



Study Guide for Wild Swan Theater's production of:

The Cricket in Times Square

Script by Jeff Duncan - Based on the novel by George Selden

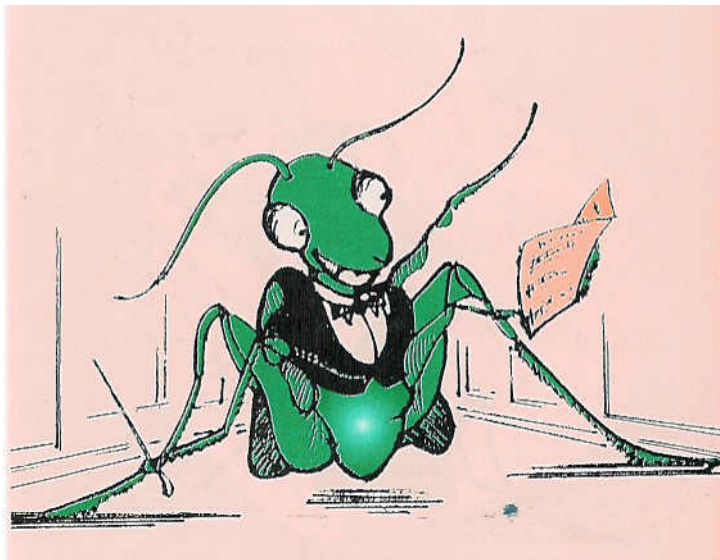


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The information in this study guide was written or compiled by Ramona Brand, Director of Education, Wild Swan Theater; December 2003.

WILD SWAN THEATER

MISSION STATEMENT:

Wild Swan Theater is dedicated to producing professional children's theater of the highest artistic quality and to making that theater accessible to low income, minority and disabled children through low ticket prices and innovative outreach programs.

HISTORY AND ACTIVITIES:

Wild Swan Theater was founded in 1980. Since its inception, the company of professional adult actors, dancers, musicians, visual artists, and American Sign Language interpreters has performed for hundreds of thousands of children. As well as many public performances in its home base of Ann Arbor, the company tours regularly to theaters, museums and public libraries as well as offering residencies and workshops at schools and hospitals serving disabled children statewide. This year the company will give 150 performances for an audience of over 50,000 children and their families.

Wild Swan's performance style, which incorporates storytelling and live action with puppets, masks, music and dance, has received critical acclaim as well as an enthusiastic following. The Detroit News has praised the work as "professional children's theater at its very best," and the Flint Museum of Art has described it as "superb theater that enhances life and its joys." Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village has called Wild Swan "one of the finest theaters for families in the nation."

