

STUDY GUIDE

A Peek Behind the Curtain

A live theatre performance requires lots of dedication and teamwork from many different people. The following is some basic information about that, as well as your duties as an audience member that will help create a fun experience for everyone.

Who's Who?

- The director is responsible for putting the show together, from a mere vision to a full production in a short amount of time.
- The cast are the actors in a show.
- It takes a team of dedicated crew members to help put on a show from backstage. They help with makeup, costumes, lights, props and ushering.
- Designers decide what kind of sounds, lights, sets and costumes effectively tell a story.
- The stage manager oversees the rehearsal schedule and performances. He or she also monitors where the actors need to be on stage.

Do's & Don'ts

- Arrive on time for the performance.
- Pay attention to the show. Turn off all cell phones and anything else that beeps, vibrates or lights up. This also means no texting!
- Don't take any photographs during the performance. It's distracting to the actors and your fellow audience members.
- Stay in your seat throughout the entire performance, even if something in the show excites or startles you.
- Don't talk during the performance.
- If something in the show is funny, laugh out loud. If something wonderful happens in the story, clap your hands.

What's Your Role?

Believe it or not, you – the **audience** – are the most important part of a theatre performance! Plays and musicals are created to entertain, enlighten and inspire people. The laughter, tears and applause from audiences are an integral part of the theatre experience.

About San Diego Junior Theatre

Every cast and crew member is enrolled in one of our classes. Ranging from 8 to 17 years old, our students learn from grown-ups who are experienced theatre arts professionals. With their guidance, young people get a taste of what it takes to work in theatre world.



The cast of Junior Theatre's production of *The Addams Family*

About *The Addams Family*

The Addams family is loving, wealthy – and ghoulish. Wednesday, the daughter, has fallen in love with a sweet, smart young man named Lucas whose family doesn't revel in all things gruesome. With such differences, Wednesday is nervous about her parents' reaction to meeting her new sweetheart and his mother and father. She does, however, confide in Gomez, her dad, but begs him not to tell her mother. It's every father's nightmare! Now, Gomez Addams must do something he's never done before — keep a secret from his beloved wife, Morticia. Everything will change for the whole family on the fateful night they host a dinner for Wednesday's 'normal' boyfriend and his parents.

The musical theatre production called *The Addams Family* is based on a series of cartoons by Charles Addams, who had a devilish sense of humor. The first was first published in 1938 in a magazine and quickly became popular. His work also inspired television programs and movies throughout the 1960s, 1970s and 1990s.

ACTIVITIES

CARTOON STUDY

Look at this cartoon. What are some of the things you notice in the picture? Who are these people? Why is this picture funny? For those of you with siblings, would your mother or father tell you something similar to resolve an argument?

DEFINE NORMAL

Wednesday: Then can we at least all act normal?

Grandma: Define normal.

Morticia: Normal is an illusion, darling. What's normal for the spider is a calamity for the fly.

Divide your group/class into groups of 3-4 students. Assign each group an emotion or attribute (such as itchy, sleepy, angry, etc.). Then tell each group to demonstrate their assigned emotion/attribute while performing a regular activity of the teacher's choosing, such as brushing their teeth, or building a sandcastle. Each group should perform this activity, with their assigned emotion, for the other groups. The others should then try to guess what that group's emotion was. **DISCUSSION** – Did any of the emotions seem more natural, or "normal", within a specific activity? Why or why not?

TWO TRUTHS, ONE LIE

At dinner, the two families agree to play a game of "Full Disclosure" – where nothing but the truth must be divulged. Of course, something goes wrong, and hilarious consequences ensue.

Divide your students in pairs. Ask them to share three pieces of information about themselves to their partner. The catch is that one of those things must be a lie. See if your partner can figure out which piece of information is the lie. **DISCUSSION** – Why did they believe what they chose was the lie? Was it because of how they shared it, or because of the lie itself?



"Well, don't come whining to me. Go tell him you'll poison him right back."

FAMILY ROLES

Look at the family in this cartoon. Who do you think they are? What kind of family are they? Who is the mother in this family? The father? After some discussion, share with your class that this is an original cartoon of *The Addams Family*, created by Charles Addams. Mention that this family became very popular among readers. Why do you think they became so popular?