



ROCK THE PRESIDENTS

Applause Series CURRICULUM GUIDE
CIVIC CENTER OF GREATER DES MOINES

October 15, 2012



Dear Teachers,

Thank you for joining us for the Applause Series presentation of *Rock the Presidents*. In the midst of this election season, *Rock the Presidents* invites students to celebrate the role of the American presidency in shaping our nation's history. Through songs ranging in style from pop, rock, and folk, this

multi-media musical review both honors our Presidents' specific contributions and acknowledges that the men who have served as Commander-in-Chief were real people — ones with unique personalities, flaws, and vision. More importantly, through *Rock the Presidents'* rousing rock concert-like atmosphere and catchy lyrics, we hope this experience excites students' interest in civic life and inspires them to dream big about their own role in shaping a better future for their community, country, and world.

As you prepare your students for this experience, we hope that this study guide helps you connect the performance to your classroom curriculum in ways that you find valuable. In the following pages, you will find contextual information about the performance and related subjects, as well as a variety of discussion questions and activities. Some pages are appropriate to reproduce for your students; others are designed more specifically with you, their teacher, in mind. As such, we hope that you are able to “pick and choose” material and ideas from the study guide to meet your class's unique needs.

See you at the theater,

Civic Center Education Team

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This study guide was compiled and written by Yvette Zarod Hermann; edited by Karoline Myers. Based on the Rock the Presidents “Resource Guide for Parents and Teachers” by Childsplay.

ABOUT THE CIVIC CENTER



The Civic Center of Greater Des Moines is a cultural landmark of central Iowa and is committed to engaging the Midwest in world-class entertainment, education, and cultural activities. The Civic Center has achieved a national reputation for excellence as a performing arts center and belongs to several national organizations, including The Broadway League, the Independent Presenters Network, International Performing Arts for Youth, and Theater for Young Audiences/USA.

Five performing arts series currently comprise the season— the Willis Broadway Series, Prairie Meadows Temple Theater Series, Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield Family Series, the Dance Series, and the Applause Series. The Civic Center is also the performance home for the Des Moines Symphony and Stage West.

The Civic Center is a private, nonprofit organization and is an important part of central Iowa's cultural community. Through its education programs, the Civic Center strives to engage patrons in arts experiences that extend beyond the stage. Master classes bring professional and local artists together to share their art form and craft, while pre-performance lectures and post-performance Q&A sessions with company members offer ticket holders the opportunity to explore each show as a living, evolving piece of art.

Through the Applause Series— curriculum-connected performances for school audiences— students are encouraged to discover the rich, diverse world of performing arts. During the 2012-2013 season, the Civic Center will welcome more than 45,000 students and educators to 14 professional productions for young audiences.

Want an inside look? Request a tour.

Group tours can be arranged for performance and non-performance dates for groups grades 3 and above.

Call 515-246-2355 or visit CivicCenter.org/education to check on availability or book your visit.

DID YOU KNOW?

More than 250,000 patrons visit the Civic Center each year.

The Civic Center opened in 1979.

The Civic Center has three theater spaces:

- *Main Hall, 2744 seats*
- *Stoner Studio, 200 seats*
- *Temple Theater, 299 seats (located in the Temple for the Performing Arts)*

No seat is more than 155 feet from center stage in the Main Hall.

Nollen Plaza, situated just west of the Civic Center, is a park and amphitheater that is also part of the Civic Center complex. The space features the Crusoe Umbrella sculpture.

The Applause Series started in 1996. You are joining us for our 17th season of school performances.

GOING TO THE THEATER . . .



YOUR ROLE AS AN AUDIENCE MEMBER

Attending a live performance is a unique and exciting opportunity. Unlike the passive experience of watching a movie, audience members play an important role in every live performance. As they act, sing, dance, or play instruments, the performers on stage are very aware of the audience's mood and level of engagement. Each performance calls for a different response from audience members. Lively bands, musicians, and dancers may desire the audience to focus silently on the stage and applaud only during natural breaks in the performance. Audience members can often take cues from performers on how to respond to the performance appropriately. For example, performers will often pause or bow for applause at a specific time.

As you experience the performance, consider the following questions:

- * What kind of live performance is this (a play, a dance, a concert, etc.)?
- * What is the mood of the performance? Is the subject matter serious or lighthearted?
- * What is the mood of the performers? Are they happy and smiling or somber and reserved?
- * Are the performers encouraging the audience to clap to the music or move to the beat?
- * Are there natural breaks in the performance where applause seems appropriate?

A SPECIAL EXPERIENCE

Seeing a live performance is a very special experience. Although it is not required, many people enjoy dressing up when they attend the theater.

