

Miss Nelson Is **MISSING!**

**WALNUT STREET
THEATRE**
Walnut KIDS

Study Guide

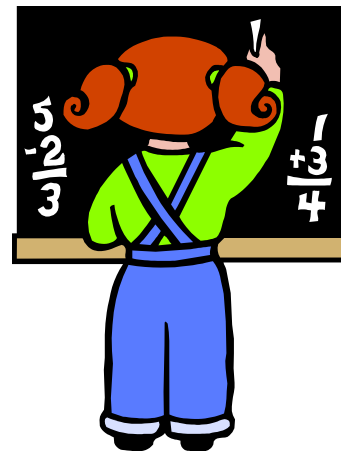


Before the show . . .

- Discuss good theatre etiquette with your class:
 - Stay seated.
 - Stay quiet.
 - Please save your questions for the end of the show.
 - Laugh when appropriate.
- Have you ever seen a musical or live performance before? If so what did you see?
- What is a musical? What types of songs do you think they will perform?
- What is the difference between a play and a movie or television show?
- Have you ever read the book *Miss Nelson is missing*? Do you think the play will be very similar or different?
- Based on the title of the play what do you think will happen?

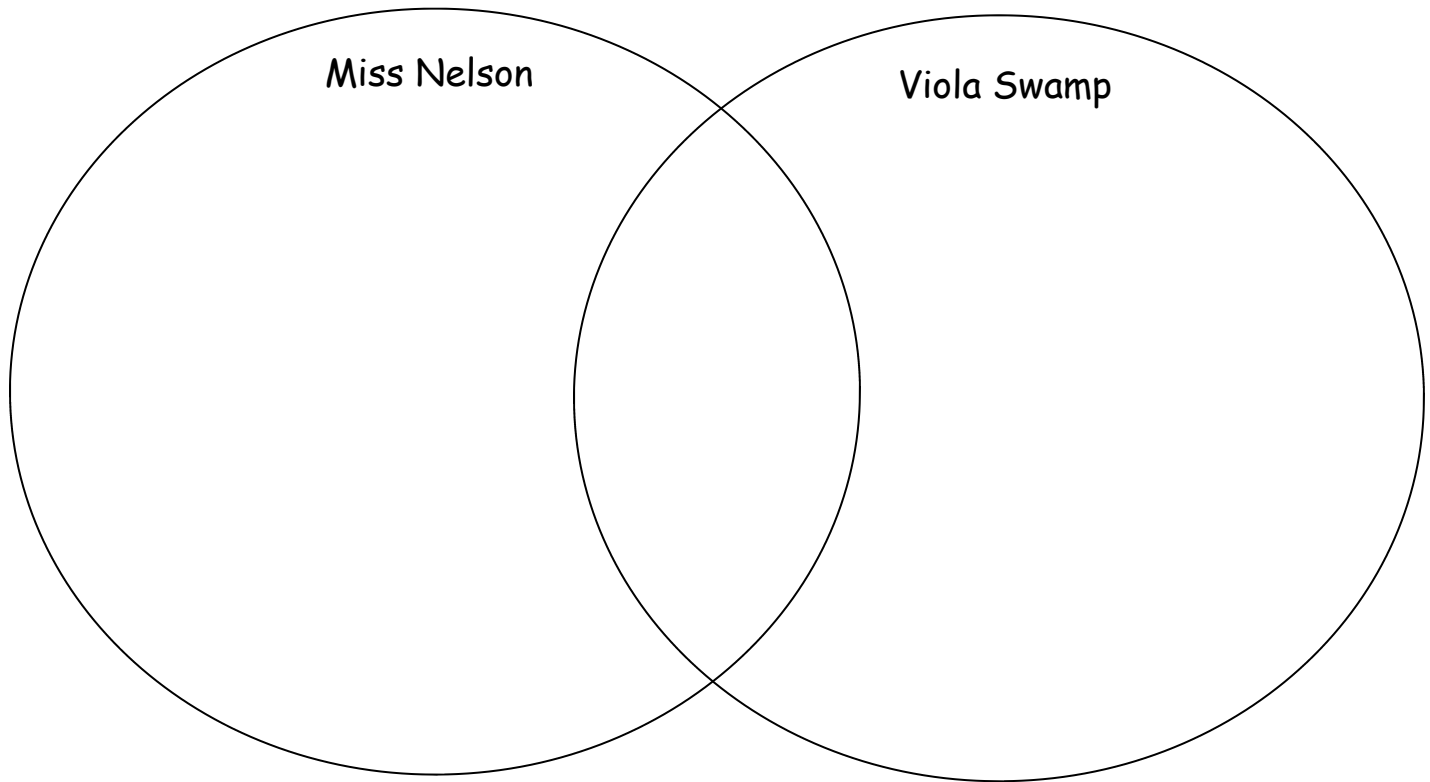
After the show . . .

- What was your favorite part of the show? Favorite song?
- Room 207 didn't appreciate what a nice teacher they had until Miss Swamp arrived. Have you ever not appreciated something and then lost it? How did it feel?
- Do you think the students were fair to Miss Nelson?
- How do you think the play would have ended if Miss Nelson never came back?
- Do you think Miss Nelson was really missing?
- Do you think the students were very bad when Miss Nelson was their teacher? What about when Miss Swamp was there?
- What would happen at your school if you acted the way the students in 207 did?



Compare and contrast:

Miss Nelson and Viola Swamp are very different characters. Using the chart below compare the characters of Miss Nelson and Viola Swamp. How are the two different and how are they the same?