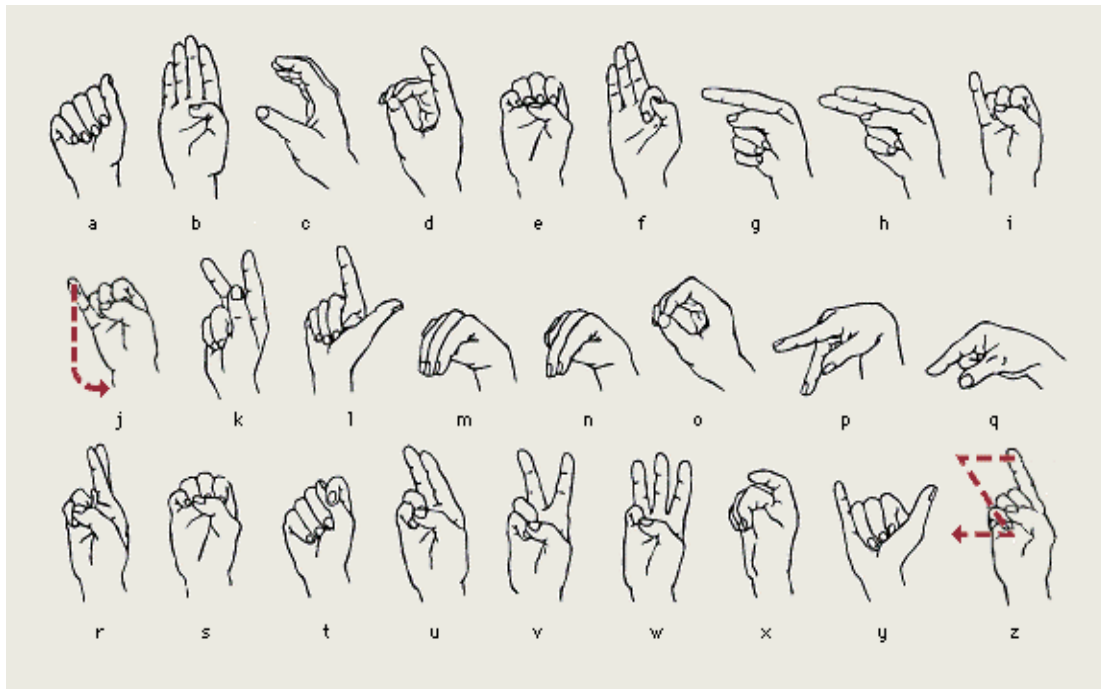
Wild Swan has pioneered a number of audience accessibility measures for disabled individuals that are models in the state and have earned the praise of educators and health specialists across the country. All productions are performed in American Sign Language as well as spoken English with the signing completely integrated into the productions. Thus deaf children and adults not only have complete access to the productions but hearing children are exposed to this beautiful and poetic language. A program for blind individuals includes pre-performance backstage "touch tours". Participants have the opportunity to feel specially constructed props and masks, explore the set, and meet actors and hear the voices their characters will use. Audio-description, a simultaneous description of staging, lights, and costumes, transmitted electronically to participating audience members during pauses in the dialogue, permits audience members who are blind or visually impaired to have access to all the visual elements of the production. As a leader of disabled access in the state, Wild Swan has been a recipient of the Governor's Service Award in 1998 in the Arts in Service category and a grant recipient of Very Special Arts/Michigan for ten years.

Wild Swan has received major support from the Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation, the Arts Foundation of Michigan, the Michigan Council for the Arts and Cultural Affairs, the Elizabeth Wight and Grayling funds of the Community Foundation of Southeast Michigan, Newman's Own Inc., the Pistons Palace Foundation and the W. K. Kellogg Foundation.

American Sign Language Alphabet

When you come to see *The Cricket in Times Square* you will notice that American Sign Language Interpreters are part of the play. They are signing the dialogue of the show for audience members who may have difficulty hearing. American Sign Language is a language used by the deaf and hearing-impaired community. Using sign language in Wild Swan Theater shows enables more people to enjoy a theatrical production.

Below is the basic sign language alphabet. Can you make the letters of the alphabet using this chart?



Related Activities:



Try spelling your name using sign language or try spelling the names of the characters in the play: Chester, Mario, Tucker, Harriet, Mrs. Smedley, etc.



Throughout *The Cricket in Times Square*, Chester plays music with his wings. Can you use American sign language to "sing a song?" Can you find a song about crickets to sign?



Sign a message of friendship to a classmate.

About the Play

The Cricket in Times Square was written by George Selden and has been adapted by local playwright Jeff Duncan so that young readers can also benefit from the experience of live theater.

In the story, curiosity and hunger draw Chester Cricket into a nearby picnic basket in his home state of Connecticut. Much to Chester's dismay, he is trapped in the basket and ends up in the Times Square subway station, one of New York's busiest. Young Mario Bellini, whose parents own a struggling newsstand in the station, finds Chester and convinces his reluctant mother to let him keep Chester at the newsstand. After Chester comfortably settles into his new home, a matchbox, he quickly befriends Tucker the mouse and Harry the cat. (In Wild Swan's version, "Harry" is played by a woman, therefore she is known as "Harriet.") Reassuring Mrs. Bellini's skepticism about Chester, he manages to get into some trouble when he accidentally eats a two-dollar bill and almost sets fire to the newsstand. The last thing Chester wants to do is cause the Bellini's any problems, so together with Tucker and Harry he manages to pay them back. In the end it is Chester's music that ends up attracting more customers than ever before to the newsstand.