THEATER ETIQUETTE

Here is a checklist of general guidelines to follow when you visit the Civic Center:

- * Leave all food, drinks, and chewing gum at school or on the bus.
- * Cameras, recording devices, and personal listening devices are not permitted in the theater.
- * Turn off and put away all cell phones, pagers, and other electronic devices before the performance begins.
- * Do not text during the performance.
- * Respect the theater. Remember to keep your feet off of the seats and avoid bouncing up and down.
- * When the house lights dim, the performance is about to begin. Please stop talking at this time.
- * **Talk before and after the performance only.** Remember, the theater is designed to amplify sound. Other audience members and the performers on stage can hear your voice!
- * Use the restroom before the performance or wait until the end. If you must leave the theater during the show, make sure the first set of doors closes before you open the second — this will keep unwanted light from spilling into the theater.
- * Appropriate responses such as laughing and applauding are appreciated. Pay attention to the artists on stage — they will let you know what is appropriate.
- * Open your eyes, ears, mind, and heart to the entire experience. Enjoy yourself!

GOING TO THE THEATER information is adapted from the Ordway Center for the Performing Arts study guide materials.

CIVIC CENTER FIELD TRIP INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS



Thank you for choosing the Applause Series at the Civic Center of Greater Des Moines. Below are tips for organizing a safe and successful field trip to the Civic Center.

ORGANIZING YOUR FIELD TRIP

- * Please include all students, teachers, and chaperones in your ticket request.
- * After you submit your ticket request, you will receive a confirmation e-mail within five business days. Your **invoice will be attached to the confirmation e-mail.**
- * Payment policies and options are located at the top of the invoice. **Payment (or a purchase order) for your reservation is due four weeks** prior to the date of the performance.
- * The Civic Center reserves the right to cancel unpaid reservations after the payment due date.
- * Tickets are not printed for Applause Series shows. Your invoice will serve as the reservation confirmation for your group order.
- * Schedule buses to arrive in downtown Des Moines at least 30 minutes prior to the start of the performance. This will allow time to park, walk to the Civic Center, and be seated in the theater.
- * Performances are approximately 60 minutes unless otherwise noted on the website and printed materials.
- * All school groups with reservations to the show will receive an e-mail notification when the study guide is posted. Please note that study guides are only printed and mailed upon request.

DIRECTIONS AND PARKING

- * Directions: From I-235, take Exit 8A (Downtown Exits) and the ramp toward 3rd Street and 2nd Avenue. Turn onto 3rd Street and head south.
- * Police officers are stationed at the corner of 3rd and Locust Streets and will direct buses to parking areas with hooded meters near the Civic Center. Groups traveling in personal vehicles are responsible for locating their own parking in ramps or metered (non-hooded) spots downtown.
- * Buses will remain parked for the duration of the show. At the conclusion, bus drivers must be available to move their bus if necessary, even if their students are staying at the Civic Center to eat lunch or take a tour.
- * Buses are not generally permitted to drop off or pick up students near the Civic Center. If a bus must return to school during the performance, prior arrangements must be made with the Civic Center Education staff.

ARRIVAL TO THE CIVIC CENTER

- * When arriving at the Civic Center, please have an **adult lead your group** for identification and check-in purposes. You may enter the building through the East or West lobbies; a Civic Center staff member may be stationed outside the building to direct you.
- * Civic Center staff will usher groups into the building as quickly as possible. Once inside, you will be directed to the check-in area.
- * Applause seating is not ticketed. Ushers will escort groups to their seats; various seating factors including group size, grade levels, arrival time, and special needs seating requests may be used to assign a group's specific location in the hall.
- * We request that an **adult lead the group into the theater and other adults position themselves throughout the group**; we request this arrangement for supervision purposes, especially in the event that a group must be seated in multiple rows.
- * Please allow ushers to seat your entire group before rearranging seat locations and taking groups to the restroom.
- * As a reminder, children under the age of three are not permitted in the theater for Applause performances.

IN THE THEATER

- * In case of a medical emergency, please notify the nearest usher. A medical assistant is on duty for all Main Hall performances.
- * We ask that adults handle any disruptive behavior in their groups. If the behavior persists, an usher may request your group to exit the theater.
- * Following the performance groups may exit the theater and proceed to their bus(es).
- * If an item is lost at the Civic Center, please see an usher or contact us after the performance at 515.246.2355.

QUESTIONS?

Please contact the Education department at 515.246.2355 or education@civiccenter.org.
Thank you!

VOCABULARY FROM THE SONG LYRICS



Photo Credit: Heather Hill Photography

agitative: moving or forcing into violent, irregular action.



A painting depicting the forced relocation of the Cherokee people under President Andrew Jackson. Image courtesy of uhcl.edu.

“With tribes he became agitative, Sent them west on the Trail of Tears.”

anarchist: a person who does not believe in government.

“William McKinley was killed by an anarchist.”

assassinate: to kill suddenly or secretly, especially a prominent political figure. Unfortunately, four American presidents have been assassinated while in office.

“Garfield was assassinated, Before the nation got to know him.”