MAKING MUSIC

The musical composer of *Miss Nelson Is Missing* created music to help tell the story. Invite students to softly beat out, with their hands, different rhythms on the top of their desks - rhythms that match the feelings in the play. Examples:

- *When Miss Viola Swamp first enters the room.*
- *When the students are at Miss Nelson's home.*

Gather a selection of rhythm instruments: drums, xylophones, "found" instruments such as cans, aluminum plates, old ice cube trays—anything that will make sound—and repeat the rhythm using these instruments. Students can add their own voices to make other melodic sounds. Don't worry about creating a specific melody—just about the mood that our sounds create.



Where is Miss Nelson?

The students in Room 207 begin to wonder where Miss Nelson disappeared to, and they come up with a long list of different things that could have happened to her. List the below events off to your students and ask them to act out what it would be like to be stuck in these situations. Have them walk around in a circle performing their reactions.

- Bitten by a tarantula.
- Left with Peter Pan.
- Swallowed by a crocodile.
- Gobbled by a shark.
- Sucked up by a vacuum.
- Stolen by a swarm of butterflies.
- Stepping in molten lava.

Missing Person

Create a Missing person ad for Miss Nelson in the space below.

Creating a Character

Miss Nelson pretends she is someone else when she "goes away." Just like the actors in the play she was acting. Create a list of your personal qualities. Next write a list of opposite qualities. This is your "Viola Swamp." Draw a picture of what this character looks like in the space below. How would they get along with your family, your friends? Would they do as well as you in school? Would you get along with them?

One step further . . .

Write a monologue as this character and present it to the class. Afterwards allow your classmates to interview your character. Did you discover anything new about your character when you were asked questions by your classmates?

Why do we have rules?

As a class discuss rules and laws and why we have rules. Divide the class up into groups of 4-5. Assign each group a rule or law and tell them to brainstorm what would happen if this rule was never followed. What would happen in class? In their community? Have the kids create a short scene where there is a problem that is made worse without rules. Next have them create a scene where the rule helps to solve the same problem. Have each group present their scenes, and have the class respond to what they saw. How would they like to live in a world where there were no rules? Why do we have rules?



1. You cannot wear white. (or any color you see enough students wearing.)
2. You cannot write with anything but an orange crayon or colored pencil.
3. You must stand on one leg while waiting in line.
4. You cannot say "and," "or," or "but" at anytime in school.
5. You must always say "banana" before asking a question.
6. You must ask permission before scratching your nose.

Rules, Rules, Rules

In the box above there is a list of absurd rules. Print them out on a piece of paper and pass them out to the class. Tell them these have been added to the current rules in the classroom and everyone must follow all of them. Begin a regularly planned lesson while enforcing these rules. Whenever a student breaks a rule point it out, and follow your regular discipline process or create a new one. When you finish the lesson ask the students if they think these rules make sense or not. Explain that rules are not just chosen but always serve a purpose. Go through the real rules in your class, and ask the students why they think each rule was created.

Did you like the show? Let us know!

Write to us at:

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

ENROLL NOW!

**THE THEATRE SCHOOL
AT THE WALNUT STREET THEATRE**

Classes For Adults, Teens & Youth
SPACE IS LIMITED; CALL NOW!

WALNUT STREET THEATRE
825 Walnut St., Philadelphia
For a Free Brochure Call:
215-574-3550 , ext. 510

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 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 29th 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 25 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, 111,000 children and adults were impacted by the Walnut's Education Programs.

About the Director/Author

Director — David Stradley- David is the Artistic Director of Delaware Shakespeare Festival. For WST, he has directed *A Christmas Carol* (2009) and tour productions *A Forest Fable* and *Go Green*. Thanks to Tom and Bernard for the opportunity. Much love to Michelle. For more information see www.davidstradley.com.

Author— Joan Cushing- a former elementary school teacher Joan is the author of numerous musicals for children that have had over 350 productions nation wide. Some of her works include *Miss Nelson is Missing*, *Miss Nelson Has a Field Day*, *Junie B. Jones & a Little Monkey Business* and *Diary of a Worm, Spider and Fly*.

Walnut Street Theatre Education Department Staff

Director of Education *Thomas Quinn*
Outreach Coordinator *Caroline Leipf*
Theatre School Coordinator..... *José Avilés*
Residency Coordinator *Ashley Kerns*
Education Apprentice *Luraine Armandt*
Dorothy Haas Acting Apprentices *Lauren Elyse Fitzgerald*
..... *Nate Golden*
..... *Samantha Joy Pearlman*
..... *Dominic Santos*

WEB RESOURCES

http://www.busyteacherscafe.com/literature_guides/missnelsonmissing.html

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

*Aqua America * The Barra Foundation * Bazelon, Less and Feldman, P.C. * Connelly Foundation * The Peter & Audrey Denton Fund * Gelman & Pelesh, P.C. * William Goldman Foundation * Hamilton Family Foundation * Hassel Foundation * Haverford Trust Company * Hellendall Family Foundation * Herman Goldner Company * Syde Hurdus Foundation* *JAMS Foundation * Virginia and Harvey Kimmel Arts Education Fund of the Philadelphia Foundation * Lincoln Financial Group Foundation * *PECO * Penn Liberty Bank * The Rosenlund Family Foundation * Salmon Ricchezza Singer & Turchi LLP * Target * Truist * United Way of Bucks County, Burlington County, Delaware, Capital Region, Cumberland County, Delaware, Greater Portland, Southeastern PA, and Tri-State **