

# WALNUT STREET THEATRE

Touring Outreach Company

Adapted From

## If You Take a Mouse to School

Adapted by Ernie Nolan

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### Study Guide

#### Play Synopsis

It is a very special day at school for Boy. It is Science Day, Progress Report Day, and Mouse's first day at school! Join Mouse as he learns the ins and outs of school life. From exploding science experiments to disappearing soccer balls, there is never a quiet moment during this exciting day.

Along the way, Mouse learns many valuable lessons, including the importance of following directions and how to mind his manners. But will Mouse's mischievous ways ruin Science Day? Will Boy's teacher discover that he brought Mouse to school? And most importantly, will Boy's Progress Report be good enough to earn him an Ultimate Gamestation?! Find out all this and more in the exhilarating tale of *If You Take A Mouse to School!*

#### Pre-Show Activity

Give each of your students a piece of paper and instruct them to fold in half. Have them write 'IF' on the top of the first side, and "THEN" on the second half. Students should compose an if/then statement to use in this activity. Tell them to draw a picture of the 'IF' on the first side and explain that this is the cause. Then instruct them to illustrate the 'THEN' statement on the second side and inform them that this is the effect. Explain that the show is based on several if/then events.

#### Questions for Before the Show

- \* *Have you ever read If You Give a Mouse a Cookie or any of the other If You Give... books by Laura Numeroff? What happened in the story? What similarities do the books have with each other?*
- \* *From the title, If You Take a Mouse to School, what do you expect to happen in the show?*
- \* *What do you do to get ready for school? What routines occur during school?*
- \* *What do you think would happen if you took a mouse to school?*



#### Questions for After the Show

- \* *What would your teacher have done if she found out that you brought a mouse to school?*
- \* *What did you learn about following directions?*
- \* *Do you think Boy will take Mouse back to his school?*
- \* *Now that Mouse has been to school, what other places do you think Mouse will want Boy to take him to?*





# Classroom Activities

## CAUSE AND EFFECT PAPER CHAINS

In *If You Take A Mouse To School*, Boy and Mouse learn about how an action triggers another event to occur. Explain how a cause is something that makes something else happen. Also, it is the event that happens first. To determine the cause, ask the question "Why Did it Happen?" An effect is what happens as a result of the cause. Therefore, it is the one that happens second or last. To determine the effect, ask the question "What Happened?"

Have the students brainstorm occurrences in a normal school day, using some examples from the play. Give the students multiple strips of construction paper. Have them write one of the school day events on their first strip of paper; this will be the first *cause*. Glue/tape the two ends of the paper together so that they form a circle. Next write the *effect* of the causal action on the second slip of paper. Link this paper through the first ring, bending to form another circle and secure with glue/tape. Continue to add on to the paper chain, using *cause* and *effect*.

## Mind Over Manners

In *If You Take a Mouse to School*, Boy frequently reminds Mouse to say "Please" and "Thank You!" Teach your students the importance of manners in this unique exercise.

First, explain to the class how having good manners impacts other people's days in a positive way. Tell them that every week the class will play the game "Pretzels" to showcase good behavior.

Give each student two tokens and arrange the class in a circle. Each student will then be asked to "reward" two fellow classmates for good manners they have recently displayed. The students should thank each other for being helpful and kind by presenting a token to the person who performed the thoughtful act.

After every student has handed out their two compliments, the class can exchange their tokens for pretzels (or any other type of small reward: candy, stickers, etc).



## No-Bake Mouse Cookies

Explore the importance of following instructions and learn math measurements for this simple recipe:



Begin with the following ingredients:

- 1/2 cup peanut butter
- 1/2 cup honey or corn syrup
- 1/4 cup water
- 1 1/2 cup nonfat dry milk solids

Mix thoroughly.

Now choose one of the following add-ins:

**(1)**

- 1/4 cup cocoa
- 2 c rolled oats
- 1/4 cup chopped peanuts
- 1 tsp. vanilla Mix.
- Shape into balls.
- Makes 2 dozen cookie balls.