Image courtesy of 123rf.com.

conciliation: the act of making friends or allies.

“[He] didn’t like conciliation.”

declaration: a statement of importance. In *Rock the Presidents*, ‘declaration’

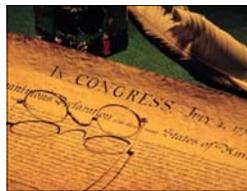


Image courtesy of ivn.us

is used to refer to the Declaration of Independence — a statement which announced that the thirteen American colonies were no longer part of the British Empire.

“Fifty years after that Declaration, Both John and Tom now breathe their last breath.”

Election Day: day in which national elections are held for electors of the President and the Vice President. Election Day occurs the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November once every four years.



Image courtesy of iupui.edu.

“Lead them to Victory on Election Day!”

esoterica: secrets very few people know.



Image courtesy of flipkey.com.

“He didn’t deal in esoterica.”



Territories acquired by the U.S. through expansion. Image courtesy of thomaslegion.net.

expansion: idea that the United States of America should acquire more territory.

“James Polk was expansion prone.”

mandate: a command.

“I was elected with a strong mandate.”

muse: to think over.

“Cal was quiet as he seemed, in his head, to muse.”

opinionated: stubborn in regard to one’s personal views.



Image courtesy of mrmn.wikia.com.

“Andy Johnson was opinionated.”

ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE



You too can become president! *Rock the Presidents* is a high-octane, multi-media-filled musical revue spanning 223 years of the American presidency – from George Washington to Barack Obama. The 44 men who rose to the highest office in the land are brought to life through all-new rock, pop and folk music.

With songs like “The Sons of Washington,” a rock anthem honoring Washington’s revolutionary idea of peacefully giving up power, and the jazz-inspired “Who in World is Millard Fillmore?” celebrating some of the lesser-known Commanders in Chief, *Rock the Presidents* is sure to entertain and inform audiences of all ages.

Run time: Approx. 60 minutes

PERFORMERS

Rock the Presidents features a cast of three actors who act, sing and dance to bring to life a rock concert experience.

SET AND MULTI-MEDIA

Set amongst a presidential backdrop framed by a bald eagle and stars and stripes, the innovative scenic design features a large screen center stage to showcase the multi-media aspects of the production. Phoenix-based Limitrophe Films created the video aspects to bring high-voltage, interactive elements to the show.

Presidential portraits, paintings and historical footage stream throughout the “concert.” During the performance, the cast interacts with the video screen in such engaging segments as a video game battle in the *Sons of Washington*, a Game Show called “The Pres-i-Tron,” a ‘60s psychedelic lava lamp technique for *I’m Not all Bad* to the neon sign of the *Lonely Presidents Lounge*.

SONGS

There are a total of 28 songs in the show. Titles include:

- ◇ Hail to the Chiefs
- ◇ The Sons of Washington
- ◇ John and Tom
- ◇ Shake America!
- ◇ Calvin Coolidge
- ◇ First Ladies
- ◇ Here Come the Generals
- ◇ The Buck Stops Here
- ◇ They Got a Dog
- ◇ Not Made of Stone
- ◇ The Great Crash
- ◇ I’m Not All Bad
- ◇ Ronald Raegan
- ◇ I Am More than Four Years
- ◇ What Could Have Been?
- ◇ The Only Thing We Have to Fear
- ◇ Are You a President-to-be?

Full lyrics to each of the songs can be downloaded at CivicCenter.org/education.

SOUND RECORDING

Childsplay has released an original cast recording of the *Rock the Presidents* soundtrack. The CD is available on iTunes, CDBaby.com or Amazon.com.

ABOUT CHILDSPLAY AND THE CREATIVE TEAM



Rock the Presidents is a creation of Childsplay, a professional theater serving young audiences and families based in Tempe, Arizona. Childsplay's mission is to create theater so strikingly original in form, content or both, that it instills in young people an enduring awe, love and respect for the theater.

Read on to learn more about the team at Childsplay and how *Rock the Presidents* was created.

FROM THE PLAYWRIGHT, DWAYNE HARTFORD

A number of years ago, I started toying with the idea of creating a piece that would pay tribute to the U.S. Presidents. I wanted to honor the office and the men who have served, while at the same time, to recognize the common humanity shared by Presidents and today's young people. In doing so, I hoped to encourage participation in American civic life. As I gathered books and research materials, I looked for a hook into the subject, a fun way to bring forty-four stories together as one.

Eventually, I decided that music could serve that purpose. I wanted young audiences to relate and connect to these stories, so I decided that the music should have a contemporary sound. At this point, I asked Sarah Roberts, a wonderful singer and songwriter, to do the music for the show.

The title came soon after, along with the musical revue format. As different as the individual stories and song styles are, put together, the revue shows the common sense of duty and patriotism shared by all the Presidents.



Dwayne Hartford, book and lyrics, is a Phoenix-based playwright, director and actor.