The Characters:

MARIO: The son of Mama and Papa Bellini—he is enthusiastic and believes that he can help turn around the luck of the newsstand.

MAMA BELLINI: She is suspicious about Chester Cricket and thinks that he is responsible for the bad luck that they are having.

PAPA BELLINI: He is hard working but afraid that the newsstand is going to close down because of bad business

TUCKER MOUSE and HARRIET CAT: They live in the drain pipe in the subway station. They befriend Chester and come to his aide when trouble happens.

CHESTER CRICKET: He is the Cricket from Connecticut that finds adventure in Times Square. His loyalty to the Mario and the Bellini family brings them good fortune in the end.

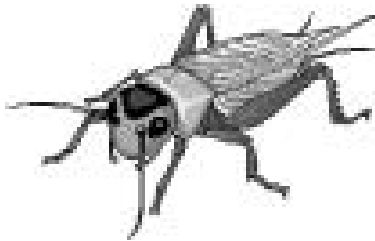
MS. SMEDLEY: The New York music critic and customer of the Bellini's

SAI FONG: A true friend of the Bellini family—he believes in the good luck that Chester Cricket can bring.

About Crickets

Crickets and Their Music

Field crickets like Chester live not only in Connecticut or New York, but are found throughout North America and Alaska. In fact, you can probably find them in your own backyard hiding under piles of leaves or old logs. Crickets love to hide in dark, covered places. Crickets belong to the oldest family of insects, which include grasshoppers. There are 17,000 types of crickets and grasshoppers in the world.



The cricket's body is black or brown in coloring. A cricket's ears are located on the insides of their knobby knees. They have wings that can be up to one inch; too short for most to fly but perfect for producing their infamous chirp. There are two easy ways to tell whether a cricket is male or female. If they have something that resembles a needle at the end of their abdomen you know the cricket is a female. This pointed extremity is called an ovipositor and is used to stick into the dirt when the female lays her eggs. A female cricket can lay up to 300 eggs at a time. You can even tell the difference between male and female crickets without seeing them. The male cricket is the only one that chirps. They have distinctive chirps for mating and for when they are threatened by other crickets or enemies. Cricket enemies include spiders, mice, lizards, and birds. Fly larvae that attach themselves to cricket eggs are the most common enemy.

How Crickets Make Music

A male cricket has a heavy vein with a row of teeth on the underside at the front of each wing. The top of one wing is used as a scraper against the underside of the other wing, like a fingernail drawn along the teeth of a comb. This performance occurs with both wings elevated so that the wing membranes can act as sounding boards. The pitch of the chirps is slightly higher than the highest octave on a piano. Air temperature influences chirping rates: the warmer the night, the faster they chirp. There are special songs for courtship, fighting, and sounding an alarm. Just like our fingerprints are individual to us, no cricket shares the same song. The "score" to the cricket's music is housed in their nervous system.

Since crickets "chirp," you would suspect that they have some kind of "ear" to hear with, and they do. Crickets have a special eardrum for hearing, but it's not where you'd expect. If you look closely at the front leg right below the elbow, you will see a small pale spot—that is the eardrum. It is not well known how precise a cricket's hearing is, but you can imagine that it's good enough to hear the song of a potential mate.

Crickets as Warriors, and Watchdogs

In Western countries, the cricket is seen as a symbol of good luck. Finding one on your mantle is a very good sign, much like finding a ladybug on your shoulder. Today many people keep sculptures or figurines of crickets on the mantle in place of the real thing as a symbol of good luck.

In China, however, the cricket functioned as a warrior, battling other crickets in wrestling matches. People would gather to watch and place bets on which cricket would win.

In Japan some families keep crickets in cages (like the one Sai Fong gives Mario) and use them as "watch crickets." The owners of the house know a burglar is present because the cricket suddenly becomes silent. Just as Chester didn't make a sound in his first three days in the subway station, crickets won't chirp when unfamiliar sounds or surroundings scare them.



(<http://www.insecta-inspecta.com/crickets/field/>)

Activities for your classroom:

Science:

Activity One: A Cricket Data Bank

Read about crickets on the internet and from the information above. List at least three items of information under each heading. Use the information in the table that follows.

