

THE PAPER BAG PLAYERS

We Start To Sing!

Material for **THE PAPER BAG PLAYERS: We Start To Sing!**

was created by Kevin Richard Woodall, John Stone, and the New Creative Ensemble (incl. Ted Brackett and Laura Canty-Samuel), with the Overture/Opening sketch drawing from material created by founding Artistic Director Judith Martin and Donald Ashwander

Performed by Abby Huff, Erika Mesa, John Stillwaggon, and Kevin Richard Woodall

Music by John Stone

Production Supervisor: James Huggans

Scenic Artist: Florencia Escudero (with Jonathan Peck, archival)

Directed by Kevin Richard Woodall

2024-25 Study Guide

Dear Teachers,

We're delighted to share this study guide to enrich your students' experience of *WE START TO SING!* For many, this may be their first live theatrical production. Use this guide to prepare students before the show and spark discussions and activities afterward to deepen their appreciation. The first part of this guide includes discussion points, activities, games, and creative thinking prompts. A supplemental section focuses on math problems and games.



Our 66th season's show, *WE START TO SING!*, is filled with music, dance, movement, and creativity. Through eight original songs and imaginative storytelling, we explore themes like collaboration, problem-solving, dreaming big, and the creative use of materials. Highlights of the show include: A change of work shifts between the sun and moon, a family of pizza makers, a bowling pin with big dreams, fishermen meeting a baby sea monster, a girl and a bird who sing to each other, a loveable giant named Bob the Slob and the sweepers who clean up his mess, a quartet of invisible but squeaky doors, and a whale who brings a little girl home on its back.

At the heart of this joyful journey are inspiration and imagination. Using simple materials like paper and cardboard, we tell stories that reflect the creative play of children—and hope to inspire them in return. Thank you for joining us on this musical adventure. Get ready to laugh, dance, and make some joyful noise as together, *WE START TO SING!*



A Note to Students: Get Ready for the Show!

Live theater is special because it happens right in front of you, in the same space and moment you're watching it. That means you are an important part of the show! Whether you're silently listening, laughing, clapping, or helping the performers by shouting advice, dancing, or singing along, your energy helps bring the show to life.

We can't wait for you to watch—and join in! If you'd like, you can share your experience afterward by drawing a picture of your favorite moment or writing us a letter about what made you laugh or think. We love receiving your artwork and letters—they're always treasured!

Rise and Shine

Discussion Points

1. The Sun and Moon's Jobs:

- ✧ What do you think the sun does during the day?
- ✧ What do you think the moon does at night?
- ✧ Why is it important for them to take turns?

2. Day and Night:

- ✧ What happens in the world when the sun is out?
- ✧ What changes when the moon is up?

Activities

1. Sun and Moon Roleplay:

- ✧ Take turns being the sun and moon. Act out waking up, stretching, punching the clock, and trading places.

Creative Storytelling

Ask children to come up with a short story about what the sun and moon do during their shifts. Do they have adventures? Friends? Challenges?



Ants In My Pants

Discussion Points

1. Teamwork and Creativity:

- ✧ Who helped Erika get ants out of her pants?
- ✧ How can teamwork make a problem easier to fix?
- ✧ Have you ever used music or dancing to make something more fun?

2. Ants and Nature:

- ✧ Why do ants come to a picnic?
- ✧ What kinds of food do you think ants like the most?
- ✧ What should we do to keep ants away from food?

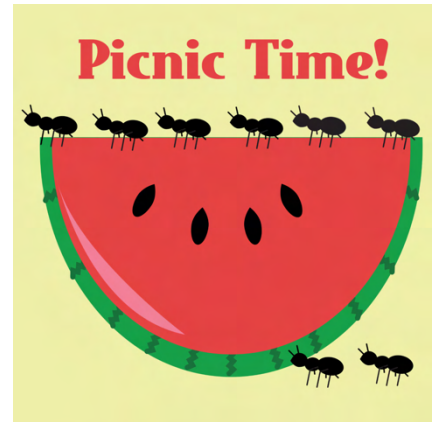
Act It Out:

- ✧ Reenact the play! Take turns being the person with ants in their pants, the ants, and the people singing and dancing. Create your own silly dance moves.

- ✧ Can you remember the song we used: "Ants in my pants, ants in my pants; gotta get rid of these ants in my pants. Ants in my pants, ants in my pants, gotta get rid of these ants!" Do you remember the dance? Show us!

Design a Picnic Scene:

- ✧ Draw your own picnic setup. Include food, a blanket, and any tricks to keep ants away (e.g., lids, baskets).