THE CREATIVE TEAM

Take a look at of the creative team behind *Rock the Presidents* to gain a sense of the many jobs that went into the show's creation.

Book and Lyrics by:
Dwayne Hartford

Music by: Sarah Roberts

Music Supervision:
Jonathan Ivie

Choreography: Molly Lajoie

Scenic Design:
Holly Windingstad

Costume Design:
D. Daniel Hollingshead

Lighting Design: Tim Monson

Projection Design:
Limitrophe Films

Sound Design:
Christopher Neumeyer

Dramaturg:
Jenny Millinger

Directed by:
Anthony Runfola

ABOUT MUSICAL REVUES



Rock the Presidents is a musical revue.

A musical revue is a theatrical performance that combines music, dance and sketches. The revue has its roots in American melodrama from the 1800s and was most popular from 1916 to 1932. People loved musical revues for their visual spectacle! Musical revues often featured famous people as their characters.

ENSEMBLE

An ensemble is a group of performers who rehearse together closely to create a strong performance. *Rock the Presidents* is performed by a talented ensemble of three people onstage, with many others backstage supporting them.

CHARACTERISTICS

Melodrama

The musical revue style has its roots in melodrama. Melodramas are stories about good and evil that exaggerate the emotions.



Image courtesy of mously.com.

Spectacle

Musical revues were largely popular because of the spectacle that they created. A spectacle is an event that is memorable for its appearance.

Sketches

Musical revues often contain sketches. A sketch is a short scene that is usually funny. Another word for sketch is "skit".



Image courtesy of ehov.com.

ABOVE: A preliminary scenic design rendering for *Rock the Presidents* by Holly Windingstad. What features do you see that will help create a spectacle?

MUSICAL STYLES

Today's musical revues includes a variety of musical styles such as:

Rock

Rock music was called "rock'n'roll" in the 1950s. Usually, this music uses the electric guitar with bass guitar and drums.

Pop

Pop music refers to any music that is "popular", like dance music and chart-toppers.

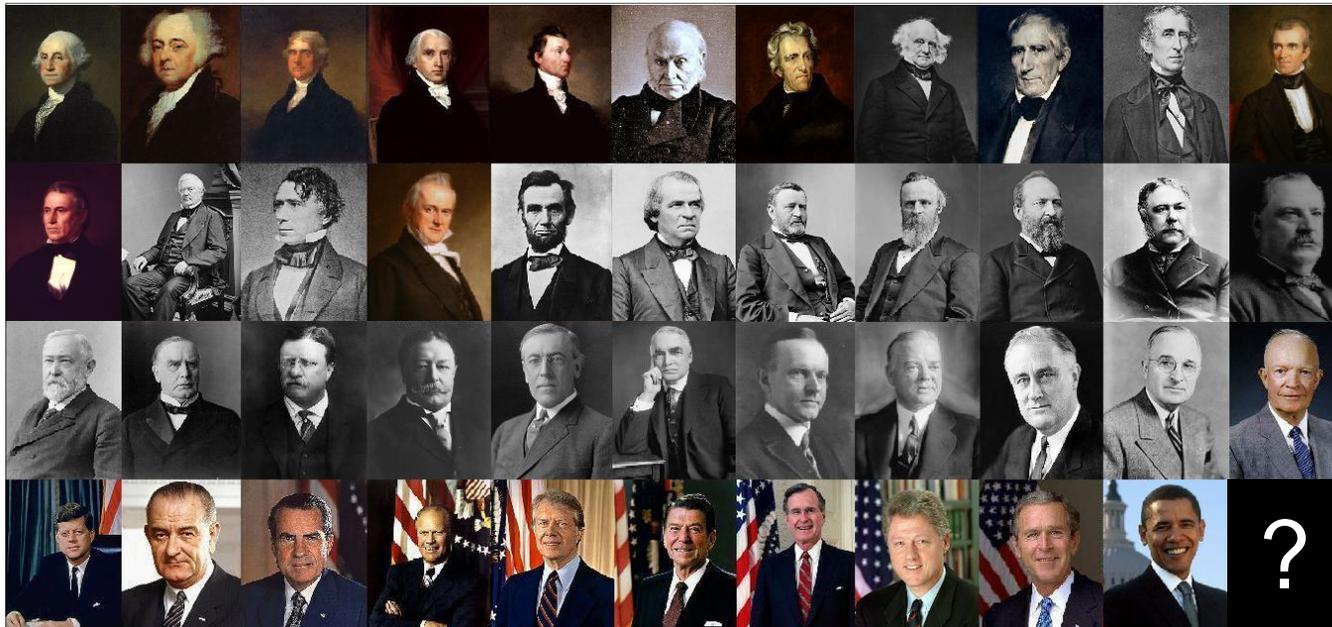


Image courtesy of sam1205.blogspot.com.

Folk

Folk music is any music related to national culture, usually written to commemorate historical and personal events.