**Or (2)**

- 2 c. rolled oats
- 1 1/2 c. raisins
- Mix. Shape into balls then flatten.
- Makes 3 dozen medium cookies.

## Gestures

During the show, everyone learned many gestures to help Boy tell his story. Explore the use of body movement with this fun game. Have students brainstorm actions that can be represented in gestures, such as riding a bicycle, playing basketball, walking a dog, etc. Next each student acts out a different action, and the rest of the class guesses which gesture the student is performing.

## Whisper Down the Lane

Often Mouse and the other characters get sidetracked. Examine ways we can be easily sidetracked by playing a simple game of telephone. The teacher whispers a statement to a student, who in turn whispers it to another student, and so on until the statement returns back to the teacher. The teacher repeats out loud the statement she heard as well as the original statement. This provides an effective example of how something might begin as one thing, but end up entirely different.



## LANGUAGE ARTS

*If You Give A Student A Pencil...*

In *If You Take A Mouse to School*, Mouse writes a book for Boy. Your students can create their very own storybooks. Explain how the author, Laura Numeroff, creates stories with the same theme. In her *If You Give...* series, the plots include the same type of format. Have your students use this format as a starting point for their own books. Begin by having them complete this sentence:

If You Give A \_\_\_\_\_ a \_\_\_\_\_ .  
(animal) (item)

This is the title and the first sentence of their book. Using cause and effect, have them create a story about their animal. Try to have the story end where it began. Remember in the beginning of the play Mouse got to go to school and wanted a lunchbox, and then in the end had a lunchbox and wanted to go to school.

To add a fun twist, have students trade stories and illustrate their partners'. Explain how author, Laura Numeroff, and illustrator, Felicia Bond, work together on all of the "*If You Give...*" series. Allow them time to brainstorm their ideas together before they start to draw. This emphasizes cooperation and that two heads are better than one!

## SCIENCE

### Volcano Experiment!

*Create a Science Day experiment just like Mouse and Boy!*

#### Materials You Will Need:

- Sand
- Pouring Jug
- ½ Cup Vinegar
- Old Newspaper
- Red Food Coloring
- Bicarbonate of soda
- A small plastic drinking bottle



#### Steps:

1. Spread some of the newspaper down in an area that is safe to make a bit of a mess.
2. Put a tablespoon of the bicarbonate of soda in the opening of the plastic bottle.
3. Place the bottle in the middle of the newspaper area.
4. Position the sand at the base of the plastic bottle and shape the sand half way up the bottle to make it look like a mountain.
5. Put a few drops of the red food coloring and ½ cup of vinegar in the pouring jug.
6. Pour the mixture into the bottle.

**Wait and watch as the volcano will erupt in a few minutes with a bright red frothy lava!**

## ART

### Mouse House

Mouse creates his own Mouse House out of blocks and clay. Have your students create their own Mouse House dioramas. Empty shoeboxes provide a perfect foundation, but feel free to let the students explore other creative ideas for their Mouse House. Include furniture, decorations, and a depiction of Mouse. As an extra bonus, have your students incorporate a part of the story into their diorama. For example, Mouse could be creating a science experiment in his Mouse House.

## SPELLING

### Word Race

Mouse loves to spell words throughout the play. Use this competitive game to make spelling fun! Divide the class into 2 teams. On the board, write team 1 and team 2. One person from each team goes to the board with chalk in hand. The teacher reads a spelling word and the 2 students must write that word on the board. The first person to finish correctly spelling the word first gets a point for their team. The team with the most points wins!



## MATHEMATICS

### School Supplies



Challenge your students with this math exercise! Clip out advertisements for school supplies (make sure the price is clearly stated). Students should create a "back-to-school" shopping list. Assign the students a given amount of money, then the students need to decide if they have enough money for the supplies, how much more they need, and how much is leftover.

