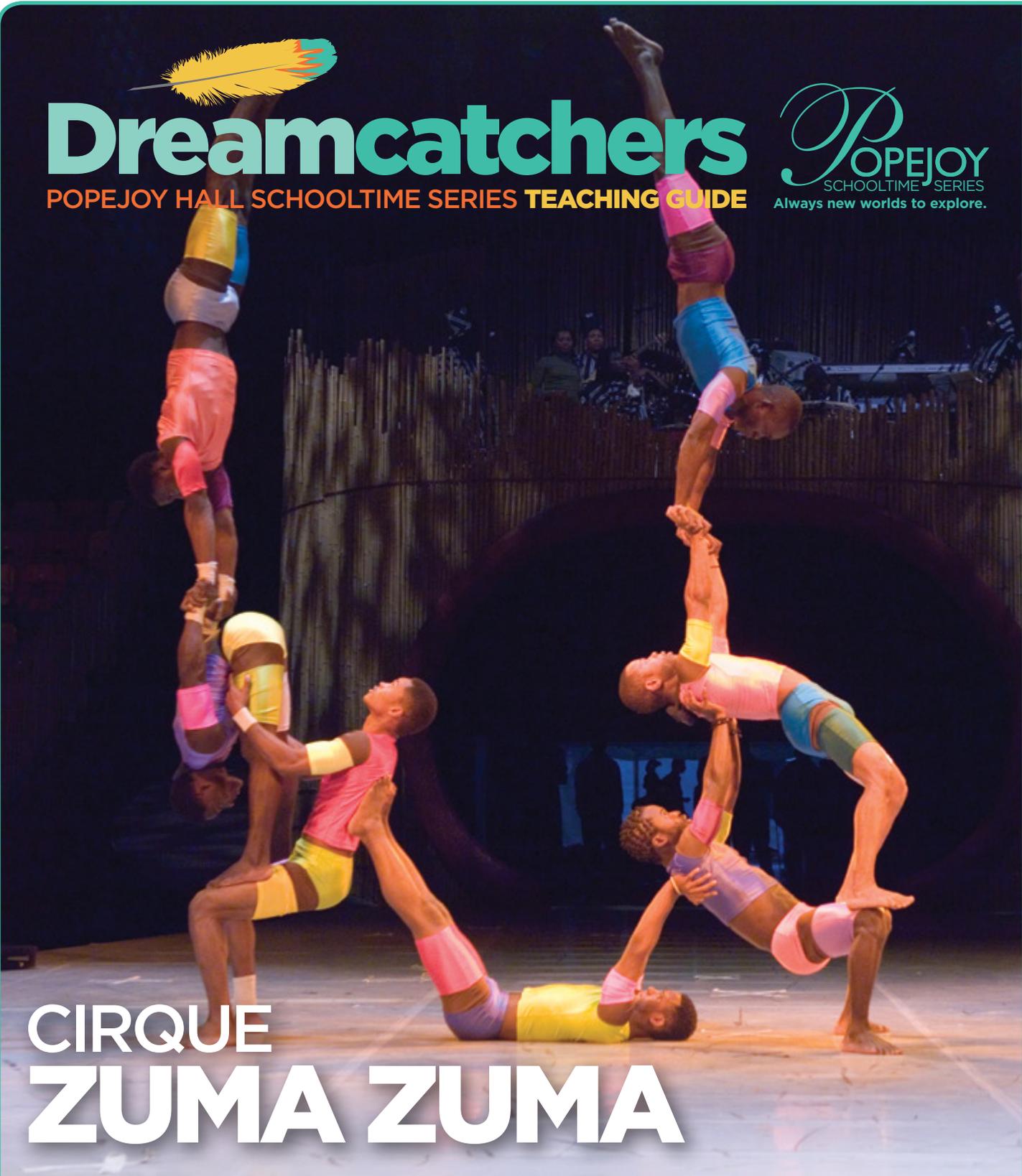




# Dreamcatchers

POPEJOY HALL SCHOOLTIME SERIES **TEACHING GUIDE**

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# CIRQUE ZUMA ZUMA

PRESENTED BY AFRICAN ACROBATICS INTERNATIONAL, INC.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 30, 2015 • GRADES: 2 - 12

Dreamcatchers Teaching Guides align with the Common Core State Standards and New Mexico State Learning Standards.