THE AMERICAN PRESIDENCY



ABOVE: The nation's 44 presidents. How many do you recognize?

Over the course of the United States of America's history, 44 men have served in the role of the President. Read on to learn more about this important position.

CREATION OF THE OFFICE

The executive branch of the Government enforces the laws of the land.

When the delegates to the Constitutional Convention created the executive branch of government, they gave the president a limited term of office to lead the government. This was very different from any form of government in Europe at the time and caused much debate. The delegates were afraid of what too much power in the hands of one person might lead to. As such, they created a government that contained a series of checks and balances. Each of the three branches of government were given the rights to change or void certain decisions by other branches to help ensure that power was safely distributed.

POWERS

As laid out in the Constitution, the President's responsibilities include but are not limited to the following:

National Security

The President of the United States commands the military. The President can make treaties with other nations with Senate approval, nominates ambassadors, and meets with ambassadors of other nations.

Legislative

The President can recommend legislation (laws) to Congress. Despite all his power, the President cannot write bills. The President also approves laws passed by Congress.

Administrative

The President heads the executive branch of the government, which makes sure that the laws of the United States are obeyed.

Judicial

The President appoints Federal judges, with the agreement of the majority of the Senate.

CABINET

The President cannot carry out his or her duties without advice and assistance. The President receives this help from the Vice President and department heads, together known as the Cabinet.

QUALIFICATIONS

The President, along with the Vice President, is the only official elected by the entire country. However, not just anyone can be President. In order to be elected, one must:

- ◇ Be at least 35 years old
- ◇ Be a natural-born U.S. citizen
- ◇ Have lived in the U.S. for at least 14 years.

TERMS

When elected, the President serves a term of four years. The most one President can serve is two terms, for a total of eight years. (Prior to 1951, the President could serve for as many terms as he wanted.)

THE AMERICAN PRESIDENCY, cont.



ABOVE: The White House in Washington D.C. has been home to each President since John Adams in 1800.

10 INTERESTING PRESIDENTIAL FACTOIDS

1) Ronald Reagan once tried stand-up comedy. In 1954, his acting career was going so badly that he took a gig as a Las Vegas stand-up comic for a few weeks.

2) Grover Cleveland and his wife had a child, Ruth, who was the namesake of the candy bar Baby Ruth.



Image courtesy of snack-food.wikia.com.



Image courtesy of gfkpoker.com.

3) Warren Harding lost the White House china in a poker game! Our 29th President really liked to gamble, although it seems he

wasn't very good at it. In one poker game, he bet the White House china collection and lost it all in one hand.

4) Calvin Coolidge had a mechanical horse installed in the White House so he could practice his riding skills.

5) Gerald and Betty Ford were fashion models. In the 1940's Gerald Ford did a bit of modeling and even posed on the cover of "Cosmopolitan." His wife Betty was a dancer and fashion model who signed with a modeling firm to finance her dance education.



Betty Bloomer, later Betty Ford, dances as a young girl. Image courtesy of mive.com.

6) James A. Garfield was ambidextrous. Not only was he the first president to be both a righty and lefty, but it was said he could write a sentence in Latin with one hand and write it in Greek with the other hand.



Image courtesy of shanzu.wordpress.com.

7) Ulysses S. Grant got a speeding ticket...on a horse! The 18th President Of The United States was given a \$20 speeding ticket for riding his horse too fast down a Washington street. You'd think he could have talked his way out of that one.

8) Supposedly, President Van Buren popularized one of the most commonly used phrases to date: "OK". Van Buren was from Kinderhook, NY which was also called "Old Kinderhook". His support groups came to be known as "O.K. Clubs" and the term OK came to mean "all right."

9) Herbert Hoover moved his family to China before becoming President, and he and his wife learned to speak Mandarin Chinese fluently. They would speak the language around the White House to prevent others from understanding them.



President Hoover was born in West Branch, Iowa. Image courtesy of nps.gov.



Special Spiderman edition featuring Obama. Image courtesy of comicbookresources.com.

10) President Obama collects "Spiderman" and "Conan The Barbarian" comic books, and has even read every "Harry Potter" book.

PRE-SHOW EXPLORATION ACTIVITIES, pg. 1

1) IF I WERE PRESIDENT

Goal: To explore the role of the President to proposing laws

Explanation: In this activity, students will brainstorm laws that they would attempt to pass if they were President and then put the laws to a class vote.

Activity:

1. Have students brainstorm in pairs: What would be the first law you would pass as President?
2. Have each pair share their best ideas with the class.
3. Have a class vote to see which laws would pass in your class.

Follow-up Questions:

1. Why did you think your proposed law was a good idea? How would it benefit the country?
2. Did all of the ideas pass when put to a class vote? Why or why not?
3. Why do you think the President can propose legislation but cannot pass it by himself?
4. Why do some bill proposals pass and become laws? Why do some not pass?