Crickets:

<http://www.ex.ac.uk/bugclub/cricket.html>

Crickets: Books

Chirping Crickets by Melvin Berger. Harper Collins, 1998.

The Cricket	
Eats	Lives
Does	Has

Language Arts:

Activity Two: Write a Cricket poem.

Have your students use the information from their Cricket table to write the poem. Explain to your students that the poem should be written in first person voice. The poem will be written from the cricket perspective.

Line One: If I were a cricket

Line Two: Tell where it is found.

Line Three: Tell one thing it could do

Line Four: Tell another thing it would do

Line Five: If I were a cricket

Mount your classroom poems on a large picture of a cricket or on smaller individual crickets and display.

Social Studies:

Activity Three: Community Attribute Chart/Ven Diagram

Chester the Cricket lives first in the country and then in the city. Have your students make an attribute chart or Ven Diagram comparing country life and city life and characteristics of urban vs. rural communities.

Follow up:

Have your students write or dictate a letter to Chester asking him questions about life in with the Bellini's in the city vs. life in the country. Send your letter to Wild Swan Theater.

Times Square History

It has been called the heart of New York, America's town square, and the crossroads of the world. Times Square is all of these things. At no other place will one see a greater cross-section of human beings than right here along Broadway. The dozens of Broadway shows, hotels, abundant restaurants and shopping opportunities, even up-to-the-minute news all combine to make it a constant hub of activity. Yet the single greatest attraction is Times Square itself. With its hyper-designed oversized billboards and countless shining lights, most people come simply to bear witness to the sheer extravagance of it. Thirteen different subway lines can be accessed from Times Square. Numerous city buses intersect this area. Factor in the walkability of Manhattan, and Times Square is probably the easiest place in New York City to get to and explore.

History & Background



Once a quiet district of carriage-building shops and livery stables known as Long Acre Square, Times Square got its current name in 1904 after The New York Times relocated its offices from lower Manhattan. The Square's traditional New Year's Eve celebration sprung from the newspaper's grand opening party that year. Already by the turn of the century, Times Square had a reputation for the flashy, which as the decades went on simply got brighter and gaudier. Ten years later, with the help of subway lines into the area, Times Square had become the undisputed center of theater, vaudeville, music publishing, motion pictures, and nightlife. In the 1920's, roughly 200 different plays were being presented in the district's 66 theaters each season.

Times Square remained the nation's capital of entertainment throughout World War II. Even when the lights were dimmed or even reduced to total darkness to diminish the risk of attack, the area still boomed. Servicemen and civilians alike flooded the area to dance to the swing music of Benny Goodman and to be crooned by Frank Sinatra.

The area started to decline shortly after the war, and by the mid-1970s it had become run-down and seedy. But with the help of an economic resurgence in the early 1990s, many New York developers, and the city of New York, Times Square found new life. Historic theaters were renovated and new ones built. Hotels, offices, and new movie theaters have shot up. And the crowds have returned.



New York City Newsstand

This sidewalk newsstand in New York City in 1903 would have sold copies of *McClure's Magazine* containing Ida Tarbell's serialized articles on the Standard Oil Company. Clearly visible in a blow-up of this are *Colliers*, *Harper's Weekly*, *Scientific American*, *Success*, *Leslie's Illustrated*, *Police News*, and *New York PM*

Making Web Connections

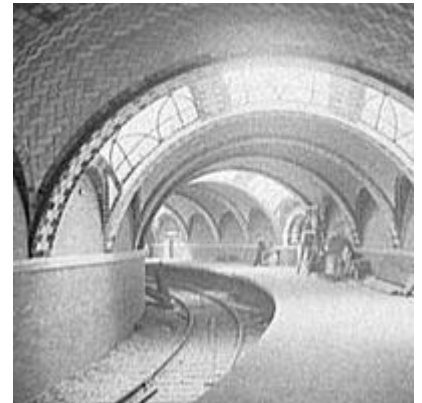
http://www.pps.org/gps/one?public_place_id=424

http://www.timessquare.com/history/history_101.html

The Biggest Subway System in the World

London claims the oldest subway system, but New York is home to the largest. Today's tracks, running between the five boroughs of New York City (Manhattan, Brooklyn, Bronx, Queens, and Staten Island), measure 720 miles. If stretched end to end they would run from Manhattan to Chicago. 2.7 million people ride the subway everyday. It costs \$2.00 to ride, quite an increase from the \$.05 required in 1904.