Creative Add-On Activities Picnic Planning:

Ask the children to plan a pretend picnic. What food will they bring? How will they keep it ant-free? Use drawings or lists.

Rhythm and Movement:

Create a "Follow the Leader" game where children imitate dance moves. Each child can take a turn leading with their own "get the ants out" dance.

Life of a Bowling Pin

Discussion Points

1. Feelings of Belonging:

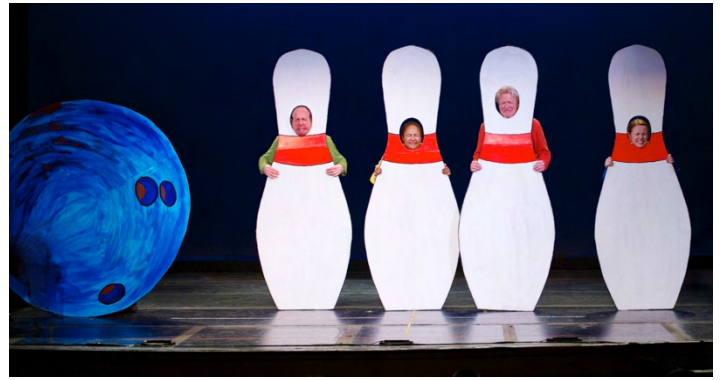
- ✧ Why do you think the new bowling pin was nervous about joining the group?
- ✧ Have you ever felt unsure about trying something new or joining a group? What helped you?

2. Courage to Be Different:

- ✧ Why do you think the bowling pin decided to leave?
- ✧ Do you think it's okay to choose a different path than everyone else? Why?

3. Knocked Down, Getting Back Up:

- ✧ What does it mean to "get knocked down and get back up again"?
- ✧ How do you think the other bowling pins felt about their job?



Creative Thinking Prompts

1. Design a New Life:

- ✧ If you were a bowling pin, what job would you want to try instead of bowling? Draw or write about it.

2. Art Project:

- ✧ Draw a picture of the bowling pin teaching an art class. What kind of art are the students making?

3. Write a Letter:

- ✧ Write a letter from the art teacher bowling pin to the other pins. What would she say about her new life?

Delicious



Discussion Points

1. Friendship and Rivalry:

- ✧ Why do you think the two friends became rivals?
- ✧ How do you think they felt when they started competing?
- ✧ What can happen to friendships when competition gets too intense?

2. Teamwork:

- ✧ What did the friends learn when they tasted each other's cookies?
- ✧ How could they have worked together instead of competing?

3. Customer's Perspective:

- ✧ How do you think the customer felt during the rivalry?
- ✧ What would you do if you were the customer?

Games and Activities

Cookie Cart Roleplay:

- ✧ Set up pretend cookie carts. Children can play the roles of the rival bakers and the customer. Act out the rivalry and the reconciliation!

Creative Thinking Prompts

- ✧ Draw your own cookie cart. What kind of cookies would you sell? What decorations or features would your cart have?



Doors



Discussion Points

1. Imagination and Problem-Solving:

- ✧ What do you think it means for the doors to be invisible or imaginary?
- ✧ How did the girl solve the problem of the locked door?
- ✧ What other ways could she have tried to unlock the door?

2. Facing Challenges:

- ✧ Have you ever faced a problem that seemed impossible at first, but then you came up with a solution? How did you figure it out?
- ✧ Why is it important to think creatively when you're stuck?
- ✧ Why do you think the girl used a blackboard and chalk?

Games and Activities

1. Imaginary Door Adventure:

- ✧ Set up an obstacle course with imaginary doors. Children must act out opening each door in creative ways (e.g., pulling a rope, solving a riddle, or drawing a key).

2. Key Drawing Challenge:

- ✧ Provide children with paper and crayons to design their own imaginary keys. Encourage them to add fun shapes and decorations.

3. Invisible Door Stories:

- ✧ In pairs or small groups, ask children to imagine and act out what might be behind each invisible door. They can come up with exciting or silly surprises!

4. Unlock the Door Relay:

- ✧ Divide children into teams. Each team must "draw" an invisible key in the air using their fingers, then act out unlocking an imaginary door before racing back to their team.



Creative Thinking Prompts



1. Design Your Own Door:

- ✧ Draw an invisible door and imagine what's on the other side. Write or share a story about what happens when you open it.

