

John and Juan

Enrichment Works

Classroom Connections

Synopsis

"John and Juan" is a lively romp through the history of the Golden State. John, a native Californian, learns from the immigrant Juan about the State's Hispanic heritage, including early Spanish explorers, the original settlers of El Pueblo de Los Angeles, and Father Junipero Serra, the Chumash Indians, and the missions along El Camino Real...and John shares with Juan the excitement of the Gold Rush.

In humorous scenes, great historic moments are reenacted with tongue in cheek (a can of spam somehow makes its way into the story!) as John and Juan learn they share a common heritage: 'Whoopi Ti Yi Yo' meets 'Cielto Lindo' as they sing their favorite cowboy/vaqero songs and forge a friendship celebrating the best of both cultures.

Our Mission

Enrichment Works creates and presents theater to inspire learning.



David Prather and Armando Ortega

About the Artists

David Prather (Playwright/Actor) is well known for his work as host and narrator at LA Phil events including the annual Holiday Sing-Along at Walt Disney Concert Hall appearing with Julie Andrews. For eleven years he entertained family audiences at the Phil's "Summer Sounds at the Hollywood Bowl" as Cap'n Dave. He has appeared in Shakespeare at the Mark Taper Forum and Gilbert and Sullivan at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion. He has written, performed and taught theater programs at hundreds of schools throughout the Southland.

Discussion and Writing Questions

- What do you think California looked like when the Native people lived here?
- What advantages did the Spanish explorers have? What about the Native people?
- What are some of the important events in California's history and how did they shape the state as it is today?
- Would you and your family have gone to California during the Gold Rush? Why or why not?

Vocabulary Words

adobe
Aztecs
border
conquests
Montezuma
Pobladores
Quetzalcoatl
Shaman
tallow

Project Ideas

- Research Aztec myths on the internet. Choose one and create a comic of the story, illustrating the different characters and events.
- Make a graphic organizer explaining some of the differences and similarities between the Native peoples of California and the Spanish explorers who they met.
- Imagine you and your family decided to go to California during the Gold Rush in a wagon. What would you bring? What would be the most important things that you'd need to pack? Draw or write a short essay to describe the contents of the wagon.
- Make an advertising poster encouraging Americans to go to California for the Gold Rush.
- Create a timeline of California history. Research dates and important people, including some of the ones mentioned in the presentation. Illustrate your timeline with drawings or printed photographs of certain events, symbols, or pictures.

Resources

Websites

- The Aztecs/Mexicas informational page <http://www.indians.org/welker/aztec.htm>
- Resources about the Aztec Empire http://archaeology.about.com/od/aztecarchaeology/a/aztec_sg_5.htm
- PBS History Detectives: Baker's Gold <http://www.pbs.org/opb/historydetectives/educators/lessonplan/bakers-gold/>
- Gold Rush Game http://www.huntington.org/Education/GoldRush/game/anna_1.htm
- Gold Rush Teacher's Guide http://www.america101.us/gold_rush/teachers_guide.html
- Exploration and Colonial History – California http://www.history.ctaponline.org/center/hsscm/index.cfm?Page_Key=1283

Booklist

- *Aztec, Inca & Maya* by DK Eyewitness Books
- *California History for Kids: Missions, Miners and Moviemakers in the Golden State* by Katy S. Duffield
- *What Was the Gold Rush?* By Joan Holub
- *The California Gold Rush* by Mel Friedman
- *We Asked for Nothing: The Remarkable Journey of Cabeza de Vaca* by Stuart Waldman
- *California Ranchos (We the People: Expansion)* by Natalie M. Rosinsky

Contact Us

Enrichment Works

Address: 5605 Woodman Ave., Suite 207, Valley Glen, CA 91401

Phone: 818-780-1400

Website: www.enrichmentworks.org

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Standards and Learning

Enrichment Works is a theater company whose productions are designed to inspire children to learn by creating an emotional connection to educational subjects. “John and Juan” uses the Theater Content Standards of California to provide a positive theatrical experience. The performer interacts directly with students and asks them questions about the topic of the play, inviting students onstage to act out specific roles and events in the story.

Visual and Performing Arts Connections

1.0 Artistic Perception

Students process, analyze and respond to sensory information through language and skills unique to theatre. They learn theatrical vocabulary such as playwright, conflict, setting, script, etc. They analyze the elements of John and Juan by identifying the who, what, when, where and why of the story. Students are engaged through direct address by the actor, scenery, costumes, and stylized movement.

2.0 Creative Expression

In John and Juan, students learn about important events in Californian history such as the Gold Rush, the Spanish Conquest, and Aztecs. Their creativity is engaged as they encounter different characters that represent various periods in Californian history such as the conquistadores and Missionaries. Students help create, perform and participate in the performance through interaction with the actor. The entire audience participates at key points during the play to create different moods.

3.0 Historical and Cultural Context

“John and Juan” helps students understand the role of theater. They take part as both spectator and participant as the story unfolds. They learn about different periods in Californian history and how the state came to be the Golden State. The theatre tradition of improvisation is utilized, allowing students to witness and respond to the actor’s guidance as he directs them to participate in the play with dialogue and action.

4.0 Aesthetic Valuing

Valuing Audience interaction throughout the play allows students to maintain a high level of emotional connection to the characters in the play. Following the play, students participate in a Question and Answer session where they can criticize and query the actors/characters about the content of the play or the artistic choices made in this production. Students are given the opportunity to express how they felt as a participating impromptu actor during the performance. Post-performance activities provided through study guides are available to help students understand the character’s journey and events in the play.

5.0 Connections, Relationship, Applications

Activities will be provided through Classroom Connection guides in order to help them encourage students to connect what is learned in John and Juan to other subject areas. Through hands-on approaches, including improvisation and dramatization, students can explore concepts in other subject areas (e.g. American history, particularly Californian and Mexican history) to learn how theatre can communicate content from other sources. Activities encourage students to learn more about the role of an actor, director and writer, and to use their imaginations and creativity to create their own tales.