On Thursday afternoon, October 27, 1904, the mayor of New York City, George B. McClellan, officially opened the New York subway system. The first subway train left City Hall station with the mayor at the controls, and 26 minutes later arrived at 145th Street. The subway opened to the general public at 7 p.m. that evening, and before the night was over, 150,000 passengers had ridden the trains through the underground tunnels.



Why Build Trains Underground?

Between 1840 and 1860 New York City's population increased by 167%. It went from 300,000 people to 800,000! Part of the influx was due to immigrants from countries like Italy, Ireland, China and many others. They set up communities that still exist today and make New York a multi-cultural melting pot.

However all of these new residents caused overcrowding on the streets, making it difficult for street cars and carriages to serve the public and maneuver through crowds. The solution was evident to the then mayor, Abraham Hewitt, who proposed the idea for the electric powered subway. Builder/contractor John MacDonal and his crew set to work in 1900. The subway officially opened on October 27, 1904. This first set of tracks was only twenty miles in length.



<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/ndlpedu/collections/nyfilm/history.html>

Building the subway was a difficult and often dangerous task. Workers used a method called "cut and cover" which worked exactly as it sounds. First the street above would be cut away then the ground underneath would be excavated using different methods, one of which was dynamite. After the tunnel was completed, the road was again placed over where it originally was. Digging under water proved even more difficult. Cave-ins were a constant threat when working under the rivers.

New York's Secret Subway

Thirty-four years prior to the opening of MacDonald's subway there was another system measuring only 312 feet in length, but this one was built secretly. Unable to get permission from city officials, builder Alfred Beach rented out the basement of a clothing store on the corner of Murray Street and Broadway. He had his men begin to dig from inside the basement wall. Only at night would the workers surface to remove huge sacks of dirt and rock. It officially opened in 1870 and was run by a system called the Roots Patent Force Blast Blower that basically pushed the train through the tunnel by the use of a huge fan. Unfortunately Beach was unable to get his plans for more tracks approved and with funding falling short he was forced to close the subway only three years after it opened.

Making Web Connections

<http://www-tech.mit.edu/Subway/>

IRT site with history and historical pictures of New York Subway

<http://www-tech.mit.edu/Subway/>

Timeline history of New York City transit

<http://www.suffolk.lib.ny.us/youth/jcsstransportation.html#RAILROADS>

Kid's transportation site

Activities For Your Classroom

Create your own classroom subway. Using the third site listed above, look at pictures of New York City subway cars. Give each student a shoebox. Using construction paper, markers and scissors, have each student decorate his or her shoebox to look like a subway car. Make sure there is at least one engine. Put together and display your subway train. Have the students decide the name of the line, the route it follows, the fare, and create a timetable for their subway line.

Learning About Community

Dramatize a subway ride! Set your classroom chairs in rows simulating the seats in a subway car. Assign roles to your students, such as ticket seller, conductor, engineer, mechanics, newsstand operator and the people riding the subway. Each student should think of a character for him or herself—business person off to work, grandmother going to see grandchildren, high school students going to work, tourists on vacation, etc. Have the conductor call out stops, collect tickets and have students get "on and off" at stations. Have students make the sounds of the subway starting up, going, slowing down and stopping. See if they can imitate the motion of being on a subway. Once the "ride" is over have a follow up discussion with students. Talk about why people use the subway and where they may be going. Talk about the jobs that are needed to run a railway and what function it serves in the community