2) LEGISLATION SIMULATION (Grades 5-8)

Goal: To explore the roles of the House, Senate, and Presidency in the legislation process.

Explanation: In this activity, the class will take on the roles of the House and Senate members while the teacher takes on the role of President. The activity will simulate a law passing, being vetoed, revised, and returned to vote.

Activity:

1. Divide the class into Senate and House members. If the number is uneven, designate a student Vice President at random.
2. The teacher assumes the role of president.
3. Demonstrate presidential veto power by allowing the bill, "Every student has the right to chew gum" to pass through votes in the Senate and the House, only to be vetoed by you — the President of the class.
4. Introduce the concept of revisions to the gum-chewing bill by Congress.
5. Allow both the House and Senate 3 minutes to propose revisions, re-write the bill and return to the Congressional floor with a designated spokesperson.
6. Both House and Senate spokespeople read their bill without comment.
7. Allow a natural debate to occur. Which bill is most likely to pass? Do either proposed bills have a favorable chance to become law or is their another revision that may work. Note: Point out **filibusters** (unnecessarily long speeches) if they naturally occur, and resolve the delay by enacting **cloture**, a two-thirds majority vote of either the House or the Senate (wherever filibustering occurred) to end the discussion and vote.

Follow-up Questions:

1. Were you able to pass a gum-chewing law?
2. What was challenging about this exercise?
3. What surprised you about this exercise?
4. Are there other laws that should be enacted in your classroom? At your school? In your community? For the nation? For the whole world?

PRE-SHOW EXPLORATION ACTIVITIES, pg. 2

3) LYRICS AND LITERACY: OATH OF OFFICE

Goal: To explore the verbs in the presidential oath of office and to understand how context changes the meaning of verbs.

Explanation: In this activity, students will closely examine the meaning of the words “preserve, protect and defend”.

“I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully execute the office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States.”

Source: Article II, Section I of the U.S. Constitution

Activity:

1. Read the following lyrics to the students:

Hail to the Presidents!
To all the Presidents!
Who are the Presidents,
Who preserve, protect and defend?

2. Explain to students that these are the opening lyrics to *Rock the Presidents* and that the words “preserve, protect and defend” are quoted from the President’s oath of office.
3. Ask students: what does it mean to take an oath?
4. Focus the discussion on our President’s oath of office.
5. Create a 3-column “Preserve/Protect/Defend” brainstorm chart while you explore these three verbs.
6. Students may initially come up with ideas such as “The Constitution,” “The United States” and “our country.” Deepen the discussion by asking questions such as: Preserve what? Protect who and what? Defend who and what?
7. Ask students to contribute at least one unique response for your Preserve/Protect/Defend chart.

(Activity cont. next column)

Sample Chart:

Preserve	Protect	Defend
people	people	against attacks
snails	children	honor
the environment	neighborhoods	against bullies
		your ideas

8. Discuss how the meaning of a verb becomes more focused when it applies to something specific, in this case, the Presidency. For instance:

- ◇ “Preserve” can refer to keeping food from spoiling.
 - ◇ “Protect” can refer to sheltering from rain.
 - ◇ “Defend” can refer to a mother bird fighting off a hawk to protect her chicks.
9. You may also discuss how two words that seem to mean the same thing (synonyms) can become opposites, or antonyms, as in “protect” and “defend”.

Follow-up Questions:

1. What else can these words mean?
2. Are we meant to take these words literally in the Oath of Office?
3. What does it mean to you that the President takes this particular oath?

Grammar Extension:

Discuss with students what other verbs have shades of meaning like this. Do all verbs have multiple meanings? What about nouns? Adjectives? Adverbs?



President Barack Obama takes the Oath of Office during his inauguration on January 20, 2009.

Image courtesy of inquisitor.com.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

PRE-SHOW DISCUSSION

1. What does the President of the United States do?
2. Would you want to be the president? Why or why not?
3. What are the things you would want to change if you were president?
4. How many presidents have there been? Name the first 3 presidents that come to your mind. Why do you think you remembered them?
5. Throughout history, there have been many political parties. What political parties are you familiar with? Why do we have different political parties?
6. First ladies have historically chosen a cause or platform when they are in the White House. (Current First Lady Michelle Obama's is fighting childhood obesity.) If you were the First Lady or the First Gentleman, what would your cause or platform be?
7. In the song "First Ladies" in *Rock the Presidents*, the chorus repeats:

The Presidents may have been all men,
But their wives have proven, time and again,
Women sang their share of history's song.
Men have led the way so far, but that lead
won't last for long.

Do you think you will see a female President of the United States in your lifetime? Why or why not?

8. Presidents have been commemorated in many ways. Can you think of examples in your community, state or across the country of ways that specific Presidents have been publically remembered? (Examples: monuments, buildings, streets, etc.)
9. What makes the American presidency special? How is it different than the leadership of other countries?