## Standards Addressed By Attending the Performance

**NMCCSS**  
English Language Arts:  
Speaking and Listening:  
Comprehension and  
Collaboration  
(CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL)

**New Mexico Content Standards:**  
**Fine Arts:**  
Theatre & Dance-  
Content Standards 3 & 5

“What you help a child to love can be more important than what you help him to learn.”

-AFRICAN PROVERB

## Introduction

African Acrobats International, Inc. has established the ultimate African Circus: a cradle of all cultures, and the ultimate source for music, dance, and rituals of Africa. The mere thought of this culturally rich continent evokes images of mysticism, magic, and excitement. African Acrobats International, Inc. brings the allure of the African Circus to American audiences. Cirque Zuma Zuma casts talented performers who can fill a 60-minute show with non-stop action and amazing features that keep spectators breathless.



This show includes performances of all different types of African culture, including: a vocalist, the Limbo Dance, South African gumboot dancers, amazing pole acts, acrobats, tumblers, contortionists and jugglers. The show features an array of never-before-seen talents mixed with some of the most renowned and admired skills associated with African variety arts.



## Vocabulary

**Acrobat:** someone who entertains people by performing difficult and often dangerous acts

**Contortionist:** a performer who twists his or her body into unusual positions

**Diablo:** a juggling prop consisting of an axle and two cups or discs

**Folktales:** a traditional story

**Gumboots:** a rubber boot

**Mime:** the theatrical technique of suggesting action, character, or emotion without words, using only gesture, expression, and movement

**Reed:** a tall, thin grass that grows in wet areas

**Synchronization:** occurring or operating at the same time or rate

**Trapeze:** a short bar that is suspended high above the ground by two ropes and held by circus performers who use it to perform athletic tricks

**Tumbling:** the skill, practice, or sport of executing gymnastic feats (such as somersaults and handsprings) without the use of apparatus

## Interesting Facts

**Acrobatics** - This word derives from the Greek *akrobatos*, which may be translated as 'walking on tiptoe', but which literally means 'to go to the highest point' (*akros*: highest; *batos*, from the verb for 'to go'). While the etymology is Greek, the performing art of acrobatics has roots in ancient Chinese culture, where it emerged in tribal rituals related to daily activities. Work, intertribal relations, and religious sacrifices all had their own corresponding acrobatic movements as the art developed alongside music, song, and dance. Acrobatics has maintained its status as a spectacular bodily art. Complex gymnastic feats are now often performed with apparatus such as balls, unicycles, trampolines, tightropes, and trapezes.

<http://www.encyclopedia.com/topic/acrobatics.aspx>

**The Limbo Dance** - was originally a ritual performed at 'wakes' in Trinidad during the mid or late 19th century. It is believed that the people of Trinidad danced in this way to portray going down into the hull of a slave ship. No matter how much they twisted or turned, squirmed or arched, they would be forced to travel deeper and deeper into the ship. Some would make it; others would not. The dextrous position had to be retained because the space between the upper deck and floor was narrow. It was designed for packing--not standing--which consequently created what is now known as the Limbo. Holly Betaudier and Julia Edwards are both credited for its development as an artistic dance. Up to the 1950's, and maybe later, the ritual known as 'limbo' was still practiced at wakes in rural Trinidad and Tobago.

<http://www.tntisland.com/limbo.html>

**Gumboot Origins** - Gumboots come from South Africans who worked in the gold mines during the migrant labor system and oppressive Apartheid Pass Laws. During this time, workers were separated from their families and forced to work in harsh conditions. The gold mines were completely dark and flooded. The flooding caused skin to breakdown, causing ulcers and several other skin diseases. Not only was their work environment harsh, the rules and guidelines were also brutal. Miners were chained to their work stations with shackles and not allowed to speak to one another while working for months at a time. Many of the miners were killed during this work by accidents, while others were beaten and abused. <http://dancehistorygumbootdancing.weebly.com/narrative.html>

**The Mine Worker's Uniform** - The flooding in the mines became a big problem, as it caused so many workers to become ill. Those in charge decided to take the cheaper route in dealing with the problem. Instead of draining the unsanitary water, they bought the workers rubber gumboots to prevent skin breakdown and infections. The miners' uniforms consisted of hard hats, bandannas, jeans/overalls, and gumboots. With this uniform, the workers were not able to show their ethnic identity or carry on their traditions with their clothing, so they turned to another form of expression.