Discussion Questions

1. Chester made a huge lifestyle change by moving from the field in Connecticut to the high paced Times Square Subway Station. Have you ever moved to a different city or neighborhood? What would be hard about leaving home? What would be exciting? If you had to move, what people, places, or things would you miss most?
2. Mario had a great deal of responsibility having to work for his parents in the newsstand. Have you ever had a job? What do you think it would be like to have the kinds of responsibilities Mario did? What do you think Mario liked about his job? What might he have disliked?
3. Chester's music brought happiness to the Bellinis and others that passed through the subway station. What other "musical" animals can you name? Where are these animals found? Can you identify them in nature by their different songs?
4. To some people, crickets are a symbol of good luck. Do you believe in luck? What kinds of things do you think are symbols of luck? Do you have a good luck charm or a good luck ritual? (Like always tying your left shoe first before an important game.)
5. After Chester accidentally ate the two-dollar bill, Tucker was extremely generous in giving up most of his life savings to help the Bellinis' newsstand. What kind of sacrifices or selfless actions like Tucker's have you done? What kinds of things have you seen others do? What is hard about making sacrifices like Tucker did? What made him able to do it?
6. How does Chester change Mrs. Bellini's opinion about him? Have you ever had to influence the way a person feels about you? What does your behavior tell another person about you?
7. How does Chester bring good luck back to the Bellini's? Is there such a thing as too much fame? What does Chester mean when he says he feels "Septemberish"? Why does Chester begin to want to go back to the country? Is there a time you felt you had "too much of a good thing"?
8. What happens at the very end of the play? How do Harriet and Tucker feel about Chester's leaving? What do they think will happen to the Bellini's? How do you feel when you leave a place or people that you care about? What does Chester leave behind?

Using the Web in Your Classroom

The following activities can be connected directly or indirectly to web sites with age appropriate lesson plans.

Activities with Newspapers: Creating Classroom News

Focus: Language Arts, writing, comprehension, grammar, factual writing and sentence structure.

Review the events of *The Cricket in Times Square* after you have seen the play. Instruct your students that they will re-tell the story they have seen by writing newspaper articles. When they are finished they will have a class newspaper.

Step 1: Bring in newspapers and review with your students the parts of the newspaper and their uses. Discuss the difference between news articles, editorials, comics, weather, etc. Ask the students to list how many different kinds of information they find in the paper.

Step 2: Say to your students:

"Chester comes to live in the Bellini family's newsstand. Newspapers are an important way for us to get information and to learn about events and people in the world around us. We have just seen the production of *The Cricket in Times Square*. We are going to write a class newspaper to tell about the story we have seen. We will use different types of newspaper writing to tell the story."

Step 3: Assign small groups of students to different aspects of the newspaper writing. Some article ideas are:

Front page

Cricket discovered playing beautiful music at Bellini's newsstand!

Entertainment

Mrs. Smedley reviews the concert at Bellini's newsstand

Letters to the Editor

Mrs. Bellini writes to complain about mysterious happenings in the subway

Advice

Chester asks advice about making money

Human Interest

Boy befriends lost Cricket

Weather

New York weather of the day

Brainstorm additional ideas with your class.

Making Web Connections:

Use the sites below for more newspaper lesson ideas:

<http://www.remc11.k12.mi.us/bstpract/bstpract/001/001.htm>

Complete lesson plan for creating classroom newspaper with MI benchmarks

http://www.education-world.com/a_lesson/lesson139.shtml

Ten Great Activities: Teaching with the newspaper

http://www.education-world.com/a_lesson/lesson072.shtml

Twenty-five great ideas for teaching current events. Below are several of the ideas, go online to get the rest!

Preserving the News! Dissolve a milk of magnesia tablet in a quart of water, and let it stand overnight. Pour the mixture into a flat baking pan large enough to hold the news clippings that you want to preserve. Place the clippings in the solution so they're completely covered by the liquid. Let them soak for an hour. Then take them out and pat them dry. They'll be crisp and new for a long time to come! (This works because the magnesium carbide in the solution neutralizes the acid in the paper—it is the acid that makes the newspaper yellow.)

Listening for Details. Students can do this activity individually or in small groups. Ask students to listen carefully as you read aloud a story from the day's newspaper. (Story length will vary by grade level.) Then hand out to students a sheet with questions about details from the story. The higher the grade, the harder (more detailed) questions you can ask. Invite students or groups to respond to the questions. Who caught the most details?