POST-SHOW DISCUSSION

1. What are three things that you learned about the presidents from the performance?
2. What was your favorite part of the performance? Why?
3. Why do you think the creators chose to make this production a musical revue and not a drama?
4. What different styles of music do you recall from the production? Why do you think the playwright and composer chose different styles of music for this production?
5. Because *Rock the Presidents* is a touring show, all of the set, costumes, sound, props and projections have to be easily transported in a small truck. If you could design the production elements and had endless money and space, what would you do differently?
6. Many presidents are known for the legacy they leave behind. What does it mean to have a legacy? What would you want your legacy to be?
7. Did any of the songs/topics surprise you? Why or why not?
8. Is there anything that you would like to conduct additional research on after seeing the performance, such as on a particular President or one of their specific actions?
9. What does it mean to be a leader? Who do you know that is a good leader? What can you do to thank him or her for their good leadership?
10. What unique presidential facts would you use to create trivia questions if we were to play our own version of "The Pres-i-tron" with the class?

POST-SHOW ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES

1) WRITE A REVIEW

Goal: To write a review of the performance.

Explanation: In this activity, students will reflect on the performance by writing their own review.

Activity:

1. Ask students to imagine that they are a critic for the school newspaper. They are going to write a review of *Rock the Presidents* to inform others about what they experienced.
2. In the review they should describe with detail:
 - what they saw
 - what they heard
 - how the performance made them feel
 - what the performance reminded them of
 - what their favorite part was and why
3. Remind students that they must paint a picture of the experience with their words so that others who did not see the performance can imagine it as vividly as possible.

Follow-up Question:

1. What did you include in your review? Why was it important to include?

2) WRITE AN ORIGINAL SONG

Goal: To write song lyrics inspired by *Rock the Presidents*.

Explanation: In this activity, students will write the lyrics to an original song inspired by an American President.

Activity:

1. Invite students to write a song about one of the Presidents of the United States.
2. In their song, they should include more than one verse and a chorus that repeats. The lyrics do not have to rhyme.
3. The song should highlight anything special about the President, such as his personality or the challenges and successes of his time in office.
4. Provide students with time and resources to conduct any research before they begin writing.

Follow-up Question:

1. How are your song lyrics similar to ones in *Rock the Presidents*? How are they different?
2. What was challenging about this activity?

3) PRESIDENTIAL SEAL

Goal: To experiment with symbolism and visual representation of an idea or value.

Explanation: In this activity, students will learn about the Presidential Seal and then create a seal that represents themselves.

Activity:

1. Show students a picture of the Presidential Seal found on page 16.
2. Ask students to respond to the following, one step at a time:
 - ◇ What do they notice?
 - ◇ What questions do they have?
 - ◇ What do they think the different elements mean?
3. Record students responses on chart paper. Encourage each student to contribute at least one unique thought.
4. Next, share the following information with students:

The Presidential Seal appears officially on medals, stationery, publications, flags, monuments, and architectural decoration. In 1945, Truman redesigned the Presidential Seal and Flag. The eagle's head used to face the arrows of war. He believed that the president, although prepared for war, should always look toward peace which is why the eagle's head is now turned toward the olive branches. He added 48 stars to stand for each state in the union at that time. Today the seal includes 50 stars, one for each state. The seal also contains the phrase E PLURIBUS UNUM, which is our country's motto. It is Latin, meaning "out of many, one."

5. Using the 'My Own Seal' template on page 17, invite students to create a seal that represents themselves. Encourage them to carefully consider what each element of their seal means and how it represents them. This should include thoughts on any objects, colors, and words on the seal.
6. After students have completed their seals, have them share with the class.

