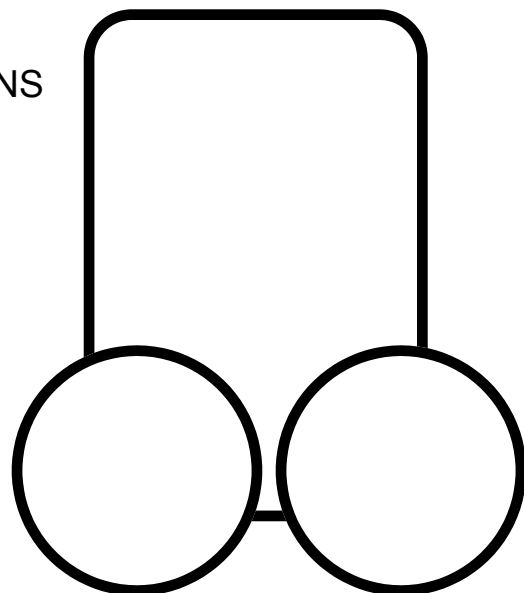
Ask students to act out a two - three minute scene for the class.

Discussion questions for students:

- * How does each new ending change the message of the book?
- * Do the characters learn anything different?



NOSE PATTERNS



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THEATER ETIQUETTE

Each year, thousands of teachers, students, bus drivers, and parents take part in CSB/SJU's Fine Arts Education series. Please review the **LOOKING & LISTENING** information below with your students to help make your theater experience the best it can be.

LOOKING and LISTENING:

Attending the Omaha Theater Company for Young People's live performance of *Miss Nelson is Missing!* will be interesting and enjoyable for everyone if you remember to...

- * listen in order to understand the words and music.
- * pay careful attention to the actions and facial expressions of the actors to help you understand what they are thinking and feeling.
- * watch for the costume each actor wears to define his or her character.

The actors in the musical will be in the same room as the audience and will be affected by the audience's behavior. Actors must concentrate on what they say and do on stage, so unexpected activity or noise may distract them. The actors rely on you to help them make a successful performance. Applaud when it is appropriate and enjoy yourself.

REMEMBER: LISTEN CAREFULLY and WATCH CLOSELY!

Please review the **PROCEDURES** section below to help your theater visit go smoothly.

PROCEDURES:

- * Prepare your students to enter the theater in single file in order of seating.
- * Position your chaperones to maximize adult supervision of your group.
- * Trips to the rest room must wait until your group has been seated. Then, students may go in small groups with adult permission. Younger students will need to be chaperoned.
- * The theater is a food, gum, drink, radio, camera, tape/video recorder free zone.

REMEMBER: ENJOY THE PERFORMANCE!