News-Mapping. Post a map (a community, state, U.S., or world map, depending on the focus of your current events curriculum) on a bulletin board. Post stories around the map and string yarn from each story to the location on the map where the story takes place

News Scavenger Hunts. Provide students with a list of things to find on the front page of today's newspaper. Students might hunt in the paper for math-related words and terms (a percent, a measurement of distance, a cost, an address, and a fraction) or grammar-related terms (a present-tense verb, a past-tense verb, a proper noun, an abbreviation, a colon, and a list separated by commas). Students might scavenge the main sports page for a list of sports-related terms. Or you might let students work in small groups to hunt for as many nouns (or proper nouns, or verbs) they can find in a story or on the front page. The group that finds the most is the winner!

A to Z Adjectives. Each student writes the letters from A to Z on a sheet of paper. Challenge students to search the day's front page (or the entire newspaper, if your students are older) for an adjective that begins with each letter of the alphabet. Students cut the adjectives from the newspaper and paste them on their list.

The Five Ws. Introduce students to the 5Ws found in most news stories. Often, the five Ws are introduced in a story's opening paragraph. Create an overhead transparency of a major news story. Invite students to talk about the *who*, *where*, *when*, *what*, and *why* of the story. Circle or highlight and label the areas of the story that tell each of the five Ws. Then provide each student or group of students with a news story and ask them to report to the class the *who*, *where*, *when*, *what*, and *why* of the story. Students might underline each of the five Ws with a different colored crayon.



Arts and Story Comprehension Curriculum

Use the following website and lessons plans to enrich your Language Arts and Story Comprehension curriculum:

<http://www.nancypolette.com/LitGuidesText/cricketintimessquare.htm>

The Cricket in Times Square chapter questions and activities

<http://www.kckps.org/readalouds/cricket.html>

Lesson tying to math/art and language arts concepts on perspective

Activity One: Challenge a friend or classmate to see which of you can find and print out at least six of the items listed below. All of the items are important in *The Cricket in Times Square*. A New York City web site address is given to get you started:

<http://aj.encyclopedia.com/articles/09212.html>

Books (List page number on which the item is found.)

Fun Places to Go With Children in New York by Randi Millman-Brown. Chronicle Books, 1998.

New York City by Deborah Kent. Children's Press, 1997.

Internet Address	Picture or Article
	a cricket
	New York City
	a newsstand
	a subway
	Grand Central Station
	a cat
	name of a popular diner
	Chinese object
	a clock
	something Italian
	word "money"
	piano
	a mouse
	an opera

<http://www.nancypolette.com/LitGuidesText/cricketintimessquare.htm>

Interdisciplinary Connections

Suggested Classroom Activities

The Cricket in Times Square entertains and provokes thought about the true meaning of friendship; the book is ideal for classroom read-aloud or a novel study. Along with the theme of friendship, the author explores important issues such as loyalty, family, and dealing with fame and fortune. Teachers who are interested in using the book as an interdisciplinary novel study will find connections to the language arts, social studies, science, art, music, and drama curriculum.

Pre-Reading Activity

Students who are unfamiliar with New York City will need an introduction to the city and the concept of subways. Find a map of Manhattan and display it for study. Point out Times Square and Chinatown as significant locations in the setting of the book. Have students go to the library to locate books on New York City that have pictures of the subway, Times Square, and Chinatown. You can also try the Internet to find out more information. To find a map of New York City [click here](#). Display your findings in the classroom for quick reference.

Thematic Connections

Friendship

Ask students to define friendship. Everyone looks for different things in friends, but there are some universal characteristics of true friendship. Have the class list these qualities on a chart. How do Chester, Tucker, and Harry demonstrate their friendship? What is strange about Tucker and Harry's friendship? How does Sai Fong befriend Mario?

Loyalty

Loyalty is one quality of a good friend. How is Mario loyal to Chester? Describe Chester, Tucker, and Harry's loyalty to one another. Ask students to discuss how Mario's loyalty to Chester allows him to let Chester return to Connecticut.

