

Study Guide For Teachers

Mark Lohr in **Hooked on Books**

presented by

Young Audiences

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ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Mild-mannered Mr. Jones sits down one day to enjoy an afternoon television program. He is interrupted by a public service announcement that makes him aware of the epic battle between TV and reading. He learns how reading is an exciting way to gain new skills, see new places, meet new people and experience more channels than any TV could ever have!

LEARNING GOALS

Students will:

- Understand the differences between experiencing story through reading vs. television viewing
- Have the opportunity to become passionate about reading
- Experience vaudeville comedy

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS

Vaudeville was a genre of variety entertainment prevalent on the stage in the United States and Canada, from the early 1880s until the early 1930s. It was home to more than 25,000 performers, and was the most popular form of entertainment in America. From the local small-town stage to New York's Palace Theater, vaudeville was an essential part of every community. It was made of comedians, singers, plate-spinners, ventriloquists, dancers, musicians, acrobats, animal trainers, and anyone who could keep an audience's interest for more than three minutes.

American Vaudeville, more so than any other mass entertainment, grew out of the culture of incorporation that defined American life after the Civil War. The development of vaudeville marked the beginning of popular entertainment as big business, dependent on the increased leisure time, spending power, and changing tastes of an urban middle class audience. Business savvy showmen utilized improved transportation and communication technologies, creating and controlling vast networks of theatre circuits standardizing, professionalizing, and institutionalizing American popular entertainment.

Frank Cullen of American Vaudeville Museum stated: "Vaudeville was a people's culture. What has remained of Vaudeville is the act – a distillation of a performer's best material into a near-perfect performance piece: the product of personality, talent and skill – the vaudevillian's reason for living."

BEFORE THE PROGRAM

1. For one week, have students keep track of how much time they spend per day watching television and reading books. Do they spend more time doing one than the other? Why?
2. Have students read a short story in class or read it to them out loud. Depending on the story chosen, create a list of questions for the students to answer on a sheet of paper. They can draw in response to the questions, as well. For instance, what did the main character look like? Describe the setting: If it was inside, what did the room look like? What else was in the room? If it was outside, what was the weather like? Were there trees, flowers, mountains, buildings? What did they look like?
3. Have students compare their answers. Did every student answer exactly the same? Enjoy the differences. Would these imaginative differences have existed if all of the students had watched the same television show?

AFTER THE PROGRAM

1. Challenge students to decrease their daily television viewing and increase their daily reading time. Have them keep track for another week. Discuss any differences with their pre-performance record and how students feel about them.
2. Get the visual arts teacher involved! Work with the art teacher to connect an art lesson to a classroom reading lesson. Have each student choose a favorite book. Have the students describe in words why they chose their particular book. Have the students create a piece of art representing their book. They could paint a favorite scene, sculpt a character, etc.
3. Create a book club with students. Involve students in the selection of books. Have them all read the same book over a certain period of time, and then have the opportunity to discuss it in peer groups.

VOCABULARY WORDS

Vaudeville

Burlesque

Clown

Charlie Chaplin

Buster Keaton

Comic

ARTIST INFORMATION

An entertainer who has studied the masters of his craft: Charlie Chaplin, Buster Keaton, Bill Irwin – Mark Lohr has almost two decades of performing experience entertaining audiences across North America. He is at home plying his trade in the streets of Baltimore, the beaches of L.A., and from the stages of restored Vaudeville houses. He has performed everywhere from the stage of The Kennedy Center and the center ring of the circus to the Meyerhoff Symphony Hall. Mark is known as a comic who can break the sound barrier for his ability to entertain with or without words.

RESOURCES

Movie: Charlie: The Life and Art of Charles Chaplin (2003)

Books: Creative Clowning by Bruce Fife
American Laughter by Mark Winokur

Website: Students can create their own book lists at: www.bookadventure.org