# WEB RESOURCES



Here are some websites that provide more ideas for your classroom activities:

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

<http://www.makinglearningfun.com/themepages/MouseIfYouTakeAMousePrintables2.htm>

<http://files.harpercollins.com/PDF/ActivitiesGuides/0060283297.pdf>

<http://atozteacherstuff.com/pages/491.shtml>

**Did you like the show? Let us know!**

Write to us at:

Walnut Street Theatre  
Education Department  
825 Walnut Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19107

## About the Playwright

Laura Numeroff is an American author and illustrator of many children's books. She is well-known for her "If You Give..." series, with her most popular book being *If You Give A Mouse A Cookie*. These circular stories all have the same 'if-then' format. Other books in this series include *If You Give A Moose A Muffin*, *If You Take a Mouse to School*, and *If You Give An Author A Pencil*. Two of the books from this series were chosen by Oprah for her Kids Reading List. Numeroff was also invited to the White House by Laura Bush to be recognized for this series. Her other series, "What People Do Best", emphasizes the importance of family and displays gender equality. Numeroff has also won numerous awards for her various other individual works, including the California Young Reader Medal (1987), the Quill Award (2006), and the Milner Award (2007). She currently lives in California where she continues to write.

**This production was directed by Jerrell Henderson.**

## Walnut Street Theatre Education Department Staff

Director of Education.....Susan Nicodemus Quinn  
Outreach Coordinator.....Caroline Leipf  
Theatre School Coordinator.....José Avilés  
Residency Coordinator.....Ashley Kerns  
Education Apprentice.....Alyssa Mulligan  
Dorothy Haas Acting Apprentices.....Langston Darby  
.....Matt Mancuso  
.....Tinuke Oyefule  
.....Emily Rast



## WALNUT STREET THEATRE



Walnut Street Theatre has the unique distinction of being the oldest, continuously operating theatre in the English-speaking world, having served Philadelphia audiences for over 200 years! It is also the Official State Theatre of Pennsylvania, and a National Historic Landmark.

Today, under the direction of Producing Artistic Director Bernard Havard, Walnut Street Theatre is in its 26th season as a self-producing, non-profit theatre. Walnut Street Theatre continues to entertain and enlighten diverse audiences with high quality theatrical programming. With more than 56,000 season ticket holders, the Walnut is also the most subscribed theatre company in the world!

The Walnut Street Theatre is celebrating 24 years of bringing high-quality professional theatre to schools across the Delaware Valley. Our multi-cultural Touring Outreach Company introduces students to the world of theatre through age-appropriate, curriculum-based pieces, that are socially relevant, entertaining, and exciting. Last season, 111,505 children and adults were impacted by the Walnut's Education Programs.

### Touring Actors

Each season, Walnut Street Theatre holds a nation-wide search to recruit accomplished young professionals for Dorothy Haas Acting Apprenticeships. These actors form our Touring Outreach Company. Nearly 350 candidates are considered each year for these four positions.

**The Walnut Street Theatre Educational Programs gratefully acknowledge support from the following:**

*ARAMARK \* The Barra Foundation*

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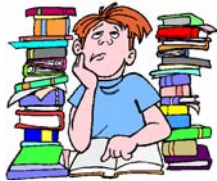


Help Mouse learn more about cause and effect! Draw a line from the action in the 'IF' column to the corresponding action in the 'THEN' column. Remember that the 'IF' event causes the 'THEN' event to happen.

IF

THEN

1.



2.



3.



Now that you have matched up the 'IF' and 'THEN' columns, write sentences that describe each scenario. As a bonus, create your own 'IF' and 'THEN' statement on the back of the worksheet.

1. If \_\_\_\_\_,

then \_\_\_\_\_.

2. If \_\_\_\_\_,

then \_\_\_\_\_.

3. If \_\_\_\_\_,

then \_\_\_\_\_.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



Help the school bus get Mouse to school!