**Communicating in the Gold Mines** - The workers began to express themselves by making rhythms and beats with their bodies, gumboots, and chains. They made the noises by slapping their boots, stomping their feet, and rattling their shackles. Not only did this express their personal heritage by using their traditional songs and rhythms, but it helped them communicate with one another in the workplace. The mines were very dark and they were not allowed to converse with their fellow South Africans, so Gumboot Dancing became the only way to communicate with the surrounding workers.

**Step Dancing or "Stepping"** - Today, gumboot is popular and has morphed into a different form of dance that is more modern and is referred to as "stepping." Stepping was developed in the 1980's by African American college students in Detroit, Michigan. Stepping involves similar rhythms and instruments as gumboot dancing. Stepping uses the body as the main instrument by stomping the feet, clapping the hands, and slapping different parts of the body to make rhythms and beats. In stepping, the performers also use their voices to make the performance more expressive and dramatic. This style of dancing is popular among sororities and fraternities at multiple universities across the United States. Just like gumboot dancing, stepping has also evolved and is now expanding into several communities all across America.



**NMCCSS:**

**Speaking & Listening** (CCSS. ELA-Literacy.SL): Comprehension and Collaboration

**New Mexico Content Standards:**

**Fine Arts/Dance:**

Content Standards 1, 3, 4, & 5

# Activity 1

## Balancing Fun

### Objectives

Students will:

- Explore moving their bodies in different ways.
- Learn about balance as individuals, in pairs, and in a group.

### Materials

Large space to move in

### Procedure

#### BALANCING ALONE:

1. Standing in a circle, ask the students to stand on one foot. Who can stand on one foot with no wiggling or extra movement? Next, ask students to stand on their other foot. Ask the students if it is easier to balance on one leg than it is on the other.
2. Repeat the exercise with eyes closed. Again, ask: What do you notice? Is it harder to balance with your eyes closed than open? Is one leg easier than the other?

#### BALANCING IN PAIRS:

6. Next, pair students up and ask each pair to create a balanced shape as a pair. Explain that they can hold hands or lean on each other; however, lifting or holding one partner off of the ground is not an option. Suggest making a shape where each person only has one foot touching the ground. Encourage shapes that are interesting and odd.
7. Once everyone in the group knows what shape they are going to make with their partner, it is

#### BALANCING IN UNISON:

11. In the circle, ask for a volunteer to make a fluid movement that is simple enough for everyone to copy. Break down the movement, until everyone is clear on exactly what it is. Point out exactly what the feet, legs, knees, elbows, hands, and head are doing. Have students make the movement in unison on your count: “3, 2, 1, Go!” and challenge them to end together, too.

3. Invite students to make a shape that is still like a statue and has three points touching the ground. Example: two hands and one foot touch the ground, the other leg in the air. Explain these rules: the shape has to be stable enough to hold for a few seconds. A head cannot be a point: no handstands or headstands. Students must keep their bodies to themselves.

time to share. Put on some music (instrumental music is best). Have students stand in a circle next to their partners. Ask each pair to step into the center of the circle and count for them: “3, 2, 1, Shape!”

8. When the first pair has held their shape for a few seconds they can take their spot in the circle and the next pair can step into the center to share their shape. Count for this pair again: “3, 2, 1, Shape!”

12. Now try doing the same movement in canon pattern. The canon is similar to the “wave” at sporting events or a “round” in music—dancers do the same move but they start it at different points in time (think “Row Row Row Your Boat” with movement instead of words). Decide which student will start the canon and what direction to go around the circle. When students are waiting for their turn

4. After allowing students time to explore, ask them to make different 3-point shapes every time they hear this instruction: “3, 2, 1, Shape!”

5. Ask students: What skills does it take to balance? If you hold your stomach or core muscles tight does it make balancing harder or easier? How do you use your eyes to help you balance?

9. Do this until all the pairs have shown their balanced shapes.

10. Ask students: What did you learn about balance? What did you learn about making shapes with a partner? What skills does it take to balance with a partner? Was it harder or easier to make a shape by yourself or with a partner?

or just finished, ask them to have still bodies. Once the group’s canon is fluid, see if the students can vary the speed, fast and slow.

13. Ask students: What did you have to do to move in unison with the rest of the group? How did your focus shift when working on the movement canon? How does the speed change the movement? Which speed do you like better and why?

### Assessment

- Students are able to balance using the guidelines given.
- Quality of participation.