2. Draw a Picture:

- ✧ Can you come up with your own conflict and then use your imagination as you draw a solution to the problem? Here's an idea to get you started: Draw two cliffs on opposite sides of the paper, and a person (it could be you!) standing on one of the cliffs. How will you get across to the other side? (Suggestions: draw e.g. a bridge, helicopter, tightrope, or perhaps a pair of wings on the person, a dragon, flying carpet or a cloud you can walk on.)

A Day on the Lake

Discussion Points

1. Building Suspense:

- ✳ Why do you think the audience could see the baby sea monster before the fishermen did?
- ✳ How did the baby sea monster make the scene funny?

2. Friendship and Reactions:

- ✳ Why did the first man think his friend was tapping him?
- ✳ How did the two men react differently when they saw the baby sea monster? How might you have reacted?

Games and Activities

1. Role-Playing the Story:

- ✳ Act out the scene! One child can be the baby sea monster, two can play the fishermen, and another can be the mama sea monster. Encourage funny "tap" reactions and rowing motions.

2. Design a Sea Monster:

- ✳ Provide art supplies for children to draw or build their version of a cute baby sea monster or a giant mama sea monster. Discuss their creations afterward.

Creative Thinking Prompts

1. Write a Sea Monster Story:

- ✳ Imagine the baby sea monster meets other sea creatures. What adventures might they have? Write or share your ideas.



Dream Come True (Grandpa's Pizza)

Discussion Points



1. Dreams and Aspirations:

- ✳ Why do you think Giuseppe wants to perform in a show?
- ✳ What are some dreams you have, and how would you share them with your family or friends?
- ✳ What makes working together as a family or team fun?

Games and Activities

1. Build Your Dream Restaurant:

- ✳ Provide art supplies for children to design and draw their own pizza restaurant. They can include fun features like performance stages or creative delivery methods.

Creative Thinking Prompts

1. Invent a New Pizza:

- ✳ Imagine you're opening a pizza restaurant. What toppings would your special pizza have? Draw and name it!

2. Dream Big:

- ✳ Write or draw a story about what happens to Giuseppe if he continues with his dream of being in shows. Do his siblings join him, or do they run the pizza shop together in a new, exciting way?

A Girl Named Sam

Discussion Points

1. Problem-Solving:

- ✳ Why do you think Sam thought to use pepper in the whale's spout?
- ✳ What other creative ways could she have escaped the whale?

2. Art and Storytelling:

- ✳ Why do you think the artists drew the story while it was being told?
- ✳ How did the colorful ending make the story more exciting?



Creative Thinking Prompts

1. Design Your Own Whale:

- ✳ Draw a whale and imagine what its home looks like. Add creative colors and patterns to make it unique.

2. Sam's Fishing Journal:

- ✳ Pretend to be Sam and write a journal entry about her big adventure, including how she felt at different moments.

The Art & Fun of The Paper Bag Players: Workshops

Deepen your students' experience of the arts by taking them from seeing theater to creating it! Our innovative arts educational program is designed to expand upon the theatrical experience and bring to arts education into the classroom. Our workshops, led by The Paper Bag Players Creative Team, are tailored to children Pre-K – 3rd grade. Children become a Paper Bag Player for the Day, engaging in movement, storytelling, and improvisation, as well as creating sets, props, and costumes. Our 1-week and 2-week programs allow for in-depth exploration of each area and culminates in a class performance of the play for family, friends and community. Single 90-minute workshops are process-oriented, giving children the opportunity to fully explore working with paper in art, movement and dramatic play.



Children learn how to make theater out of what is all around them with the help of their own ideas, creativity, and a little bit of paper – just like The Paper Bag Players do! The paper transforms into everything from trombone to telescope, puppy to party dress. This dramatic play exercises children's imagination, as well as social, language and motor skills. Students work as a team and learn how to collaborate. Our workshops provide early readers and writers with an active context for literacy development and for exploring new and abstract concepts. In addition, teachers can witness The Paper Bag Players approach, tools, and techniques to enhance their own curriculum, utilizing low-cost, readily available, expressive paper.