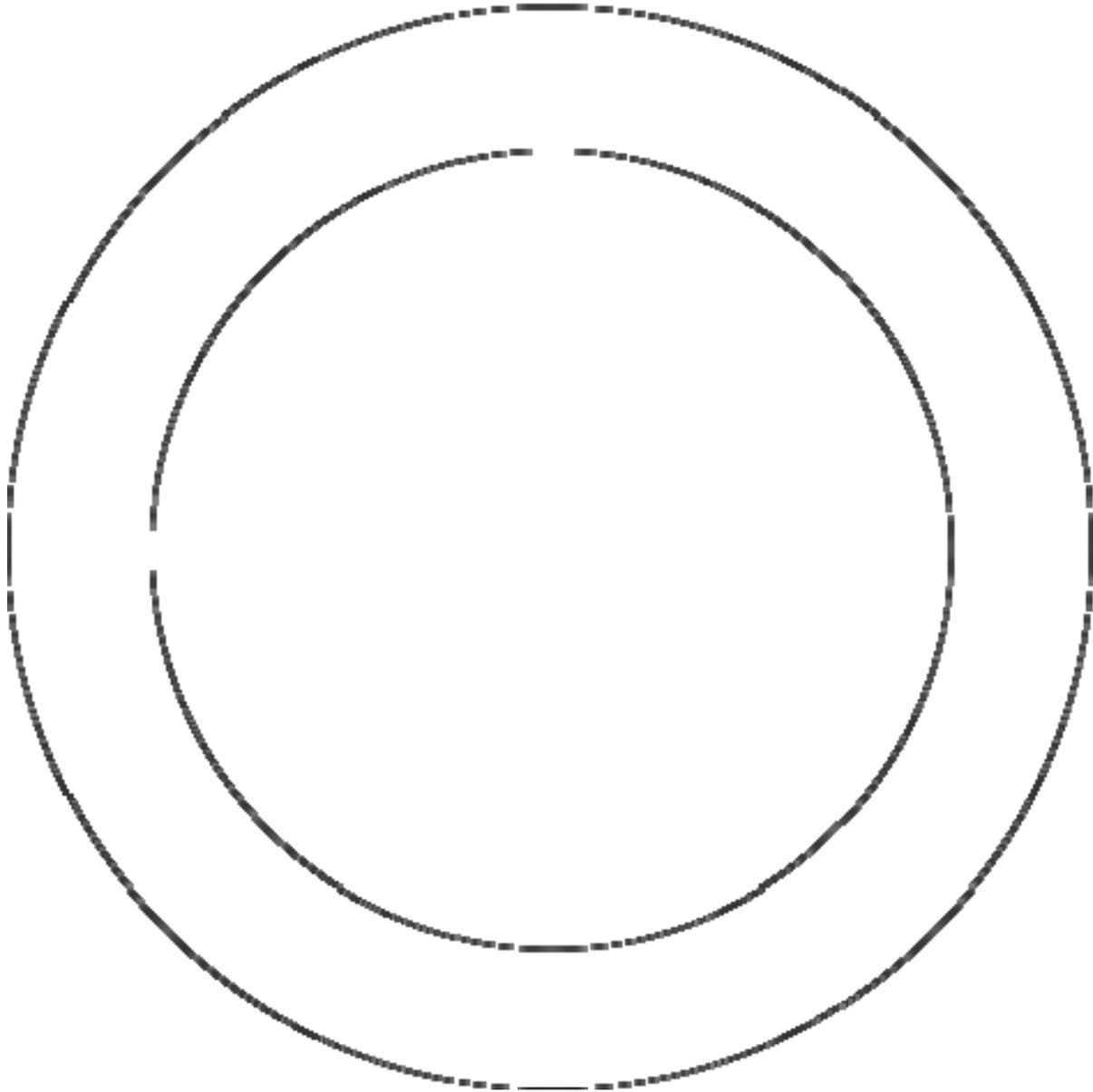
Follow-Up Questions:

1. What did you include on your seal? Why?
2. The Presidential Seal contains the phrase E PLURIBUS UNUM, which means "out of many, one." What does this mean to you? What is your phrase?

PRESIDENTIAL SEAL (For use with Post-Show Assessment Activity 3 on page 15)



'MY OWN SEAL' TEMPLATE



DIRECTIONS

1. Think about who you are and write your title in the outer circle (Seal of _____).
2. Draw an animal that represents you for the center. What does this animal represent to you?
3. Choose a motto for your seal. Our national seal shows an eagle holding the words E PLURIBUS UNUM, which is Latin for "out of many, one." What does your motto say?
4. Choose colors and then color your seal.

RESOURCES AND SOURCES



ADDITIONAL CLASSROOM RESOURCES

'Rock the Presidents' Lyrics

View all the lyrics to *Rock the Presidents* at CivicCenter.org/education.

Write a Letter to the President

Letter-writing guide: <http://www.enchantedlearning.com/writingletters/government/president/>

Email the President: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/contact/submit-questions-and-comments>

The White House Website

See virtual tours featuring architecture, decor and art, a slideshow featuring each President, biographies of each First Lady, photo galleries featuring President Obama and much more.

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/about/presidents>

National Geographic Tour of the White House

This fun, interactive experience lets you pretend to move into the Oval Office.

<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/features/96/whitehouse/whhome.html>

A List of Presidential Nicknames <http://www.classroomhelp.com/lessons/Presidents/nicknames.html>

About Air Force One <http://www.whitehouse.gov/about/air-force-one>

Kids.gov

A safe place to learn about how the government works. Includes resources for grade ranges K-5 and 6-8.

<http://www.kids.gov/>

STUDY GUIDE SOURCES

"22 Ridiculous Things You Didn't Know About US Presidents." [Huffington Post](http://HuffingtonPost.com). 2/21/11. www.huffingtonpost.com

"Ben's Guide to U.S. Government for Kids." <http://bensguide.gpo.gov/6-8/government/national/executive.html>

Childsplay. "2012-13 National Tour: Rock the Presidents." <http://www.childsplayaz.org/national-tour.php>

National Public Radio. <http://www.npr.org>