## Grades: 4-12

Adapted from an activity at [www.artyfactory.com](http://www.artyfactory.com)

### NMCCSS:

**Speaking and Listening** (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL):

- Comprehension and Collaboration

### New Mexico Content Standards:

#### Fine Arts/Visual Arts:

Content Standards 1, 2, 5, & 6

# Activity 2

## Designing an African Mask



### Objectives

Students will:

- Construct masks inspired by African designs.
- Learn basic collage techniques.
- Use symmetry in their designs.

### Materials

Two similar sized sheets of thick paper or card stock: one light in tone, the other dark • Pencil • Scissors or craft knife • Glue

### Procedure

*NOTE: It might be helpful to look at various [African mask designs](#) before beginning this project.*

1. Have students fold the light sheet of paper in equal half down its vertical length and cut along the crease.
2. Take one of the light halves and place it over the dark sheet creating one half dark and one half light. Arrange these sheets in portrait (vertical) format.
3. Draw a stylized eye about halfway down the light sheet of paper. Simplify this drawing into basic shapes that contain little detail.
4. Have students cut out the eye shape, flip it over and place it on the dark sheet to form a symmetrical arrangement.
5. The next step is to draw one half of a stylized nose on the light colored paper, cut it out, and flip it over. Place the nose on the dark sheet and align it with the vertical edge of the light paper.
6. Have students draw one half of a stylized mouth on the light colored paper.
7. Cut out the mouth shape and flip it over. Place it on the dark sheet and align it with the vertical edge of the light paper to complete its shape.
8. Draw a simple shape for the outline of the face on the light paper. This shape could be oval, circular, rectangular, elongated, heart-shaped, animal-shaped or human, or any combination of these.
9. Cut around the outline of the face but leave the face shape in place.
10. Now take the leftover background shape, flip it over to the other side and align it with the vertical center line.
11. Tell the students that they can decorate the face of their mask by drawing some designs on the light side of the face.
12. Next, have students cut out the designs, flip them over and place them on the opposite side of the mask to create a decorative symmetrical arrangement.
13. On the light background have them draw a stylized design to represent hair or braids in a straight, simplified, linear design.
14. Cut out the stylized hair braid, flip it over and place it onto the dark side of the design.
15. Once they have completed the arrangement of their design, instruct the students to glue the light shapes down onto the dark background.
16. Have them take care to ensure that a neat line is formed down the middle of the mask where the two halves of the design meet.
17. Ask the students to share their masks. Have them note how, even though they all had the same instructions, their masks are individual or unique to them and their personal imagination and creativity.

### Extensions Activities

- Students can customize their mask design by using different materials. Adapt the color, pattern and texture of the mask to enhance its expressive power and visual impact.
- Have students write or tell a story with their mask as a central character.
- For older students, have them expand upon their own character and write a group play using a small group format or the whole class.

### Assessment

- Quality of participation.
- Students follow directions so that their masks show a certain amount of symmetry between the light and dark sides.

# Bonus Explorations

## Extension Activities

**AFRICAN NATIONS-** The performers in Zuma Zuma come from a number of different African nations including South Africa, Kenya, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, and Ethiopia. What do you know about these countries? What can you find out about this part of the world? Do a quick nation study with your class. Ask students: What information was already familiar to you? What surprised you? What questions do you have about these countries? Next, have students (individually or in small groups) choose one of the countries listed above to research and create presentations. Students should use their school library catalog, pathfinders, and databases to locate at least two print resources and at least one online source. Presentations should include basic information such as: the country's official name, population, capital city, official language, images of the country's wildlife, natural features, man-made features, and a brief history of the country.

Students should also try to answer the following questions through their presentations:

- What is the landscape or what are the prominent geographical features of the country? What wildlife might you see there?
- What are some of the country's most well-known art forms?
- What are some of the country's most loved pastimes?
- Who are some of the nation's most famous figures (political figures, artists, national heroes, etc.)?
- What is the country's economy based on? Agriculture? Tourism? Trade? Explain.

## GET HANDS-ON

Create an illustrated advertisement for the show that describes some of the highlights from the performance.

Write a story or narrative that connects to one of the acts you saw and explore an aspect of African cultural history in your narrative.

Research acrobatics and learn how much time and practice it takes to perform some of the acts you saw at the performance.

Imagine that you can create your own circus. What types of acts would you have? How would it be different from the performance you saw? How would it be similar?