Family and Relationships

The Bellinis make their living by operating a newsstand. How is it truly a family business? Ask students to discuss how the author describes Mr. Bellini, Mrs. Bellini, and Mario. Divide the class into small groups and ask each group to find five adjectives that might best describe each member of the Bellini family.

Dealing with Fame and Fortune

Chester's ability to make music brings him much fame and the Bellinis some fortune. Ask students to list the pros and cons of Chester's growing fame. There are those who try to use another person's fame to their benefit. Have students make a list of every character in the book. Then ask them to discuss how each person or animal uses Chester's fame. Divide the class into small groups and instruct them to devise a plan that would allow Chester to live a less famous life and remain in New York with his friends.

Language Arts

Read aloud or tell the fable *The Town Mouse and the Country Mouse*. Ask students to compare and contrast the fable with *The Cricket in Times Square*.

Invite students to research the mythical character Orpheus. Discuss why George Selden titled Chapter 14 "Orpheus."

Social Studies

Mario goes to Chinatown to buy a cricket box for Chester. There is a picture of Mr. Fong's shop in Chinatown on page 47. Ask students to research the many things that Mr. Fong might sell in his shop. What is the significance of a cricket box in Chinese culture?

Science

Ask students to write down as many facts about crickets as they can find in the novel. Have students verify the facts by using reference materials at the library. What is the life cycle of the cricket? What does Chester mean on page 132 when he says, "I'm just feeling Septemberish"? Ask students to discuss why Mario feels okay about Chester returning to Connecticut. Is it because he fully understands the life cycle and life span of crickets or are there other reasons?

On page 15, Mario says that one can tell the temperature by the number of chirps made by crickets. Is this fact or fable? Ask students to support their answer with documented fact.

Art

Most important performances have posters advertising the event. Ask each student to design an appropriate poster for Chester's musical performances. Some students may enjoy writing and illustrating a newspaper ad for Chester's concerts.

Music

Ask students to identify the types of music in Chester's repertoire. Divide the class into small groups and ask them to select one type of music and research it. For example: One group may research waltzes, another opera, and another religious music. Each group should also find an example of their type of music to play for the class.

Drama

The Cricket in Times Square contains a lot of dialogue, making it perfect for Readers Theater. Ask for volunteers from the class to develop a significant scene in the book for Readers Theater. Allow them time to perform for their class as well as for other classes in the school.

Teaching Ideas prepared by Marilyn Carpenter, Education Consultant, Tucson, Arizona.

(<http://www.randomhouse.com/teachers/catalog/display.pperl?isbn=0440415632&view=tg>)

Bibliography

More adventures with Chester and friends:

Selden, George; *Chester Cricket's New Home*; Farrar Straus Giroux, New York, 1983

Selden, George; *Chester Cricket's Pigeon Ride*; Farrar Straus Giroux, New York, 1981

Selden, George; *Harry Kitten and Tucker Mouse*; Farrar Straus Giroux, New York, 1986

Selden, George; *The Old Meadow*; Farrar Straus Giroux, New York, 1987

Selden, George; *Tucker's Countryside*; Farrar Straus Giroux, New York, 1969

Other stories by George Selden

Selden, George; *The Genie of Sutton Place*; Farrar Straus Giroux, New York, 1973

Books about Crickets and Grasshoppers

Berger, Melvin, illustrated by Megan Lloyd; *Chirping Crickets*; HarperCollins Publishers, New York, 1998

Describes the physical characteristics, behavior, and life cycle of crickets while giving particular emphasis to how they chirp.

Cole, Joanna, photographs by Jerome Wexlet and Raymond A. Mendez; *An Insect's Body*; S. Morrow, New York, 1984

Examines the common house cricket and shows why its body is ideally suited for survival.

Pascoe, Elaine; *Crickets and Grasshoppers*; Blackbirch Press, Woodbridge, CT 1998

Describes the physical characteristics, habitats, and life cycle of crickets and grasshoppers. Includes related activities.

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Amazing orthopterans -- Cricket or grasshopper? -- Why do they sing? - An orthopteran grows up -- Escape artists.