Workshops are designed for groups of 10-25 children, can be held during or after school. For more details, or to book dates and times, call 212-353-2332. For examples of our work, CDs & DVDS, please visit www.thepaperbagplayers.org

The Paper Bag Players

A Non-Profit Theater for Children

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Supplemental Math Section

Ants in My Pants

- Counting Ants:**
 - If 5 ants are on Erika's pants and 3 crawl away, how many ants are left?
 - Kevin saw 6 ants near his sandwich, and 4 more came. How many ants are there in total?
 - Sorting Food:**
 - Erika brought 3 apples, 4 sandwiches, and 2 cookies to the picnic. How many items of food does she have?
 - If she eats 2 sandwiches, how many are left?
 - Dance Moves Math:**
 - If Abby stomps her feet 4 times, claps her hands 3 times, and spins 2 times, how many moves did she make?
 - The song repeats her dance moves 3 times. How many total moves does she make?
 - Sharing the Picnic:**
 - There are 12 pieces of fruit at the picnic and 4 friends to share with. How many pieces of fruit does each friend get?
 - If 10 cookies are shared evenly between 5 kids, how many cookies does each child get?
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Life of a Bowling Pin

- Counting Pins:**
 - A bowling lane has 10 pins, but 3 are knocked down. How many are still standing?
 - If there are 4 lanes with 10 pins each, how many pins are there in total?
 - Knocking Down Pins:**
 - In a game, a player knocks down 6 pins in the first round and 3 in the second round. How many pins were knocked down in total?
 - If 7 pins are left standing and 4 are knocked down, how many were there to start?
 - Art Class Students:**
 - If 8 students join the art class and each brings 3 markers, how many markers are there altogether?
 - The art teacher arranges paintings into rows of 5. If there are 20 paintings, how many rows are there?
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Dream Come True (Grandpa's Pizza)

- Pizza Counting:**
 - The restaurant makes 8 pizzas in the morning and 12 pizzas in the afternoon. How many pizzas did they make in total?
 - If 5 pizzas are delivered, how many are left in the restaurant?
 - Tossing Pizzas:**
 - The siblings toss 4 giant foam pizzas to each other in a circle. If each sibling catches 2 pizzas, how many tosses were made?
 - If they add 3 more foam pizzas to the game, how many pizzas are being tossed now?
 - Box-Spinning Fun:**
 - Each sibling spins 2 pizza boxes on their heads. How many boxes are spinning altogether?
 - If Grandpa takes away 4 boxes, how many are left spinning?
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Delicious

- Cookie Counting:**
 - One friend bakes 12 cookies, and the other bakes 8 cookies. How many cookies are there in total?
 - A customer buys 3 cookies from each cart. How many cookies did the customer buy?

2. **Customer's Choice:**

- A customer has \$5 to spend, and each cookie costs \$1. If they buy 2 cookies from the first cart, how much money will they have left to spend at the second cart?
- If the customer buys 3 cookies from one cart and 2 cookies from the other, how many cookies do they have altogether?

3. **Cookie Sharing:**

- If the friends decide to combine their cookies (20 total) and share them equally between 5 customers, how many cookies does each customer get?
 - They split 24 cookies equally between their two carts. How many cookies does each cart have?
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Doors

1. **Counting Doors:**

- The girl walked through 3 doors and then found 1 locked door. How many doors did she encounter in total?
- If she passed through 2 more doors on her way back, how many doors did she go through altogether?

2. **Key Patterns:**

- The girl draws a key with 4 loops. If she adds 2 more loops, how many loops does the key have?
- If each door requires a key with 3 loops, how many loops would she draw for 4 doors?

3. **Shapes on the Blackboard:**

- The girl draws 3 triangles, 2 circles, and 1 rectangle on the blackboard to decorate the key. How many shapes did she draw?
- If she erases 2 circles, how many shapes are left?

4. **Drawing Time:**

- It takes the girl 5 minutes to draw the key. If she spends 3 minutes drawing decorations, how much time does she spend drawing altogether?
 - If she draws 4 different keys, each taking 5 minutes, how much time does she spend drawing keys?
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A Day on the Lake

1. **Fishing Fun:**

- One man catches 5 fish, and the other catches 3 fish. How many fish did they catch together?
- If they throw 2 fish back into the water, how many do they have left?

2. **Rowing Away:**

- If the men take 10 rows to get away from the baby and 15 rows to escape the mama, how many rows do they make altogether?
 - If each row takes 2 seconds, how long does it take them to row 10 rows?
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A Girl Names Sam

1. **Fishing Catch:**

- Sam catches 2 small fish, 3 medium fish, and 1 big fish. How many fish did she catch in total?
- If she releases 2 fish back into the water, how many are left?

2. **Counting Whales:**

- Sam sees 5 whales swimming, and 1 comes closer to her boat. How many whales are there altogether?
- If 2 whales swim away, how many are left?

3. **Time in the Whale:**

- Sam spends 4 minutes inside the whale and 6 minutes riding home on its back. How long was she with the whale?
- If her fishing trip lasted 30 minutes and 10 minutes of that was spent fishing, how much time was left for her adventure with the whale?