## Outreach Activities

### NM Martin Luther King Jr. State Commission

The mission for the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Commission is to promote cultural awareness and human rights through Dr. King's life philosophy and six principles of nonviolent social action to all peoples of New Mexico.

### African American Performing Arts Center and Exhibition Hall

The mission of the African American Performing Arts Center and Exhibit Hall is to preserve, nurture and support the intellectual and cultural history of African Americans in New Mexico and the Southwest. Their goal is to promote visual and performing arts that support African American Culture; and to sponsor scholastic and technological programs and projects that advance the research and preservation of the intellectual and cultural history of African Americans.

## Resources

### WEBSITES

<http://www.zumazuma.com/>

Check out the Cirque Zuma Zuma website for more information on their performances and the variety of acts and art forms—see photos and check out video clips from their shows.

<http://www.yourchildlearns.com/mappuzzle/africa-puzzle.html>

Try this fun interactive quiz—locate the countries of Africa, place them on the map, and learn their capital cities.

<http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/ngm/africaarchive/map.html>

This interactive map of Africa allows you to locate countries on the map and then select and read corresponding National Geographic articles about those nations and their people.

### VIDEOS

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UOQ51WVrR40>

Check out this video of a group performing traditional gumboot dances. Notice the combination of quick footwork and the percussive use of the boots and bodies of the dancers.

### BOOKS

<http://www.mandelasfavoritefolktales.com/>

An audio book benefiting children in South Africa orphaned and impacted by HIV/AIDS.

## Cogitations

After seeing the show, ask your students to answer these questions:

Before seeing this show, I didn't know that ...

This show made me think about ...

The part that most grabbed my attention was ...

While watching the show, the strongest feeling I had was ...

Overall, the show made me feel ...

The question I have about the show is ...

One change I would make in the show is ...

If I could talk to the creative team or actors, I would say ...

After seeing the show, my friends and I talked about ...

Something I want to share with my family about the experience is ...

## About the Company

The tradition of dance and acrobatics in Africa goes back over 2,500 years. The members of African Acrobats International Academy uphold this centuries old tradition through their training, artistry, and touring performances. AAI was originally founded in East Africa as a private school with a goal of providing entertainment to the tourist hotels in Africa. Cirque Zuma Zuma was established about a decade later, in late 2005, as a touring arm of the company with a mission of teaching the world about African cultures. African Acrobats International now has training schools in Tanzania, Ethiopia, and Kenya. In addition to training performers, AAI is working to collect and publish numerous African opera scripts and historical texts as well as issuing DVDs and videos for education and promotion of the traditional arts of Africa. The performers of African Acrobats International have toured the world, presenting more than 150 performances annually.



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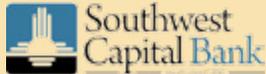


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Dreamcatchers are teaching guides produced by the Education Department of Popejoy Hall, New Mexico's premier nonprofit venue for the performing arts and entertainment located in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Selected Dreamcatchers Teaching Guide materials provided by **Cirque Zuma Zuma**, **San Luis Obispo Performing Arts Center Study Guide**, and other resources noted within this guide.

**Popejoy Hall's Mission: To provide access to the performing arts for all New Mexicans.**

The Popejoy Schooltime Series is a program of The University of New Mexico.



**Popejoy Hall**, New Mexico's premier nonprofit venue for the performing arts and entertainment.

## About the Popejoy Hall Schooltime Series

We present national and international touring companies and performers that you will not see anywhere else in or around Albuquerque.

These companies are selected with youth and family audiences in mind, from titles and materials that reflect the cultural diversity of our global community. These professional performing artists create educational experiences designed to encourage **literacy, creativity, communication** and **imagination**.

## Etiquette

The performing arts - theater, music and dance - are all collaborative endeavors. They require the cooperation of many skilled people: playwrights, directors, performers, designers, technicians, lyricists, choreographers, musicians and the audience. Live performances can transport you to other times and places but to do so, they require you, the audience, to listen, observe, discover, and imagine.

The inside of a theatre is called a "house." There are rules inside the house to make the experience smooth and enjoyable for everyone. A poster of **Theatre Etiquette** is available on our website. Please post it and discuss it with your students before attending this show.

## House Policies

Please visit our website for detailed information about **House Policies** safety, special needs, food and drink, backpacks, cell phones, photography, recordings, and more.

Find us at: [schooltimeseries.com](http://schooltimeseries.com)  
[schooltime@popejoypresents.com](mailto:schooltime@popejoypresents.com)

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